



Media Release

24 September 2008

## **Polls actually show Australians remain opposed to RTD tax grab**

The results of a survey released today by health groups seeking greater funding for heart disease and cancer prevention programs are at odds with every other analysis of community sentiment over the narrow tax hike applied to pre-mixed drinks on 27 April 2008.

Stephen Riden, Information and Research Manager for DSICA, said all other credible research and analysis has confirmed that Australians see the 70% increase in the excise on RTDs as a blatant tax grab that is causing more unintended social and health problems that it claimed it would solve.

“The Government’s own adviser on health and welfare statistics, the Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, has already highlighted the limitations of increasing the tax on alcohol products,” he said.

“The latest National Drug Strategy Household Survey, conducted by the AIHW, found that increasing tax was not strongly supported as a means to overcome problem drinking. Improved labelling, policing and education were considered more appropriate to address the issue.

“This AIHW finding is consistent with research, conducted by Galaxy Research in April this year, that found only 3% of Australians believe that increasing tax is the most effective way to address excessive alcohol consumption among young people.”

A later poll conducted by Galaxy Research found 81% of Australians agreed the RTD tax trial should be abandoned in favour of a more comprehensive strategy to tackle binge-drinking. The survey also found that 77% of the population believe the RTD tax increase is ineffective in addressing binge drinking in young people.

“This community view was reinforced by the results of a survey of 480 liquor retailers – who are at the coalface – found that 90% believe their customers consider the tax to be an unwarranted tax grab and that 81% of their customers have an unfavourable view of the RTD tax increase,” Mr Riden said.

“Today’s focus on how excise collected from alcohol sales is applied to health initiatives highlights all the reasons why a narrow tax on one range of alcohol products does nothing to provide a solution to the issue of problem drinking in the Australian community,” he added.

The Distilled Spirits Industry Council of Australia agrees that a much greater proportion of the \$6 billion in taxes collected from alcohol sales should be directed to public health initiatives but strongly rejects the assertion that Australians support the Federal Government’s RTD tax gouge.

### **Media Contact Details:**

**Stephen Riden, DSICA – 0408 372 496 or John Morton, Ethical Strategies – 0416 184 044**

For further information please visit: [www.alcotaxripoff.com](http://www.alcotaxripoff.com)