



MEDIA RELEASE - 11 June 2013

NEW ALCOHOL ADVERTISING REPORT – TOP TEN SHOCKERS REVEALED

The first annual report of the independent Alcohol Advertising Review Board finds that self-regulation of alcohol advertising is failing, irresponsible alcohol promotions are common, young people are heavily exposed to alcohol advertising, and there is an urgent need for regulation on alcohol promotion.

The AARB was established by the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth and the Cancer Council Western Australia with support from many health organisations. The Board is chaired by leading child health advocate, Professor Fiona Stanley AC.

During its first year of operation, the AARB received 200 complaints (in comparison with 98 received in 2012 by the alcohol and advertising industries' voluntary self-regulatory system). There were 104 determinations of upheld complaints fully, and 32 that upheld complaints in part.

The report lists the "Top 10 alcohol advertising shockers of 2012-13". These include examples of exposure to young people through sports sponsorship; advertisements outside a school; Jim Beam Racing Kids Team clothing for four year olds; targeting of young people through music festivals; cheap alcohol promotions by liquor retailers; product packaging likely to appeal to young people; disguised alcohol advertising in sporting commentary; and promotion of excessive alcohol consumption.

The report also includes a "Weekend in the life of a child" with examples of how many times Australian children could be exposed to alcohol advertising over one weekend.

Professor Stanley said, "The impact of the creativity shown by the alcohol industry in promoting its products is shocking and concerning. There are promotions that will appeal to children, even products that appear to be designed and promoted for young people, and advertisements placed where children will be exposed. Our children and young people should not be exposed to so much alcohol promotion both directly and through sports sponsorship and online promotion. It is time for governments to act."

Director of the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth, Professor Mike Daube said: "Self-regulation by the alcohol and advertising industries is a dismal failure. We see massive exposure of children to alcohol promotion, alcohol promotion clearly targeting young people, disguised alcohol advertising in media commentary and even advertisements that promote excessive alcohol use."

“Eighty percent of alcohol consumed by Australian young people aged 14-24 is consumed in ways that put the drinker’s and others’ health at risk.”

“We know that the alcohol industry will claim that its self-regulatory system works: this report shows that they are wrong. It is time for governments to legislate, rather than leaving the protection of children and young people from alcohol harms in the hands of those whose job it is to sell as much as possible of the product.”

AMA Federal Executive Member, Dr Stephen Parnis, said, “We urgently need effective curbs on alcohol marketing. Harmful use of alcohol by adults and young people is one of our greatest preventable public health problems. This report shows that voluntary self-regulation by the alcohol industry has clearly failed. The time has come for real regulation, established by government and backed by sanctions for serious non-compliance.”

Professor Simone Pettigrew, Professor of Marketing at the University of Western Australia said, “The alcohol industry invests many millions of dollars in promotions that access very large numbers of children and that blatantly use advertising themes that appeal to children. Their approach has been highly successful in encouraging young people to start drinking early and to drink to dangerous levels. The outcomes of the AARB in just its first year of existence demonstrate the extent of concern among the Australian public and indicate support for higher levels of monitoring of alcohol promotion”.

The report of the AARB is available at www.alcoholadreview.com.au

Copies of the report are being sent to all Health Ministers and Federal Members of Parliament.

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