

MEDIA RELEASE

New alcohol industry ad rules dismissed as window dressing

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New advertising placement rules developed by the alcohol industry are unlikely to reduce young people's exposure to alcohol promotion in any meaningful way, and highlight yet again the need for independent regulation of all forms of alcohol marketing to protect young people.

"There is a clear need for comprehensive controls on the content, placement and volume of alcohol marketing, but alcohol advertisers should not be the ones designing those controls", said Julia Stafford, Executive Officer of the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth which runs the Alcohol Advertising Review Board.

"There are significant conflicts of interest at play – the Directors of the ABAC Scheme and the majority of its Management Committee represent the major brewers, distillers and winemakers in Australia. It's no wonder the new 'placement rules' appear to be designed to look like the industry is addressing alcohol ad placement, without actually doing anything.

"We are not aware of any information about how these 'placement rules' can be expected to protect young people. We do not know how the provisions were developed, who was consulted, or if any data modelling was conducted to provide an evidence base for the rules".

"The new placement provisions are incredibly generous to alcohol advertisers. For example, alcohol ads are allowed on television where at least 75% of the audience are adults. This approach hasn't worked in other countries and it won't work in Australia. Those aged under 18 years account for less than 25% of the Australian population and even a seemingly modest proportion of the TV audience can represent hundreds of thousands of young viewers."

Michael Moore, co-chair of the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA) said, "This is another sign that the alcohol industry is fearful of future independent regulation of alcohol marketing.

"The new 'rules' fail to address the significant gaps and weaknesses in the voluntary system – the ABAC Scheme still does not apply to alcohol sponsorship, there are few restrictions for outdoor media and the loophole allowing alcohol ads in weekend sport during children's TV viewing times remains.

"These weak provisions should not deter the Australian Government from taking action to introduce effective alcohol marketing regulation that prioritises the health of young people".

ENDS

For further information contact:

Julia Stafford, McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth - 08 9266 9079 or 0413531398.

Michael Moore, co-chair of the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA) and CEO of the Public Health Association of Australia – 0417 249 731

About the Alcohol Advertising Review Board:

The Alcohol Advertising Review Board reviews complaints from the Australian community about alcohol advertising. It was established by the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth and Cancer Council WA in response to concerns about the ineffectiveness of the self-regulatory alcohol advertising system – the ABAC Scheme is a central part of this system.

About the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol:

The National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA) is a national coalition representing more than 80 organisations from across Australia. NAAA's members cover a diverse range of interests, including public health, law enforcement, local government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, child and adolescent health, and family and community services.