



WILLETTON & DISTRICT LOCAL DRUG ACTION GROUP

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The Committee Secretary
Inquiry into the Alcohol Toll Reduction Bill 2007
Community Affairs Committee, Dept of the Senate
community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

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Dear Secretary,

Re: Inquiry into the Alcohol Toll Reduction Bill 2007

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Alcohol Toll Reduction Bill 2007.

The Willetton and Districts Local Drug action Group is comprised of representatives of schools, health agencies, Service organisations, universities, the Police Department, the city council and concerned parents from the local community. We have been conducting prevention related activities in relation to alcohol and other drug use for over 10 years.

We are particularly concerned about government policies that make it easier for young people to have access to alcohol, and that encourage harmful and hazardous drinking. The 2005 Australian School Students' Alcohol and Drug survey showed that 86% of 14 year olds had tried alcohol, and 70% of 17 year olds had consumed alcohol in the previous month¹. Studies undertaken in the early 2000's indicated that over 40% of 15-17 year olds consumed alcohol at unsafe levels on their last drinking occasion.²

We believe the aggressive advertising of alcohol is relevant in this context. We blame our youth for the increase in alcohol related problems. But the aggressive promotion by the alcohol industry normalises heavy drinking. Recent evidence indicates the impact of advertising on drinking behaviours of young people is significant.³⁻⁵

There is therefore an urgent need for strict regulations on the advertising and promotion of alcoholic beverages. In particular we need to have strict controls on the manufacture and promotion of alcopops or the mixed drinks that are blatantly marketed to young people. It would also be beneficial to have reduced alcohol advertising on TV during popular sports events so that exposure of our youth to these products is minimised.

Hence we are supportive of the proposed **Alcohol Toll Reduction Bill 2007**

Brian Davis
Convenor

References

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3. Bonomo YA, Bowes G, Coffey C, et al. Teenage drinking and the onset of alcohol dependence: a cohort study over seven years. *Addict* 2004;99:1520-1528.
4. Henriksen L, Feighery EC, Schleicher NC, Fortmann SP. Receptivity to alcohol marketing predicts initiation of alcohol use. *J Adolesc Health*. 2008 Jan; 42(1):28-35.
5. Donovan K, Donovan R, Howat P, Weller N. Magazine alcohol advertising compliance with the Australian alcohol beverages advertising code. *Drug and Alcohol Review*. 26(1):73-81, 2007.