

Re: Bill number 07192

**Alcohol Toll Reduction Bill 2007**

I would like to put my support behind this Bill but believe it is only a start in changing a culture of excessive drinking and the problems that are directly linked to that culture.

The importance of this Bill is made relevant when we look at the way the culture of cigarette smoking has changed over the past ten years. This has been largely due to government intervention after recognizing the harm it was doing.

**Adam Cresswell, Health Editor in the Australian in 2007** had an interesting article. I quote a couple of paragraph's.

Binge drinking is rising so quickly in Australia that it now affects at least one third of young adults.

Experts have described the findings as "alarming" and say Australia is in danger of following countries such as Britain, where every weekend drunken youths bring disorder and violence to scores of once-quiet towns. Alcohol Education Rehabilitation Foundation AERF chairman professor Ian Webster says binge drinking causes a huge toll in terms of violent injuries and accidents, and is a much worse problem than illicit drugs such as cannabis or amphetamines.

**Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading in Nov 2002  
Volume 48 .**

Headling. Salvos' research shows teenage binge drinking is Australlia's worst drug problem.

**Statistics. National Alcohol Strategy page 12.**

35.4% Consume at levels that are risky or a high risk for harm at least once per year.

62.3% of alcohol in Australia is consumed at levels that are risky or high risk for short term harm.

**National Alcohol Strategy 2006-2009**  
Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy May 2006

This document spells out some of the things we need to do to change the culture of a drug that is not only killing us off but is also causing untold mental and medical costs.

This strategy has not reached into my local Shire. In talking about local closing hours for hotels Moira Shire personal couldn't see that there was a problem with alcohol in Australia.

In changing the culture of irresponsible drinking we need to go beyond just controlling advertising.

We need to change the culture of those who mentor our youth. This involves changing the attitude of most of our community from parents, government officials and others in responsible positions.

If the problem is as bad as the statistics are saying at what stage do we need to have a complete ban on advertising of alcoholic beverages? I would say now is that time.

National Alcohol Strategy has 4 aims. It is time that we started to put these into practice.

1. Reduce the incidence of intoxication among drinkers.
2. Enhance public safety and amenity at times and in places where alcohol is consumed.
3. Improve health outcomes among all individuals and communities effected by alcohol consumption
4. Facilitate safer and healthier drinking cultures by developing community understanding about the special properties of alcohol and through regulation of its availability.

**I support all parts of this Bill and see it as a start to facing the problems caused by alcohol.**

**I request that the Senate look at increasing the powers of the Bill to deal with alcohol problems as outlined in the National Drug Strategy.**

Garry Duke.