



EDUCATION KEY TO PREVENTING UNDERAGE DRINKING – DSICA

The Distilled Spirits Industry Council of Australia (DSICA) today expressed its support for two campaigns, launched by the Australian Liquor Store Association (ALSA), aimed at educating teenagers and their parents of the dangers of underage drinking.

DSICA's Information and Research Manager, Mr Stephen Riden said that his members welcomed the *ID-25* campaign aimed at reducing the incidence of underage drinking. The campaign, designed by ALSA, warns customers that if they look under 25 years, they can be asked for identification.

The other campaign, launched by the ALSA and which deserves support, is *'Don't Buy It For Them'* – an initiative aimed at educating parents against supplying their underage children with alcohol.

"We all agree Australians rightly demand a real, comprehensive solution to binge-drinking and substance abuse," Mr Riden said.

"To this end, we wish to engage proactively and positively with the Rudd Government on working towards a lasting solution to problem drinking and drug abuse amongst our young," he said.

"This is why we oppose the Government's 70% tax increase on a limited range of alcohol products. There are already a number of unintended health and social consequences."

These include:

- Pushing young consumers into purchasing (and then mixing their own) straight spirits;
- Encouraging younger drinkers to opt for cheaper wine-pops and cask-wine which contain twice the alcohol content and are taxed at half the rate of RTDs;
- Increasing the risk of young women being victims of drink-spiking. Highly respected medical experts are already warning of the increase risk of being drugged when buying 'open' drinks over the bar (or at a party) rather than safeguarding against spiking by consuming drinks already mixed in a can or bottle.
- Increased abuse by young men of full strength beer – leading to greater street and domestic violence.

Mr Riden said DSICA's mission is to create an informed political and social environment that educates consumers about moderate alcohol consumption and encourages responsible community attitudes towards alcohol.

“DSICA urges the Rudd Government to rethink its strategy to impose a 70% tax hike on some pre-mixed drink products; effectively forcing consumers – young and old – to turn to more potent but cheaper alcohol options.

“Although the campaigns launched today by liquor stores across Australia are aimed at underage teenagers and their parents, we believe it is grassroots-style awareness programs that will lead to older consumers also learning how to manage their alcohol-intake responsibly,” Mr Riden said.

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