

ADF POSITION STATEMENT ON ALCOHOL ADVERTISING

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PURPOSE: The purpose of this document is to articulate the ADF's position on alcohol advertising. 'Advertising' includes all forms of advertising, promotion and marketing.

BACKGROUND: Research in Australia and overseas shows alcohol advertising influences young people's attitudes and expectations related to alcohol, including decisions about drinking (Anderson P, 2009). Greater exposure to alcohol advertising leads young people to start drinking earlier, to drink more often and to drink larger amounts (Grenard JL, 2013) (Smith LA, 2009). Ownership of alcohol branded merchandise increases young people's attraction to and likelihood of drinking (Hurtz SQ, 2011).

Alcohol advertising is ubiquitous and impossible for young people to avoid (Roche A, 2009). Alcohol sponsorship of sport and cultural events is common and events and music festivals that admit underage young people can be sponsored by alcohol brands. Sponsorship of professional elite sport enables alcohol companies to evade the prohibition on alcohol advertising during children's viewing hours as an exemption is granted for the broadcast of national sporting events (Jones SC, 2006).

Advertising via digital and social media is difficult to monitor and to regulate. Alcohol sponsors of sport leverage their access to fans via digital and online 'second screens' to embed the consumption of alcohol as a normal facet of watching sport and turn consumers into collaborators by encouraging them to transmit branded messages (Westberg K, 2016).

Industry self-regulation of advertising is inadequate. Breaches of the ABAC Responsible Marketing Code are common but the code does not allow for the imposition of meaningful or timely sanctions (Code, 2016). Sponsorships by alcohol brands are not included in the remit of the code (Code, 2016).

POSITION

(1) Alcohol Advertising Legislation:

The Commonwealth government should legislate for the regulation by a statutory authority of all forms of marketing, including point of sale promotions, print and media advertising, packaging, labeling, sponsorship, merchandise branding, viral and internet campaigns. The statutory authority would:

- i. provide that all alcohol advertisements are subject to pre-vetting;
- ii. establish clear public policy goals for the regulatory system, including minimising the exposure of children alcohol advertising;
- iii. investigate possible breaches of the alcohol advertising rules;
- iv. impose penalties for serious or persistent non-compliance by advertisers;
- v. ensure external oversight of the outcomes of the regulatory system;
- vi. require alcohol companies to disclose their annual advertising, promotion and sponsorship expenditure.

Note The rules that apply to television advertising should be apply to all television services and products including free to air, subscription TV, TV on demand, regardless of platform or device; and to cinema advertising.

(2) Bans on the sponsorship of events by alcohol companies:

The Commonwealth government should legislate for the incremental, introduction of bans on the sponsorship of sporting and cultural events by alcohol companies. Existing sponsorships would run their course and sponsored bodies would have time to seek alternative sources of sponsorship.

(3) Bans on alcohol advertisements:

The legislation should provide for the phased introduction of bans on alcohol advertisements. Initially, the ban would apply to the banning of alcohol advertisements during live sporting broadcasts on television, toys and children's clothing, and expand over time to apply to billboards and public transport infrastructure; in cinema and radio; and the television and internet.

Works Cited

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