

## **National Liquor News April 2013**

### **Who speaks for Australia's drinkers?**

DSICA follows the alcohol control debate in the media very closely. A great deal has been said by many alcohol advocates about the community being concerned with alcohol in Australia.

Australians are concerned about some elements of alcohol abuse and about alcohol-related violence, but I don't believe they are supportive of what the alcohol control advocates are trying to push onto this nation. That is, whole of population controls affecting all Australians, in place of targeted controls aimed at well-known groups in well-known locations that create alcohol-related violence and antisocial behaviour.

What Australians appear to be saying is that they want something done about late night drinking in the entertainment precincts, but please leave the non-problematic drinkers alone. Most popular is the Police cracking down on people who behave very badly and violently in public spaces and who make our streets unsafe at night.

Parents, in particular, want help and support about reducing or ending underage drinking. DrinkWise Australia and new secondary supply legislation is helping in this area. Parents are now far more aware that they are the key to reducing underage drinking through role modelling and as suppliers.

There is very little public support for higher prices, and for substantial reductions in alcohol availability and actively reducing bottle stores numbers. However I don't think that the public are necessarily the primary target of the alcohol advocates' lobbying; their efforts are more targeted at politicians and the health bureaucracy to build belief amongst those groups that the community demands strong action.

In contrast, I think the majority of the public wants adult Australians to have reasonable access to alcohol under reasonable restrictions, and to be left alone if they are not causing anyone any harm.

In my last column, I asked the question about politicians listening to their community and if they were really listening to everyone they represent, not just the organised pressure groups.

I don't think the alcohol industry can ever claim to be the voice of Australia's millions of adult drinkers, but we do seem to be the only group at present which represents their interests.