



# Katy Gallagher MLA

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

MINISTER FOR HEALTH

MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

MINISTER FOR DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

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MEMBER FOR MOLONGLO

Senator Claire Moore  
Chair  
Senate Community Affairs Committee  
community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Ms. Moore *Claire*

I enclose a copy of the ACT Health submission for the Senate Community Affairs Committee inquiry into the Alcohol Toll Reduction Bill 2007.

Thank you for inviting ACT Health to provide a submission.

Yours sincerely

*Katy Gallagher*  
Katy Gallagher MLA  
Minister for Health

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**SUBMISSION TO THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
(AUSTRALIAN SENATE)**

**INQUIRY INTO THE ALCOHOL TOLL REDUCTION BILL 2007**

**SUBMISSION BY ACT HEALTH**

**MARCH 2008**

## Introduction

ACT Health welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Australian Senate's Community Affairs Committee inquiry into the Alcohol Toll and Reduction Bill 2007.

### **ACT Health response to the Alcohol Toll Reduction Bill 2007**

ACT Health supports the Bill's aims of encouraging a culture of responsible drinking and facilitating a reduction in the alcohol toll resulting from excessive alcohol consumption. In doing so, ACT Health recognises that alcohol abuse is a complex issue affecting the wider Australian community. Accordingly, a wide-ranging evidence-based response to this issue is required of governments, industry and the community.

Initiatives to restrict the reach and effectiveness of alcohol advertising on young people are supported in-principle by ACT Health. Babor and Colleagues (2003) in a summary of their *Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity* cautioned:

*Exposure to repeated high-level alcohol promotion inculcates pro-drinking attitudes and increases the likelihood of heavier drinking. Alcohol advertising predisposes minors to drinking well before legal age of purchase. Indeed, advertising has been found to promote and reinforce perceptions of drinking as positive, glamorous and relatively risk-free.*

Accordingly, ACT Health supports a ban on alcohol advertising aimed at children and welcomes the intent behind a 5am – 9pm restriction on TV and radio alcohol advertising and adds the following to consideration of this initiative:

- A 9pm cessation of alcohol advertising restrictions may be too early to maximise the desired effect. Many young people continue to watch television past 9pm
- Consideration should be given to extending the scope of the Bill to include Internet advertising.

ACT Health understands that advertising restrictions are unlikely to achieve dramatic short-term positive impacts on levels of alcohol consumption. To this end Babor and Colleagues (2003) noted:

*Although many countries have restricted alcohol advertising to various degrees, the evaluation findings suggest that while the restrictions have not achieved a major reduction in drinking and related harms in the short-term, countries with greater restrictions on advertising have less drinking and fewer alcohol-related problems.*

## **Conclusion**

Restrictions on the times that television and radio alcohol advertising are able to run and bans on alcohol advertisements that are aimed at children are two valuable initiatives that have the potential to reduce the harms caused by alcohol in our community.

For any strategies of this type to be effective, ongoing consideration of relevant research and a commitment to consultation with young people about what is likely to be successful are essential.