

DALGARNO INSTITUTE

Regulation of billboard and outdoor advertising

Submission on the to the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs

PO Box 6021, Parliament House, Canberra, ACT, 2600

T: 02 6277 2358 F: 02 6277 4427

E: spla.reps@aph.gov.au W: www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/spla

Dalgarno Institute PO Box 7005 Dandenong, Victoria 3175

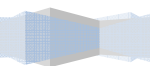
T: 1300 975 002 F: 1300 952 551

E: director@dalgarnoinstitute.org.au W: www.dalgarnoinstitute.org.au

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In this submission, the Dalgarno Institute seeks to have the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Public Affairs consider the nature, type and exposure of alcohol advertising in the indiscriminate context of Billboard Advertising. That the committee will seriously consider the scientific evidence relating to the impact of alcohol advertising on our most vulnerable citizens – the young; and consider the banning of such advertising in this form/template.

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1. Introduction

The Dalgarno Institute is a community based coalition of individuals, community groups, and associations that hold the common vision of making the world a better place for families and particularly women and children, by reducing the adverse impact of alcohol and drug use. The Institute continues a more than 150 year tradition of the Australian Temperance movement that made important historical contributions to developing Australia's public health and women's rights movements. Australians are exposed to heavy investment from vested-interests that profit from marketing alcohol. The Institute is one of few public forums that continues to promote the scientific and social benefits of making the choice to say 'No' to alcohol and other drugs.

At the request of the Attorney-General, The Hon Robert McClelland MP in December 2010, the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs was set the task to inquire into and report on the regulation of billboard and outdoor advertising.

Submissions from the public were sought by The Committee and closing date for submissions was set at 18th of February 2011.

2. What mechanism currently exist for Billboard advertising

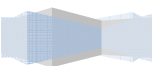
The Australian Association of National Advertisers AANA Code of Ethics allows Billboard and other forms of outdoor advertising operate in a 'self-regulating' space ¹The protocol of lodging a complaint about any breaches of the code by advertisers can be made in writing and/or via an online complaints form to the Advertising Standards Board.²

There are review processes in place for both advertiser and complainant, based on a flawed process or if there is additional material to consider. However, the advertisers are free to decide if they will ignore or implement after the Advertising Standards Board has made a determination.

3. Potential concern with the current mechanisms and alcohol advertising.

In a very short three year period, commencing from 2006, there was an increase of over 600 percent in complaints about outdoor advertising. These complaints making up nearly a quarter of all complaints received. In 2010 the complaint rate on billboard advertisement had reach 40 percent of all complaints.

There are no doubt a number of motivations for complaint about billboard advertising impact. The following are some imperatives that must be considered about Billboard advertising of alcohol and the vulnerable young. The following are just some of the realities of the AOD problem in our culture.



- ✗ TEN-year-old children are seeking treatment for alcohol addiction.
- ✗ Five Australian teens and youths die a week in incidents tied to binge drinking.
- ✗ By 16, one in five teenagers regularly binge drinks; by 18 it is 50 per cent.
- ✗ A national survey of high school students has found parents have eclipsed friends and all other sources for supply of alcohol.
- ✗ Every third child aged 12-17 turns to mum or dad for party booze.
- ✗ A recent study by Odyssey House, one of the country's biggest rehabilitation centres, found 90 per cent of residents named alcohol as their first drug of intoxication at 12 or 13. James Pitts said alcohol was blamed for a 33-year high in admissions.³

According to the still standing 2001 World Health Organisation's - *Declaration on young people and alcohol...* **"Young people have a right to grow up in a society where they are protected from pressures to drink and from the harm done by alcohol."** Advertising not only adds to that pressure but contravenes the WHO declaration!

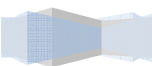
We recognise that every citizen has a right to live in a social environment where there is no social pressure to drink against one's will and respect for choices not to drink. One way to build such an environment is to put more restriction on alcohol advertisement and sponsorships that may lead to not only potentially harmful alcohol use, but more so to the pressure of the expectation to partake.

Alcohol advertising has a direct impact on alcohol consumption. A national study published in January 2006 concluded that greater exposure to alcohol advertising contributes to an increase in drinking among underage youth. For example, for each additional ad a young person saw (above the monthly youth average of 23), he or she drank 1% more. For each additional dollar per capita spent on alcohol advertising in a local market (above the national average of \$6.80 per capita), young people drank 3% more.⁴

To reduce alcohol consumption, alcohol advertising must be further restricted. This could be achieved through:

- ✓ Banning all advertising of alcohol at sporting events including alcohol sponsorship of sport to be banned.
- ✓ Banning alcohol advertising in all media vehicles including print, web, radio and television.

While this might sound near impossible at the moment, it has been achieved in France with considerable success for several decades.⁵ This intervention option has also been recommended in the 2010 **Assessing Cost-Effectiveness in Prevention Report (ACE) prepared by University of QLD and Deakin University of (Sept 2010)**



4. Recommendation

There is an ever increasing concern and scrutiny being placed on alcohol advertising and it will only a matter of time as initiatives already in place in other countries will be introduced here. The following recommendations are offered for your consideration and implementation.

Recommendation 1:

That all alcohol advertising on Billboards be banned with no caveats in place to negate that ban.

Recommendation 2:

If that ban is not approved then a caveat be in place stipulating that advertisements for alcohol on billboards are to be without imagery or packaging/brand recognition. These advertisements will be text only in nature.

Endnotes

1. <http://www.aana.com.au/documents/AANACodeofEthicsAugust2009.pdf>
2. <http://www.adstaiKlardsxom.au/process/fe>
3. <http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/national/boozy-children-beg-for-rehab/story-e6frf7l6-1226004703053>
4. L.B. Snyder, F.F. Milici, M. Slater, H. Sun, and Y. Strizhakova, "Effects of Alcohol Advertising Exposure on Drinking Among Youth," *Archives of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* 160 (2006): 18-24
5. The 'Loi Evin': a French exception. By Dr Alain Regaud; Dr Michel Craplet *The GLOBE* 2004 Issue 1 & 2

