

MEDIA RELEASE

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New research proves alcohol harm prevention a wise investment

FEDERAL: New research released today by The University of Queensland and Deakin University shows that investment in measures, such as taxation and advertising, would get the most bang-for-buck towards preventing alcohol-related illness and death. These are key areas the Alcohol Policy Coalition agrees are the best value investment of taxpayer dollars to reduce alcohol harms.

“The problem with alcohol is so deep-seated within Australia’s culture. We agree that by tackling cheap prices, availability and marketing, Australia will see real a reduction in alcohol problems,” said CEO Australian Drug Foundation John Rogerson.

Our nation’s love affair with boozing puts 1,500 people in hospital and kills more than 60 Australians every week.

“Alcohol abuse is costing Australian taxpayers \$36billion each year, so investment in proven preventative measures will not only benefit our health and quality of life, but also reduce what is a huge burden on the taxpayer,” said Mr Rogerson.

The research is clear that alcohol marketing directly influences young people’s decisions about drinking. Sponsorship by alcohol companies encroaches on youth events, such as the five alcohol sponsors of this year’s *Big Day Out* – another reason to act on alcohol advertising and protect young people from the alcohol industry.

“It is unethical for the alcohol industry to target youth events and now is the right time for government to step in and regulate advertising and sponsorship. The alcohol industry has a vested/commercial interest in promoting their product to young people and can not be trusted to protect the community from the harms alcohol causes,” added Mr Rogerson.

Alcohol sits just under tobacco as Australia’s most harmful drug. It’s time to acknowledge that preventative measures work to reduce those harms and act on those measures,” added spokesperson.

“Studies like this go a long way to opening the debate around a range of issues and potential solutions to the alcohol problem,” said Mr Rogerson

The full report - *Assessing Cost Effectiveness of Prevention (ACE-Prevention)* is available at www.sph.uq.edu.au/bodce-ace-prevention

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The Alcohol Policy Coalition (the Coalition) is a collaboration of health agencies – Australian Drug Foundation, Cancer Council Victoria, Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre and VicHealth – with shared concern relating to the misuse of alcohol and its health/social impacts on the community.

Alcohol remains one of the major causes of preventable death and illness in Australia. As such, the Coalition advocates for evidence based policy to prevent and reduce the harms caused by alcohol to Australians. For more information visit www.alcoholpolicycoalition.org.au