

MEDIA RELEASE

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Price matters: Alcopops consumption down

Call on Govt to collect sales data and implement an effective tax system for all alcohol.

FEDERAL: The Alcohol Policy Coalition is today calling for an effective tax system for all alcohol, after new ABS data showed a big drop in the apparent consumption of alcopops but little change to alcohol overall.

“This data shows a significant reduction in the supply of alcopops, which is proof that price matters,” said APC spokesperson Todd Harper.

“The next step for the Government will be to implement a comprehensive system that taxes products based on alcohol content with a premium price for more harmful products.

“Alcohol still remains one of the major causes of preventable death and illness in Australia. It puts 1500 people in hospital and kills more than 60 Australians **every week**. An effective tax system can help change that.

“While it is useful to see the change in supply of alcohol, which indicates apparent consumption, the Government needs to also be collecting sales data from every state. Only then can we ensure that any change to policy is based on evidence and informed by what Australians are actually consuming.

“If people are moving away from alcopops then that’s a good thing because these drinks provide a pathway for younger children to take up drinking because they are sweet and sugary and branded with attractive colourful packaging – they don’t taste like alcohol.

“Alcopops have been the most popular alcohol drinks for 12 to 15 year olds and a comprehensive tax system will help to reinforce any behavioural change the alcopops tax is already making.”

Mr Harper added that this is the first time alcopop consumption had dropped, ending its annual rise in consumption, and the only alcohol category where there was a reduction.

“The Australian alcohol taxation system remains incoherent. There needs to be a uniform approach whereby alcohol is taxed on the volume of alcohol in the product, because we know this move will produce significant health benefits.

“Taxation of alcohol should be based on the principle that alcohol is not an ordinary commodity – it is a product responsible for violence, addiction, accidents, ill-health and death. The evidence shows that price affects consumption and will go a long way to fixing Australia’s \$15 billion dollar alcohol problem.”

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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