

My submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee is presented with particular reference to the abuse of alcohol and the subsequent effects on family relationships.

Alcohol has long been documented as the main ingredient in accidents, assaults, dysfunction, divorce, grief, depression, suicide, sexual abuse, disease and ultimately death. The damaging effects of alcohol reach far into the community and so we all pay either directly or indirectly and yet liquor outlets proliferate, advertising is rampant and overall the associated behaviour is accepted as part of the 'Australian male macho myth'.

After a reasonably successful 26 year marriage I lost my husband to alcohol. He suffered a fundamental personality change following a drinking history of 36 years. So one more family broken, one more statistic for the divorce court and one more slow premature death from the insidious effects of alcohol.

Through Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous, plus my own research and reading, I have been able to gain a perspective on the disease of alcoholism. I realise there are many non-profit and government run organisations devoted to helping those who need and want help but I feel these programmes need to be complemented by a more visible, honest and less tolerant approach.

Therefore my recommendations are; a total ban on any and all advertising of alcohol, including that at sporting venues - honest education and presentation of alcohol as a drug with serious side-effects that needs to be treated with great care - the type of consumption that constitutes abuse readily and publicly available - the ramifications of prolonged use and abuse- physical, emotional, financial, mental.

As community attitudes and perception of smoking has changed, so I would like to see the same shift regarding alcohol. We lose so many of our men and women through the direct result of drinking and just perhaps, if honest and easily accessible information was to reach the community, the community might be able to make a truly informed decision before picking up the first drink.

Yours sincerely,

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