

KEY SENATOR CONFIRMS RTD TAX A FAILURE

Today's decision by Senator Stephen Fielding to declare that the Government's RTD tax hike has failed to curb binge-drinking is yet another blow to the controversial 70% tax increase on pre-mixed alcohol products.

Senator Fielding's decision comes as the Senate finally has the opportunity to vote down the flawed tax which has proven a double failure – not raising the expected revenue nor curbed binge-drinking, as promised by supporters of the tax.

More than ten months since the tax hike was introduced, no evidence has been presented to show that it has curbed binge-drinking in the community – with industry sales data consistently showing significant substitution from RTDs to other alcohol products.

DSICA Information Manager Stephen Riden said, "It simply hasn't worked to reduce levels of binge-drinking. This was never anything more than a tax grab masquerading as health policy.

Just last month, a Galaxy Research poll found that 78 per cent of respondents believed the RTD tax trial has been ineffective in solving binge drinking among young people, with almost half of those polled rating the tax hike as 'very ineffective'.

"Australians know the RTD tax hike is a failure. The time has come for the Senate to vote it down and put this tax out of its misery. Only when the Government is forced to look at balanced solutions will we see the problem of binge drinking in our community addressed. We need to ensure Australia is not left with a legacy of flawed policy and missed opportunities," Mr Riden said.

For further information, please contact:

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