

10 November 2017

Revd the Hon Red Nile MLC
Committee Chairman
NSW Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 1

Dear Reverend Nile,

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO ALCOHOL BEVERAGES ADVERTISING PROHIBITION BILL 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the New South Wales (NSW) Government's *Inquiry into Alcohol Beverages Advertising Prohibition Bill 2015*.

I would like to offer my support to the submission prepared by the NSW ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance (NAAPA). NAAPA is a coalition of 48 organisations working to reduce alcohol-related harms by ensuring that evidence-based solutions inform alcohol policy discussions in NSW and the ACT.

Alcohol is one of the most heavily promoted products in the world.ⁱ Alcohol advertising contributes to the normalisation of alcohol use and reinforces the harmful drinking culture that currently exists in Australia.ⁱⁱ

Young people experience disproportionate levels of alcohol-related harms. Exposure to alcohol marketing shapes young people's attitudes towards drinking and behaviours. The more alcohol advertising that young people are exposed to, the earlier they will start to drink, and the more they will consume if they already drink.^{iii, iv, v}

Alcohol marketing in Australia is more prolific than ever, with an unprecedented number of platforms for advertising including through social media and the sponsorship of sporting and cultural events. This pervasive nature of alcohol marketing is evidence of the ineffective regulation under the current Liquor Promotion Guidelines. Features that appeal to minors, sexualised advertising and heavy discounting remain problems in NSW. In Sydney takeaway liquor stores alone there is an average of 30 point of sale (POS) promotions at each outlet.^{vi} This outrageous number of promotions influence purchasing decisions and often result in individuals buying more alcohol than they planned to.^{vii}

There is significant community support for action to address alcohol advertising, with:

- 66 per cent of NSW adults support a ban on alcohol advertising on television before 8.30pm^{viii}
- 53 per cent of NSW adults believe that alcohol sponsorship should not be allowed at sporting events^{ix}

Australian Medical Association (NSW) Ltd

- 61 per cent of NSW adults believe alcohol advertising should be phased out of sporting broadcasts^x
- Three-quarters of parents support the introduction of policies to restrict unhealthy food, beverage and alcohol sponsorship of children's and elite sports.^{xi}

As an independent organisation, which represents almost 9000 doctors in NSW, AMA (NSW) is acutely familiar with the toll alcohol harms take on Australians' health and the subsequent pressure this puts on the healthcare system.

As the state's peak medico-political lobbying body, AMA (NSW) serves to represent the interests of its members and plays a pivotal role in the formation of public health and hospital policy.

We also serve to uphold the integrity and honour of the profession, and support the interests of doctors and their patients for the advancement of the health of the community.

The AMA produced a substantial report on alcohol advertising in 2012 *Alcohol Marketing and Young People: Time for a new policy agenda*, which included a summary of contemporary alcohol marketing techniques, the impact of alcohol marketing on drinking patterns, as well as current regulations and a case for regulatory reform. The report can be found here:
https://ama.com.au/sites/default/files/documents/alcohol_marketing_young_people.pdf.

As the report indicates, alcohol is a major contributor to preventable illness and death, and is responsible for a range of social, health and economic harms^{xii}. These harms tend to be most pronounced amongst young people. On average, around five young Australians aged 15 to 24 years die every week due to alcohol-attributable injury or disease, and a further 200 are hospitalised^{xiii}. In the short term, alcohol misuse by young people is associated with increased risk of depression, suicide, violence, poor academic performance, risky sexual behaviours, and reckless driving^{xiv}.

In the long term, alcohol misuse elevates the risks of developing certain cancers and contributes to a range of chronic health conditions, including cirrhosis of the liver, inflammation of the gut and pancreas, heart and circulatory problems, and alcohol dependence^{xv}.

Childhood and adolescence are critical times for brain development, and the brain is more susceptible to alcohol-induced damage during these times, while being less sensitive to cues that moderate alcohol intake^{xvi}.

Prior to the mid-20s, the human brain is still developing. At this early age, alcohol consumption can lead to structural changes in the hippocampus, a part of the brain involved in learning processes.

High levels of alcohol consumption can permanently impair brain development^{xvii}. The consequences of alcohol misuse among children or young people can therefore be profound in both the short and long term.

Numerous studies have indicated that those who commence drinking at an earlier age experience an increased risk of physical, social and mental health problems later in life^{xviii}.

The rates of harmful drinking are highest among young adults aged 20 to 29 years. However, it is the drinking patterns established in adolescence that are often most decisive in shaping later drinking behaviours, with harmful drinking in adolescence substantially increasing the risk of developing dependent or risky patterns of use in young adulthood and later life. Accordingly, those with heavier consumption in their mid-teens tend to have heavier alcohol consumption and dependence in early adulthood. Those who start drinking early not only risk causing irrevocable damage to their brain, but are also at a heightened risk of developing long-term, chronic health conditions associated with alcohol misuse^{xix}.

In sum, the harmful use of alcohol among young people is a significant public health challenge in Australia, with short- and long-term consequences for individuals, their family and friends, and for the wider community. Understanding and addressing the factors driving alcohol misuse is, therefore, a public health priority.

AMA (NSW) supports the recommendations outlined in the submission prepared by the NSW ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance (NAAPA).

Thank you once again for the opportunity to raise these important issues with you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frankum". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Prof Brad Frankum
AMA (NSW) President

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- ⁱ Jernigan D. (2010). The extent of global alcohol marketing and its impact on youth. *Contemp Drug Probl.* 37:57-89.
- ⁱⁱ Australian Medical Association (2012). *Alcohol Marketing and Young People: Time for a new policy agenda.* Canberra: AMA
- ⁱⁱⁱ Anderson, P., De Bruijn, A., Angus, K., Gordon, R., & Hastings, G. (2009). Impact of alcohol advertising and media exposure on adolescent alcohol use: a systematic review of longitudinal studies. *Alcohol and Alcoholism* 44, pp. 229-43.
- ^{iv} Jones, S. and Magee, C. Exposure to alcohol advertising and alcohol consumption among Australian Adolescents. *Alcohol Alcsm.* 46(5):630-637. 2011.
- ^v Snyder, L.B., Milici, F.F., Slater, M., Sun, H., and Strizhakova, Y. (2006). Effects of alcohol advertising exposure on drinking among youth. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* 160(1), pp. 18-24.
- ^{vi} Jones S.C., Barrie L., Robinson, L., Allsop, S. & Chikritzhz T. (2012). Point-of-sale promotions in the Perth and Sydney metropolitan areas. *Drug and Alcohol Review* (31):803-808.
- ^{vii} Jones S.C. & Smith, K.M. (2012). The effect of point of sale promotions on the alcohol purchasing behaviour of young people in metropolitan, regional and rural Australia. *Journal of Youth Studies* 14 (8):885-900.
- ^{viii} Foundation for Alcohol Research Education (2017). Annual Alcohol Poll: Attitudes and behaviours. FARE: Canberra
- ^{ix} Foundation for Alcohol Research Education (2017). Annual Alcohol Poll: Attitudes and behaviours. FARE: Canberra
- ^x Foundation for Alcohol Research Education (2017). Annual Alcohol Poll: Attitudes and behaviours. FARE: Canberra
- ^{xi} Kelly B. *et al.* Views of children and parents on limiting unhealthy food, drink and alcohol sponsorship of elite and children's sports. *Public Health Nutrition* 16 (01): 130-135. 2013
- ^{xii} Chikritzhz *et al.* 2003; NPHT 2009
- ^{xiii} Chikritzhz & Pascal 2004
- ^{xiv} Miller *et al.* 2007; Coleman & Cater 2005; Shepard *et al.* 2006; Bonomo *et al.* 2001
- ^{xv} Parry *et al.* 2011
- ^{xvi} NPHT 2009; Bonomo *et al.* 2001; Hayes *et al.* 2004; Wells *et al.* 2004; Hingson *et al.* 2003
- ^{xvii} ELSA 2007
- ^{xviii} NHMRC 2009; NPHT 2009
- ^{xix} NEACA 2001; Spear 2000, 2002