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Most Australians say alcohol promotion and sport don't mix: new report

More than seven out of 10 Australian adults want TV ads promoting alcohol to be phased out at times when children are likely to be watching sports broadcasts – including this week's AFL and NRL Grand Finals, a national survey commissioned by the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth shows.

The survey of 1050 Australian adults also found 80 per cent of adults are concerned about the current levels of exposure children have to alcohol promotion, and 71 per cent do not think it is appropriate for alcohol advertisements to feature sports stars that are popular with children.

The survey results are outlined in a new Alcohol Advertising Review Board (AARB) report, *'It's not fair play: Why alcohol must leave sport'*, released today by the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth and Cancer Council WA.

The report also reveals an analysis of complaints made to the AARB over the past five years, with sport-related complaints making up almost one-third (305) of the total 939 complaints.

About two-thirds of the sport-related complaints made were related to alcohol sponsorship of sport, with more than 80 per cent of those complaints related to AFL, NRL, cricket and motor racing. Carlton Draught and VB, sponsors of AFL and NRL, both received more sponsorship complaints than any other alcohol brand.

McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth Executive Officer Julia Stafford said the report highlighted the community's concerns with children and young people's exposure to alcohol advertising through sports.

"TV ratings data show kids love watching sport – the AFL and NRL Grand Finals were in the top five programs watched by children in 2016-17 – so we know hundreds of thousands of kids watching the Grand Finals this weekend will be heavily exposed to alcohol promotion," Ms Stafford said.

"Given the majority of Australian adults do not think it is acceptable for alcohol to be promoted in connection with sport, we call on the Federal Government to phase out alcohol sponsorship of sport, close the loophole that allows alcohol ads during sport on TV, and introduce independent, legislated controls on all forms of alcohol marketing."

Cancer Council WA Nutrition and Physical Activity Manager Steve Pratt said alcohol advertising should not be involved in sports.

"While alcohol and sport are so closely connected, children and young people will continue to be exposed to unacceptably high levels of alcohol marketing. If the health and wellbeing of our community is a priority for governments, it is clear alcohol has no place in sport," Mr Pratt said.

In the foreword of the report, Nick Marvin, former CEO and Managing Director of the Perth Wildcats and Perth Lynx and former Chairman of the National Basketball League, wrote: "Above all my personal achievements in sports administration, I consider few greater than the eradication of alcohol from any involvement with the Perth Wildcats. It is now up to the more powerful and wealthy sports such as cricket,

rugby league and motor racing, who rank very poorly in this area, to show leadership by walking away from alcohol – especially in light of their enormous revenues from media and other healthy sponsors”.

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Notes to Editor:

In July 2017, the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth commissioned independent market research to explore public opinion on alcohol marketing by surveying a nationally representative sample of 1050 Australian adults.

The findings of that survey include:

Public perceptions of alcohol marketing:

- *90 per cent of Australian adults believe children and young people are sometimes, heavily or very heavily exposed to alcohol promotion.*
- *80 per cent of Australian adults are concerned about children’s current level of exposure to alcohol promotion.*
- *84 per cent of Australian adults believe children who watch sport on TV are sometimes, frequently or very frequently exposed to alcohol promotion.*

Children’s exposure to alcohol promotion:

- *60 per cent of Australian adults think it is not acceptable for alcohol to be promoted in connection with sport; only 20 per cent think it is acceptable.*
- *71 per cent of Australian adults think it is not appropriate for alcohol ads to feature sport stars that are popular with children; only 12 per cent think it is appropriate.*
- *Less than 30 per cent of Australian adults think popular sports such as AFL, NRL and cricket are doing enough to promote healthy messages to the community.*
- *Less than a quarter of Australian adults think motor sports should be able to promote alcohol.*

Stronger regulation of alcohol marketing:

- *71 per cent of Australian adults support using legal controls to reduce children’s exposure to alcohol promotion, with only six per cent opposed.*
- *77 per cent of Australian adults support phasing out TV ads for alcohol during sports broadcasts in children’s viewing times, with only seven per cent opposed.*
- *63 per cent of Australian adults support phasing out the promotion of alcohol through sports sponsorship, with only 13 per cent opposed.*

About Curtin University

Curtin University is Western Australia’s largest university, with more than 58,000 students. Of these, over 15,000 are international students. The University’s main campus is in Bentley near the Perth CBD. Curtin has five other campuses across WA, Malaysia and Singapore, with a new campus opening in Dubai in 2018. Curtin also has presence at a number of other global locations.

Curtin is celebrating ‘50 Years of Innovation’ in 2017 – the combined history of the Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT), which opened its doors to students in 1967 and Curtin University, which opened in 1987.



Today, Curtin is estimated to be ranked 180th and in the top one per cent of universities worldwide, and 9th in Australia in the highly regarded [Academic Ranking of World Universities 2017 \(ARWU\)](#), and features highly in a number of other key world rankings.

The University has built a reputation around innovation and an entrepreneurial spirit, being at the forefront of many high-profile research projects in astronomy, biosciences, economics, mining and information technology. It is also recognised globally for its strong connections with industry, and for its commitment to preparing students for jobs of the future.

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