



Australians say no to a ‘double’

The vast majority of Australians do not want a second rejection of the controversial ‘alcopops’ tax hike by the Australian Senate to be the trigger for a double dissolution election, according to new research.

Conducted by Galaxy Research, the national survey found two-thirds (65%) of Australians believe a second rejection of the 70% tax increase on Ready-to-Drink (RTD) alcohol products would be an “illegitimate” reason to call a double dissolution election. Only 25% of respondents thought this would be a “legitimate” reason for both houses of Parliament to be dissolved.

“The Australian public does not think a second rejection of the RTD tax bill is any justification for an early election,” said Mr Stephen Riden, Information and Research Manager for the Distilled Spirits Industry Council of Australia (DSICA).

The poll also found strong ongoing opposition to the taxation of RTD products as a solution to youth binge-drinking. A significant 78% of respondents believe the tax hike should be abandoned in favour of a more comprehensive strategy to tackle binge-drinking among young Australians.

While half (51%) of respondents “strongly agree” with the scrapping of the tax, only 9% of Australians “strongly disagree” with such a move.

Support for abandoning the RTD tax hike in favour of other measures remains consistent, with 81% in July 2008 “agreeing” the tax should be dumped and 77% “agreeing” in January 2009.

The latest survey also found that almost three-quarters (73%) of the population believe the RTD tax increase is ineffective in addressing binge-drinking among young people. Of those polled, 42% rated the RTD tax trial as a “very ineffective” measure.

This finding reflects the consistent public sentiment over the last year, with 77% considering the RTD tax hike as “ineffective” in July 2008 and 78% rating it “ineffective” in January 2009.

“Australians continue to view the RTD tax hike as a failure. We hope the Government listens to the will of the people and replaces this narrowly focused tax with real solutions to problem drinking,” Mr Riden said.

The Galaxy Research survey was carried out on 1-3 May and was commissioned by the Distilled Spirits Industry Council of Australia. The statistically significant national sample of 1,046 respondents aged 18 years or over was weighted to reflect the latest ABS population statistics. The complete survey is available as a PDF upon request.

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