

MEDIA RELEASE

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Cancer Council warns alcohol industry must not call the shots on alcohol advertising

Cancer Council joins community organisations calling for government-led regulation of alcohol marketing in Australia that protects our kids and community, as the alcohol industry today releases its revised Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC).

The ABAC Scheme is an oversight scheme created by the alcohol industry for the alcohol industry, allowing alcohol companies to continue their more than 20-year history of promoting harmful products with little to no independent oversight.

Ms Danica Keric, Chair of Cancer Council's Alcohol Working Group warns that the scheme is voluntary, weak and littered with loopholes, regardless of revisions.

"Alcohol companies promote their latest product on billboards near schools and parks or advertise their online deliveries on our phones every day. These are deliberate tactics to encourage Australians to drink more alcohol."

"However, Australians are increasingly recognising the damage alcohol does to our communities and have made complaints under the ABAC Scheme. These complaints are frequently dismissed, and even if breaches are upheld, alcohol companies do not face consequences as the scheme is voluntary," Ms Keric explains.

There is strong evidence that any amount of any type of alcohol increases the risk of mouth, throat, oesophagus, stomach, bowel, liver and some breast cancers. Alcohol use causes 3500 cases of cancer in Australia each year.

Ms Keric explains that the revised industry scheme does not reflect public health evidence and the "review" is an attempt to alleviate growing community concerns about alcohol harms and advertising.

"Cancer Council is just one of dozens of community organisations who declined to participate in the industry-led review of the voluntary ABAC Scheme because it is inherently flawed. No amount of tinkering with the ABAC, which is designed and run by a \$46 billion alcohol industry, will ever protect the wellbeing of our communities," Ms Keric added.

Cancer Council is calling for the introduction of government-led regulation of alcohol marketing in Australia that is independent of the alcohol industry — a comprehensive legislative framework with enforcement measures that effectively stop harmful alcohol marketing.

"Every day, Australian families are subjected to numerous alcohol ads for products that are known to increase the risk of a range of health harms including seven types of cancer. Governments must not let the alcohol industry continue to call the shots on the advertising of their own products, putting their profits over people's health," concluded Ms Keric.

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Contact details

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About Cancer Council Australia

Cancer Council Australia is Australia's leading cancer charity, working to reduce the impact of cancer for all Australians. Cancer Council Australia works with its members, the eight state and territory Cancer Councils to:

- Undertake and fund cancer research
- Prevent and control cancer
- Provide information and support for people affected by cancer
- Shape and influence policy and practice

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