



Cooperative Research Centre for
Aboriginal Health

Media Release

Passing Alcopops tax is a good start

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Australia's leading Aboriginal health research organisation has joined the Australian Medical Association and the Public Health Association of Australia in calling for the Senate to pass the Rudd Government's Alcopops tax measures.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health urged all parties to put aside their differences to support a policy initiative which will benefit public health.

"There is ample research evidence pointing to the cost of alcohol having an impact on alcohol consumption and despite the efforts to obfuscate the impact of this tax it is clear that Alcopops consumption has been reduced as a result of the increased costs from this tax," said Mick Gooda, chief executive officer of the CRCAH.

"The CRCAH believes that the tax on pre-mixed sweetened drinks, aimed at a youth market is a good start," he said. "But we also firmly believe that the whole tax on grog needs to be re-assessed and consideration should be given to taxing alcoholic drinks by volume of alcohol.

"We currently have a skewed method of taxation; one which allows the alcohol industry to target cheap grog at young people and other financially disadvantaged Australians including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people," said Mick Gooda. "It's about time our elected representatives started acting on the available evidence, pass this tax measure and start drafting new tax laws to ensure the cheap grog loophole is closed."

Leading national alcohol researcher, Associate Professor Peter d'Abbs of James Cook University said he and other researchers had been calling for a volumetric tax on alcohol for many years.

"There is no doubt that alcohol abuse is prevalent in Australian society and we need policies that will address the problem," said Dr d'Abbs. "Passing the Alcopops tax measures is just one necessary reform and the Senate should do so immediately. It's also to be hoped that the ongoing Henry tax enquiry will explore the need for a new volumetric alcohol tax."

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