

Media Release

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“NO WAY TO IGNORE IT”: CALLS TO REMOVE ALCOHOL ADVERTISING FROM PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Health groups are calling for alcohol advertising to be removed from public transport following the release of the latest report from the Alcohol Advertising Review Board.

The report, *“No way to ignore it: The case for removing alcohol ads from public transport”*, shows that alcohol advertising on public transport sites is widespread despite substantial community concern around young people’s exposure to alcohol advertising on these sites.

A review of Perth bus stop ads by the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth found that 53% of the 584 bus stop ads identified were for alcohol, junk food and sugary drinks. One in seven of the ads were for alcohol products, including beer, whisky, gin, liqueur and vodka.

Julia Stafford, Executive Officer of the McCusker Centre, said, “The review shows children and young people are being exposed daily to heavy alcohol promotion, in locations where they are guaranteed to see it. This is despite all the concerns about alcohol use by young people, and evidence that they are influenced by alcohol advertising.

“There are no effective controls on the placement of outdoor alcohol ads in Australia. The current voluntary codes are totally inadequate. There are even alcohol ads on bus stops outside schools.”

Maurice Swanson, Chief Executive of Heart Foundation WA, said, “Children should be able to go outside without being bombarded with ads for beer, fast food outlets and soft drinks. With over half of bus stop ads promoting unhealthy products, it is very difficult for public health messages to cut through.”

Since its launch in 2012, the Alcohol Advertising Review Board has received 130 complaints about alcohol ads placed on public transport and transit stops from all around Australia (18% of all complaints).

Julia Stafford said, “We have written to all State and Territory Transport Ministers calling on them to amend advertising contracts or existing legislation to prohibit alcohol ads on buses, trains and trams, and at train stations and bus stops – the places where children are most likely to be exposed.”

Michael Moore, Chief Executive Officer of the Public Health Association of Australia, said, “State and Territory governments should act now to remove alcohol ads from public transport sites. The ACT Government are leading by example; last year they banned alcohol advertising on their public bus service. We call on other jurisdictions to follow this example which protects young people from alcohol promotion.”

In a Foreword to the report, the world's leading researcher on young people and alcohol advertising, Dr David Jernigan highlights the need for "stronger measures as a crucial response to the failure of industry self-regulation if we are to significantly reduce this risk factor in the lives of young people".

The report is available at www.alcoholadreview.com.au

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