

**Submission  
No 7**

## **INQUIRY INTO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ADVERTISING PROHIBITION BILL 2015**

**Organisation:** Australasian College for Emergency Medicine

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## Submission to the Parliament of NSW: November 2017

### ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ADVERTISING PROHIBITION BILL 2015

The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the New South Wales (NSW) Government on the *Inquiry into Alcohol Beverages Advertising Prohibition Bill 2015* (the Inquiry).

ACEM is the not-for-profit organisation in Australia and New Zealand responsible for the training and education of emergency physicians and advancement of professional standards in emergency medicine. The practice of emergency medicine is concerned with the prevention, diagnosis and management of *acute* and *urgent* aspects of illness and injury among patients of all ages presenting with a spectrum of undifferentiated physical and behavioural disorders.<sup>1</sup> As the peak professional organisation for emergency medicine, ACEM has a vital interest in ensuring the highest standards of emergency medical care are maintained for all patients. Fellows of ACEM (FACEMs) are specialist emergency physicians working in emergency departments (EDs) across Australia and New Zealand. Where appropriate, ACEM acts in partnership with relevant stakeholders in the alcohol policy arena to address alcohol harm in the Australian and New Zealand communities.

ACEM is a member of the NSW ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance (NAAPA) and supports NAAPA's submission to this Inquiry. NAAPA is a coalition of 48 organisations that work together to reduce alcohol-related harm in NSW and the ACT by ensuring that evidence-based solutions inform alcohol policy discussions.

Alcohol is one of the most heavily promoted products in the world.<sup>2</sup> Alcohol advertising contributes to the normalisation of alcohol use and reinforces the harmful drinking culture that currently exists in Australia.<sup>3</sup> One in five Australians drinks at levels that increases their lifetime risk of alcohol-related disease or injury.<sup>4</sup> Almost half of Australians (45%) aged over 18 years report consuming alcohol on a single occasion that put them at increased risk of acute injury in the preceding year. ACEM considers that alcohol harm is one of the largest, preventable public health issues facing EDs in all Australian jurisdictions.

Emergency physicians deal with high volumes of alcohol-related ED presentations, which have detrimental effects on clinical staff, other patients and accompanying persons, and the functioning of the ED. This situation is becoming increasingly unsustainable, given ED presentation numbers are increasing year on year.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ACEM. Policy on standard terminology (P02). Melbourne: ACEM; 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Jernigan D. The extent of global alcohol marketing and its impact on youth. *Contemp Drug Probl.* 2010;37:57–89.

<sup>3</sup> AMA. Alcohol marketing and young people: Time for a new policy agenda. Canberra: AMA; 2012.

<sup>4</sup> ABS. Australian Health Survey: First Results (2011-12). Canberra: ABS; 2013.

<sup>5</sup> AIHW. Emergency department care 2014–15: Australian hospital statistics. Health services series no. 65. Cat. no. HSE 168. Canberra: AIHW; 2015.

Young people experience disproportionate levels of alcohol-related harm. Exposure to alcohol marketing shapes young people's attitudes towards drinking and their drinking behaviours. The more alcohol advertising young people are exposed to, the earlier they start to drink and, if they are already drinking alcohol, the more they will consume.<sup>6, 7, 8</sup>

Alcohol marketing in Australia has become more prolific than ever, with an unprecedented number of platforms for advertising alcohol including social media and sponsorship of sporting and cultural events. The pervasive nature of alcohol marketing is evidence of ineffective regulation under the current Liquor Promotion Guidelines. Features that appeal to minors, sexualised advertising and heavy discounting remain problematic in the NSW context. In Sydney takeaway liquor stores alone, there is an average of 30 point of sale (POS) promotions at each alcohol outlet.<sup>9</sup> This high number of promotions influence consumer purchasing decisions and can result in individuals buying more alcohol than they intended.<sup>10</sup>

There is significant community support for action to address alcohol advertising, with:

- 66 per cent of NSW adults supporting a ban on alcohol advertising on television before 8:30 pm<sup>11</sup>
- 53 per cent of NSW adults believing that alcohol sponsorship should not be allowed at sporting events<sup>11</sup>
- 61 per cent of NSW adults believing alcohol advertising should be phased out of sporting broadcasts<sup>11</sup>
- Three-quarters of parents supporting the introduction of policies to restrict alcohol sponsorship of children's and elite sports.<sup>12</sup>

ACEM understands that alcohol advertising in Australia is currently self-regulated by the alcohol and advertising industries through the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC). There are several deficiencies with the ABAC, such as:

- Compliance with the ABAC is voluntary
- There is inability to penalise advertisers that breach the code
- ABAC regulates advertising content, but not placement (i.e. time of day, appearance during a program)
- There is inadequate regulation of alcohol advertising on social media
- The complaints process is confusing and difficult to navigate.

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<sup>6</sup> Anderson P, De Bruijn A, Angus K, Gordon R, Hastings G. Impact of alcohol advertising and media exposure on adolescent alcohol use: a systematic review of longitudinal studies. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*. 2009; 44:229-43.

<sup>7</sup> Jones S, Magee C. Exposure to alcohol advertising and alcohol consumption among Australian Adolescents. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*. 2011; 46(5):630-637.

<sup>8</sup> Snyder LB, Milici FF, Slater M, Sun H, Strizhakova Y. Effects of alcohol advertising exposure on drinking among youth. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. 2006; 160(1):18-24.

<sup>9</sup> Jones SC, Barrie L, Robinson L, Allsop S, Chikritz T. Point-of-sale promotions in the Perth and Sydney metropolitan areas. *Drug and Alcohol Review*. 2012; (31):803-808.

<sup>10</sup> Jones SC, Smith, KM. The effect of point of sale promotions on the alcohol purchasing behaviour of young people in metropolitan, regional and rural Australia. *Journal of Youth Studies*. 2012; 14(8):885-900.

<sup>11</sup> Foundation for Alcohol Research Education. Annual Alcohol Poll: Attitudes and behaviours. FARE: Canberra; 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Kelly B, Baur LA, Bauman AE, King L, Chapman K, Smith BJ. Views of children and parents on limiting unhealthy food, drink and alcohol sponsorship of elite and children's sports. *Public Health Nutrition*. 2013; 16(01):130-135.

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Alcohol advertising that promotes positive messages around alcohol consumption continues to be widely viewed by children, with alcohol advertising allowed during live broadcasts of sporting events on weekends and public holidays. In one study, 76 per cent of Australian children aged five to 12 years were able to match at least one sport with its relevant sponsor.<sup>13</sup> ACEM recommends that the NSW Government introduces legislation to remove alcohol sponsorship of sports teams, as well as alcohol advertising during televised sport.

ACEM wishes to highlight to the Inquiry research on alcohol-related presentations in Australian and New Zealand EDs, which demonstrates the prevalence of alcohol harm in the community. Research by ACEM has shown that:

- In Australia and New Zealand, over a seven-day period one in 10 (9.5%) ED presentations are alcohol-related, translating to more than half a million presentations each year<sup>14</sup>
- At peak times, one in eight ED presentations are alcohol-related; however, in peak times all regions have EDs where one in three presentations are associated with alcohol<sup>15, 16</sup>
- 98 per cent of ED clinical staff have experienced verbal aggression from an alcohol-affected patient<sup>14</sup>
- 92 per cent of ED clinical staff have experienced physical aggression from an alcohol-affected patient<sup>18</sup>
- The majority of clinical staff report that alcohol-affected presentations impact the care of other patients and the functioning of the ED<sup>17</sup>
- The large majority of ED clinicians want to provide health promotion interventions for risky drinking, but lack time and resources.<sup>18</sup>

ACEM's research makes a strong case for interventions to address alcohol harm as a serious public health problem. The NSW Government can solve part of this problem by closing the loophole that allows alcohol advertising during sports broadcasts and alcohol sponsorship from sporting and cultural events. ACEM proposes that the Inquiry Committee recommends the removal of alcohol sponsorship and advertising from sporting and cultural events.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to NSW Government on the *Inquiry into Alcohol Beverages Advertising Prohibition Bill 2015*. Should you require clarification or further information, please do not hesitate to contact the ACEM Policy Officer Shelley Cogger on \_\_\_\_\_ or via email at \_\_\_\_\_.

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<sup>13</sup> Pettigrew S, Rosenberg M, Ferguson R, Houghton S, Wood L. Game on: do children absorb sports sponsorship messages? *Public Health Nutr.* 2013; 16(12):2197-204.

<sup>14</sup> Egerton-Warburton D, Gosbell A, Wadsworth A, et al. Perceptions of Australasian emergency department staff of the impact of alcohol-related presentations. *Med J Aust.* 2016; 204(4):155.

<sup>15</sup> Egerton-Warburton D, Gosbell A, Wadsworth A, et al. Survey of alcohol-related presentations to Australasian emergency departments. *Med J Aust.* 2014; 201:584-587.

<sup>16</sup> Egerton-Warburton D, Gosbell A, Wadsworth A, et al. Survey confirms alcohol-related presentations to Australasian emergency departments are under-reported. Proceedings of the 31st Annual Scientific Meeting of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine; 2014 Dec 7-11. Melbourne (Australia). *Emerg Med Australas.* 2015; 27 (Suppl 1):6.

<sup>17</sup> Egerton-Warburton D, Gosbell A, Moore K, Jelinek G. Public health in Australasian emergency departments: Attitudes, barriers and current practice. *Emerg Med Australas.* 2015;27(6):522-8.

<sup>18</sup> McGinnes RA, Hutton J, Egerton-Warburton D, Weiland TJ, Fatovich D. Effectiveness of ultra-brief interventions in the emergency department to reduce alcohol consumption: A systematic review. *Emerg Med Australas.* 2016; 28(6):629-40.

Yours sincerely,

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