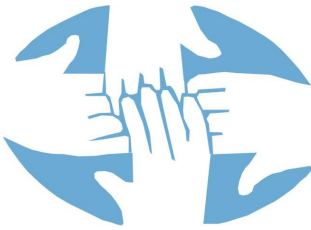


WILLETTON & DISTRICT LOCAL DRUG ACTION GROUP



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LOCAL DRUG ACTION GROUP

30 May 2008

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The Secretary
Senate Community Affairs Committee
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Parliament House
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Dear Secretary,

Re: Inquiry into Ready-to-Drink Alcohol Beverages

The Willetton & District Local Drug Action Group (W&DL DAG) would like to take the opportunity to make this submission to the **Inquiry into Ready-to-Drink Alcohol Beverages**

For the past ten years, the W&DL AG has been working at community level to promote prevention and raise awareness of the negative impact of alcohol and other drugs, particularly among youth. From a local perspective, alcohol causes the most problems from violence to social harms, and young people are usually the victims. There are many factors that have contributed to the escalation of a binge drinking culture among our youth in the past few years, however the emergence of sweet ready to drink alcoholic beverages is a major factor.

Whilst we are aware that a comprehensive approach is required and a collaborative effort from Governments at Federal and State level and relevant health agencies to reduce the harmful use of alcohol by youth [1, 2], however, we believe that the availability, marketing and pricing of these products requires urgent attention.

We are aware that research shows that ready to drink pre-mixed varieties are the most popular alcohol beverage of youth aged 12-13 and 14-15 years of age and that with increasing age this appeal is reduced in preference to other alcoholic beverages.[3] This provides evidence that although alcohol marketers maintain that they are not targeting under-age youth, this is the group that finds their products most appealing. Research has also found that youth underestimate the harms associated with drinking pre-mixed alcoholic beverages compared to spirits and hence are at high risk of such harms.[4]

Studies have found that children and under-age youth are exposed to alcohol advertising [5, 6] and that it may influence positive associations with alcohol by linking consumption with attractive symbols, role models and positive outcomes [7-11], and also make them more familiar and comfortable with consuming alcohol.[12]

It is time for the Government to act. Australian youth need and deserve to be protected from the aggressive promotion and marketing of a legal drug that causes too much damage (social and economic) to society. A legal drug that is easily available and aggressively marketed without adequate regulation.

We thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours Sincerely



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