Alcohol Change Australia

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# Alcohol Change Australia calls for stronger action on alcohol tax and marketing following inquiry report

Alcohol Change Australia has welcomed the final report from the *Federal Inquiry into the Health impacts of alcohol and drugs in Australia*, saying it confirms the urgent need for stronger action on alcohol taxation and marketing to reduce preventable harm across Australian communities.

The report reflects what the public health sector, communities, and people with lived and living experience have said for years: alcohol causes widespread and preventable harm, yet current policy settings remain inadequate.

Alcohol Change Australia Chair Dr Erin Lalor AM said the report provides a timely opportunity for governments to tackle some of the key drivers of alcohol harm, including the affordability and pervasive marketing of alcohol products.

"Australia cannot continue to accept the enormous health, social, and economic toll caused by alcohol while failing to implement some of the most effective policies available to reduce harm.

“This inquiry has shone a spotlight on the need for stronger action. For too long, alcohol marketing and tax systems have prioritised industry interests and profits over the health and wellbeing of the Australian community,” Dr Lalor said.

Alcohol Change Australia Executive Officer Hannah Pierce said the report should prompt renewed consideration of alcohol taxation reform, noting that Australia's current system continues to treat alcohol products inconsistently and does not adequately reflect their contribution to harm.

"Our taxation arrangements should be designed to protect public health, not simply preserve historical anomalies between different categories of alcohol products," Pierce said.

“Alcohol taxation is one of the most effective tools we have to reduce harm, yet Australia’s current tax system is inefficient, inequitable, and contributes to harm. It allows high-volume, high-alcohol wine to be sold at very low prices, with bulk cask wine available for less than 30c a standard drink.

“There is a clear opportunity to address the very cheap alcohol products that fuel harm. We welcome the Committee’s recommendation that Treasury undertake evidence-based modelling to examine the impact of alcohol tax reform and identify options to make the system more effective, equitable, and fit for purpose.”

The report also recommends the Australian Government establish a new mandatory alcohol advertising and marketing regulatory framework and remove the Government representative from the current self-regulatory system’s Management Committee.

“The report rightly recognises that Australian children are growing up surrounded by alcohol marketing and that self-regulation has failed to deliver the protections the community expects and deserves,” Ms Pierce said.

“Removing the Australian Government representative from the ABAC Management Committee is an important first step. The Government cannot continue to endorse a system that allows children to be

bombarded with alcohol advertising while watching sport, browsing YouTube, or travelling to school."

Alcohol Change Australia calls on the Australian Government to respond positively to the report and prioritise implementation of evidence-based reforms that will reduce alcohol-related harm and improve community health.

"This report provides a significant opportunity to make meaningful progress. We urge governments to be ambitious, act on the evidence, and introduce the reforms needed to reduce the unacceptable burden of alcohol harm in Australia," said Dr Lalor.

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**About Alcohol Change Australia:**

Alcohol Change Australia is a collaborative alliance comprising diverse health and community organisations from across the nation. Our collective mission is to combat and diminish the impact of alcohol-related harm on individuals, families, and communities throughout Australia.