

DrinkWise.

Responses to Portfolio Committee No. 1's Inquiry into the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Prohibition Act 2015

Question taken on notice:

Mr Scott: *So Kids Absorb Your Drinking* as our first campaign was particularly good because the role was to get parents to stop and reflect on how they are drinking and how their attitudes to alcohol influence their kids in terms of future drinking.

The Chair: It was effective.

Mr Scott: Many parents are talking about that. I think Mr Taylor talked about some statistics around that, which we are happy to provide the Committee.

The Chair: If you could take that on notice?

Response:

Launched in 2008, the *Kids Absorb Your Drinking* campaign was DrinkWise's first step towards bringing about generational change in attitudes to alcohol across Australia and promoting a safer and more responsible drinking culture.

Raising awareness amongst parents that through their own attitudes and drinking, they have the power to positively influence their children's future drinking behaviour - even from a very early age - was the major aim of *Kids Absorb Your Drinking*. The campaign sought to start conversations about this issue between parents, family and friends – well before their own children started experimenting with alcohol.

The campaign has generated positive results. Campaign tracking¹ undertaken by Quantum Market Research found that as a result of seeing the campaign parents had:

- discussed how they drank with their partner (34%);
- thought more about how they drank around their kids (33%);
- talked with friends or colleagues about drinking in front of the kids (18%); and
- discussed their consumption of alcohol with their children (24%).

¹ Tracking research was undertaken 8 months after commencement of the Campaign and included 512 interviews conducted online with a representative sample of parents.

Additionally, almost three in ten (28%) parents reported reducing their consumption of alcohol in front of their children. The primary reason cited for wanting to reduce consumption in front of their children was because they wanted to be a good role model (33%).

Building on this success, the DrinkWise *Kids and Alcohol Don't Mix* campaign was developed in 2009 to encourage parents to delay their child's introduction to alcohol. DrinkWise recognised that for many parents talking to their kids about alcohol and setting clear boundaries and expectations was a daunting task. This campaign provided useful advice and encouraged parents to agree on a strategy for talking to their kids about why delaying the introduction of alcohol is important. Our approach with parents has continued to evolve and is now activated through a range of advertising channels, including parents website MamaMia, retail websites and the DrinkWise website; all of which provide parents with a forum to discuss their views and share their experiences.

The DrinkWise parental influence campaigns and key messages are yielding results. Current national statistics² reveal that underage drinking has significantly declined in Australia, with 82% of minors reporting that they abstained from alcohol in 2016 – a significant increase from 57% reported in 2007.

Evidence also continues to emerge that reinforces the role that parents play in role modelling and delaying the introduction of alcohol to minors³. These research findings reveal that 17-year-olds who had been given alcohol by their parents in the earlier years, even sips, were more likely to binge drink and show symptoms of dependence and alcohol use disorders than those who had not obtained alcohol from parents or other sources. The authors of the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC) study claim that any protective effects of parental supply that had been evident at ages 15 and 16 dissipated over time and parents should avoid supplying alcohol to children.



² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare National Drug Strategy Household Survey Series <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-statistics/behaviours-risk-factors/alcohol/overview> and Australian Secondary Schools Alcohol and Other Drugs Survey <http://www.nationaldrugstrategy.gov.au/internet/drugstrategy/Publishing.nsf/content/australian-secondary-students-alcohol-drug-survey>

³ <https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/Professor%20Richard%20Mattick%20-%20Parental%20supply%20of%20alcohol%20and%20adolescent%20drinking%2C%20harms%2C%20and%20alcohol%20use%20disorder%20symptoms%20Six%20years%20later.pdf>

Supplementary questions:

Question: Deakin University Centre for Drug, Alcohol and Addiction Research said in its submission that the Get the Facts health warning labels fail to effectively communicate health messages and don't reduce consumption. What would be your response?

Response: The 2017 evaluation of the voluntary labelling initiative to place pregnancy health messages on alcohol products included analysis of responses from 5,622 consumers, representative of target groups, geographies and socioeconomic status.

The evaluation found that:

- 82.6% of the total sample understood the meaning of the pregnancy pictogram (85.1% of women); and
- 78.2% of the total sample understood the meaning of the text It is safest not to drink while pregnant, get the facts, www.drinkwise.org.au. (82.5% of women)
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/fr/publishing.nsf/Content/pregnancy-warnings-alcohol-labels>

Recently released national statistics⁴ reveal steady increases in pregnant women abstaining from alcohol - at 56% in 2016, up from 40% in 2007. Of those who drank during pregnancy, 97% usually consumed 1-2 standard drinks and this occurred monthly or less often (81%) or 2-4 times per month (16.2%).

The claim made by Deakin University that labels fail to effectively communicate health messages is premised on perceptions of 40 Victorian university students aged 18-25 years⁵ and fails to acknowledge nationally representative statistical trends relevant to this age group.

There have been significant declines in the proportions of those aged 18-24 years drinking in excess of the National Health and Medical Research Council's Alcohol Guidelines as well as increases in those abstaining from alcohol.⁶

⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare National Drug Strategy Household Survey Series <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-statistics/behaviours-risk-factors/alcohol/overview>

⁵ <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ajpy.12177/full>

⁶ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare National Drug Strategy Household Survey Series <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-statistics/behaviours-risk-factors/alcohol/overview>

Question: The NSW ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance Submission supported stronger health warnings on alcohol products. Would DrinkWise support stronger health warnings? And would you support making them compulsory?

Response: The approach to reaching consumers through the DrinkWise *Get the Facts* labelling initiative has included multiple channels and settings:

Consumers

DrinkWise.org.au provides consumers who may be considering pregnancy, or who are pregnant and breastfeeding with a range of evidence based information about alcohol's effects on fertility, conception and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Alcohol Guideline recommendation that it is safest not to drink while pregnant.

Clinicians and Educators

There are a range of tailored pregnancy resources for use by pregnant women, their partners and health practitioners available from DrinkWise that promote the labelling pictogram and NHMRC recommendation that it is safest not to drink while pregnant.

DrinkWise has issued thousands of these resources for use in medical practices, academic institutions, schools and community centres across the country. Resources can also be downloaded directly from the DrinkWise Website.

Producers

The DrinkWise Website Portal provides alcohol producers with full access and use of the DrinkWise *Get the Facts* logos for alcohol product labels and packaging. Over 650 new registrations have been approved to access the labels, licensing agreement and guidelines from winemakers, brewers, distillers, importers and contributors. This number is likely to be an under-representation of the number of producers who apply the labels as registered portal users may represent several alcohol producers and clients and will apply the labels to an array of alcohol products and packaging.

DrinkWise in collaboration with associations, such as the Winemakers Federation of Australia, promote awareness and access to the labels to smaller producers to extend coverage of the message.

Retailers

There is a range of tailored in-store and point of sale materials that support retailers and wineries to extend promotion of the NHMRC recommendation, so that consumers shopping in-store and those frequenting wineries across the country remain informed.

2017 Evaluation of the Voluntary Labelling Initiative

The 2017 evaluation of the voluntary labelling initiative to place pregnancy health messages on alcohol products included analysis of responses from 5,622 consumers, representative of target groups, geographies and socioeconomic status.

The evaluation found:

- 82.6% of the total sample understood the meaning of the pregnancy pictogram (85.1% of women);
- 78.2% of the total sample understood the meaning of the text *It is safest not to drink while pregnant, get the facts*, www.drinkwise.org.au (82.5% of women) <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/fr/publishing.nsf/Content/pregnancy-warnings-alcohol-labels>;
- increases in the coverage of products with a pregnancy health message (75.3% compared to 59.8% in the 2014 evaluation); and
- that given the current availability of evidence, labels should be seen as only one part of the mix of comprehensive social marketing campaigns and other health promotion endeavours. <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/fr/publishing.nsf/Content/pregnancy-warnings-alcohol-labels>

In order to further increase coverage, DrinkWise will be liaising with craft brewers, wine and cider makers to adopt the labels on more of their products and packaging.

Further information about the DrinkWise Labelling Program is included in the Attachment.