

## **National Liquor News December 2014**

### **Another tough year for the industry**

Writing the end of year column for National Liquor News is a mix between celebrating the Christmas spirit, looking with hope at the coming year, and glancing back over the past 12 months.

This year began with yet another needless violent death in Kings Cross, causing the O'Farrell Government to react precipitously and introduce just about every restriction that could be thought up for the entire Sydney CBD. Only time will tell what impact the very wide range of restrictions has on the industry, the nightlife and the liveability of central Sydney.

The federal Budget in May had a negative effect on consumer sentiment, and trading conditions are very tough for all parts of the industry. The ongoing economic uncertainty from the end of the mining boom and the growing cost of living pressures have a serious impact on our industry overall.

In June, the nation's food regulation ministers accepted that alcohol beverage manufacturers were making sufficient progress putting pregnancy advice labels on our products, and didn't make such labelling mandatory. The issue isn't dead; the food ministers will re-examine progress in June 2016 so the industry needs to keep adopting labels, particularly the RTD sector.

In late October, the Australian Medical Association held a national alcohol summit with the intention of generating at the federal level the political will for a much more restrictive set of alcohol policies. The summit had very little impact and passed un-noticed.

The trend towards more moderate and sensible drinking amongst young Australians continued to show up in the statistics. Less risky drinking patterns are spreading from the underage into the Australians in their twenties, which is very welcome.

A bright note for 2014 is that the industry was generally more willing to work together and become more unified in our efforts. I think the industry will become even more unified in coming years, which is my hopeful note for 2015.

Lastly, I like to wish all alcohol industry members a prosperous and Merry Christmas on behalf of the DSICA members and staff.