

## Health experts praise ban on booze ads

The Alcohol Advertising Review Board (AARB) welcomes the WA Government's planned ban on alcohol advertising on Transperth buses and trains announced today.

Since its launch in 2012, the AARB – a joint initiative by the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth (MCAAY) and Cancer Council WA - has received 63 complaints about alcohol ads on WA buses, proving the inadequacy of the industry's self-regulated guidelines.

MCAAY Executive Officer Julia Stafford said the ban was an important move to protect young people as around half of Australia's high school students use public transport at least once a week.

"Alcohol ads normalise and reinforce Australia's harmful drinking culture. Over one in four West Australians aged 14 years and above drinks at high-risk levels at least once a month."

"Unlike TV and radio, you can't switch outdoor ads off and it's impossible to control who sees them. Every day children and young people are heavily exposed to alcohol promotions in locations they're guaranteed to see it. Today's ban on public transport alcohol ads is a step in the right direction."

Cancer Council WA CEO Ashley Reid said restricting alcohol ads is an essential part of a comprehensive approach to preventing short and long-term harm.

"Banning alcohol ads on public transport is a good practical first step in reducing alcohol-related harm. Similar successful bans were an integral part in the country's tobacco control effort that has led to a reduction in smoking rates and saved countless lives," Mr Reid said.

"The health risks associated with alcohol are irrefutable. Alcohol causes nearly 6,000 Australian deaths annually. That's approximately one death every 90 minutes, yet it's one of the most heavily promoted products in the world."

Mr Reid said the next logical step is for local governments to follow the State Government's lead by banning alcohol advertising at bus stops – a move 77% of the WA population supports.

A 2016 audit of Perth bus stop ads found almost a quarter (172 of 744) were for alcohol products, and alcohol was the dominant category.

"In the future it would be great to see this ban expanded to include junk food as well. People should be able to go outside without being bombarded with ads for products that are proven to increase their cancer risk."

### Notes to the editor

76% of West Australian adults support legal controls to reduce young people's exposure to alcohol advertising, with only 5% opposed.

77% of West Australian adults support removing alcohol advertising from buses and bus stops to reduce young people's exposure, with only 8% opposed.

Since its launch in 2012, the Alcohol Advertising Review Board has received 241 complaints about alcohol ads placed on public transport and transit stops from all around Australia (23% of all complaints).

The AARB's "*No way to ignore it: The case for removing alcohol ads from public transport*", report is available at [www.alcoholadreview.com.au](http://www.alcoholadreview.com.au)

The AARB's 2016 survey of WA adults is available here [mcaay.org.au/publications.aspx#market-research-reports](http://mcaay.org.au/publications.aspx#market-research-reports)

### **About AARB**

The Alcohol Advertising Review Board is an initiative of the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth and Cancer Council WA. The Alcohol Advertising Review Board operates with support from health organisations around Australia.

### **Interview opportunities**

Julia Stafford – McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth, Curtin University  
Ashley Reid – Cancer Council WA

### **Media contact**

Niki Companti - Cancer Council WA, 0438 935 697 [ncompanti@cancerwa.asn.au](mailto:ncompanti@cancerwa.asn.au)