

## **National Liquor News October 2014**

### **Silencing the opposition**

'You won't miss a moment if you DrinkWise' is a new moderate drinking initiative by DrinkWise Australia and it's aimed at drinkers attending sports or cultural events. Essentially, the message is to stay focused on the event, not the drinking and you will enjoy the show, game or concert more. It's a good message.

TV advertisements carrying the message started appearing during the AFL Finals thanks to the support of CUB and the AFL.

Sadly, not every Australian welcomed the new moderate drinking TV advertisements. The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) did not like them at all, believing that the DrinkWise advert was really a sneaky advert for drinking beer as there was an unbranded glass of beer continuously in view.

Many famous public health advocates took up FARE's opinion about the advertisement, but their complaints were ignored and gained no media coverage at all. FARE also produced a fly-on-the-wall mockumentary about how the DrinkWise advertisement truly came to be made.

In its criticism FARE never stopped to ask or answer why would DrinkWise or the alcohol industry pay to have a sneaky advertisement for drinking beer? Fully-branded alcohol ads are allowed to be broadcast during live sport. Besides, if the industry ever wanted pro-drinking advertisements why use a storyline about missing the best moments of an AFL game because of drinking too much?

In reality, FARE's complaint about the advert, and the broader public health movement's support for FARE's attack, is aimed at reducing the credibility and the voice of DrinkWise. FARE has a broader campaign on 'Alcohol Truth - Get the Facts on DrinkWise' aimed at DrinkWise. In FARE's view, DrinkWise's funding by the alcohol industry forever taints whatever it does.

Sadly, Australia's anti-alcohol groups continuously try to silence any opposing viewpoints. It has been a long-standing demand of theirs that governments have as little contact with the alcohol industry as possible.

The latest fuss from FARE is just another attempt of silencing their opposition. And where are FARE's moderate drinking ads? After all, the E in FARE stands for EDUCATION.