



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **ACTION NEEDED TO PROTECT KIDS FROM ALCOHOL ADS**

The second annual report of the Alcohol Advertising Review Board was launched today at Parliament House in Canberra by AMA Federal Vice President Dr Stephen Parnis. The report provides further evidence that self-regulation of alcohol advertising is ineffective and many alcohol companies are ignoring concerns about young people's exposure to ads through sport, TV and online.

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 researcher, Professor Fiona Stanley AC.

In its second year, the AARB received 209 complaints. There were 86 determinations that upheld complaints in full and 44 in part. The 209 complaints are again more than the number received by the industry's self-regulatory system.

Dr Parnis said, "Children are being heavily exposed to alcohol promotion, often in association with their sporting idols. The government should act now to introduce strong regulatory controls on the content, placement and volume of alcohol advertising and promotion".

"Health authorities agree that exposure to alcohol promotion contributes to young people's attitudes to drinking and their drinking behaviours. That is why strong, independent regulation is needed as part of a comprehensive approach to reducing harm from alcohol."

The report lists the "Top 10 alcohol advertising shockers of 2013-14". These include examples of exposure to young people through sponsorship of major sports, a Carlton Draught AFL Tipping email sent to children; outdoor ads placed near a school and youth centre; liquor retailer promotions by Woolworths Limited and Wesfarmers Limited; a spirits ad by Diageo Australia disguised as a road safety message; and liquor retailer Facebook pages.

The inaugural Worst Offender award was presented to Carlton and United Breweries (CUB) for exposing Australian children and young people to extensive alcohol advertising of AFL, NRL and cricket, and for attracting the most complaints to the AARB.

Professor Stanley said, "Alcohol advertising has never been as pervasive, as inventive, and as well-resourced as it is now. Public health will suffer until there is effective regulation that prioritises the health of children and young people."

“The association between sport and alcohol in Australia must end. While alcohol companies are free to sponsor sports and children’s sporting heroes, health groups will be deprived of supporters, advocates and role models.”

Director of the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth, Professor Mike Daube said:

“CUB’s success in turning sports stars into mobile billboards for beer brands makes them worthy recipients of this award. CUB has been one of the greatest beneficiaries of the lack of regulation around alcohol sponsorship of sport and the loophole allowing alcohol advertising during sport in children’s TV viewing times.”

“CUB advertisements have attracted 78 complaints over the AARB’s two years of operation - almost 20% of all complaints. Unfortunately, CUB has chosen to ignore the concerns of the AARB and rely on the feeble industry-controlled self-regulatory codes.”

Dr Parnis said, “The actions of alcohol advertisers have consistently shown that they have little interest in addressing this issue. We call on the government to act immediately to close the loophole that allows alcohol ads during live sport on TV, end alcohol sponsorship of sport and bring in legislated controls to cover all alcohol marketing activities.”

The report was launched as part of a forum organised by the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol – “Recruiting New Drinkers – the Impact of Alcohol Marketing on Children”.

The report of the AARB is available at [www.alcoholadreview.com.au](http://www.alcoholadreview.com.au)

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

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