



MEDIA RELEASE

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Alcopops drinking down: clues for booze tax reform

Call on Govt to implement an effective tax system for all alcohol.

The Alcohol Policy Coalition has welcomed new ABS data showing a 35.8% drop in alcopop consumption nationwide since the 2008 alcopops tax implementation. The alcopops tax has also resulted in an overall reduction in per capita spirits consumption.

Given the success of the alcopops tax, the APC is calling for further reforms to the way alcohol is taxed in Australia.

“We’ve always known that increasing price can be an effective tool to reduce alcohol consumption and alcohol harm. Now we have an example of this tool working in practice,” APC spokesperson Associate Professor John Fitzgerald said.

The data, released this morning by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, also shows a sharply rising increase in wine consumption over the past five years.

“It’s no surprise that wine consumption has gone up - it’s not taxed by alcoholic content, which means that cask wine is often cheaper than soft drink. With cut price booze so widely available, it’s no wonder our nation has a drinking problem.”

“The Australian Government will be reviewing Australia’s taxation in October this year; this is a perfect opportunity to develop a system to tax drinks based on alcohol content with a higher price for more harmful products.

“At the moment, alcohol taxation in Australia is inconsistent, confusing and in need of serious improvement. We know that by taxing alcohol by volume we can reduce excessive drinking and lift a huge burden off hospitals and health services, which are increasingly overwhelmed by alcohol-related injuries and diseases.”

“The recent cut-price beer wars suggest that taxation strategies need to be married to price-regulation to ensure this type of discounting isn’t seen in the wine market.”

“Alcohol still remains a major cause of preventable death and illness in Australia. It hospitalises 78,000 people and kills more than 3000 Australians every year. An effective tax system could begin to tackle this problem.”

“Alcohol should be taxed on the basis that it is not an ordinary commodity like milk or bread – it is a level one carcinogen as well as being responsible for violence, addiction, accidents, ill-health and death. Research shows that price affects consumption and will go a long way to fixing the nation’s \$15 billion dollar alcohol problem.”

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The Alcohol Policy Coalition (the Coalition) is a collaboration of health agencies – Australian Drug Foundation, Cancer Council Victoria, Heart Foundation Victoria, Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre and VicHealth – with shared concern relating to the misuse of alcohol and its health/social impacts on the community.

Alcohol remains one of the major causes of preventable death and illness in Australia. As such, the Coalition advocates for evidence based policy to prevent and reduce the harms caused by alcohol to Australians. For more information visit www.alcoholpolicycoalition.org.au