

28th June 2017

Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review
c/o Department of Health

Dear Review Manager

SUBMISSION TO THE ALCOHOL POLICIES AND LEGISLATION REVIEW

Many thanks for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Northern Territory (NT) Government's *Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review*. The NT has the worst alcohol related problems in Australia, and its alcohol-related social harms and morbidity and mortality place it amongst the top 10 countries in terms of consumption levels, and harm profile. Such a review is overdue and extremely important to addressing the problem of alcohol in the NT.

My own submission centers on the "promotion of alcohol" to children and young people, and its role in creating an environment and culture around alcohol whereby hazardous drinking and alcohol related harms may be seen as an accepted norm in the NT.

Specifically, the alcohol promotion activities I refer to is **alcohol advertising and sponsorship on free-to-air TV, and particularly alcohol advertising and sponsorship in sport.**

Research on the extent of alcohol advertising and sponsorship in Australia and elsewhere, shows that it is ubiquitous and implicitly tied with sport in those countries, like Australia (e.g. NT), that have ineffective regulations for protecting children and young people from exposure to alcohol related alcohol advertising and sponsorship.

Alcohol advertising and sponsorship is regularly shown to influence children and young people's drinking intentions, attitudes, and behaviour. Alcohol advertising and sponsorship also creates a culture whereby consumption of alcohol is normalised and indeed encouraged. It inhibits recovery from alcohol-related problems (addiction), by acting as a cue for drinking, thereby undermining individual efforts to reduce drinking.

Research Evidence:

- Anderson P., de Bruijn A., Angus K., Gordon R., Hastings G. Impact of Alcohol Advertising and Media Exposure on Adolescent Alcohol Use: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies. *Alcohol and Alcoholism* 2009; 44: 229-43.

Alcohol Advertising and Sponsorship in Australia

Our recent work from Australia examining the extent of, and children and young people's exposure to alcohol advertising in sport and non-sport TV programming across an entire year, showed that Australian children and young people received millions of exposures to alcohol advertising messages when watching TV at their peak viewing times.

For every one alcohol advert in non-sport TV there is approximately four in Australian sport TV (4 to 1 ratio).

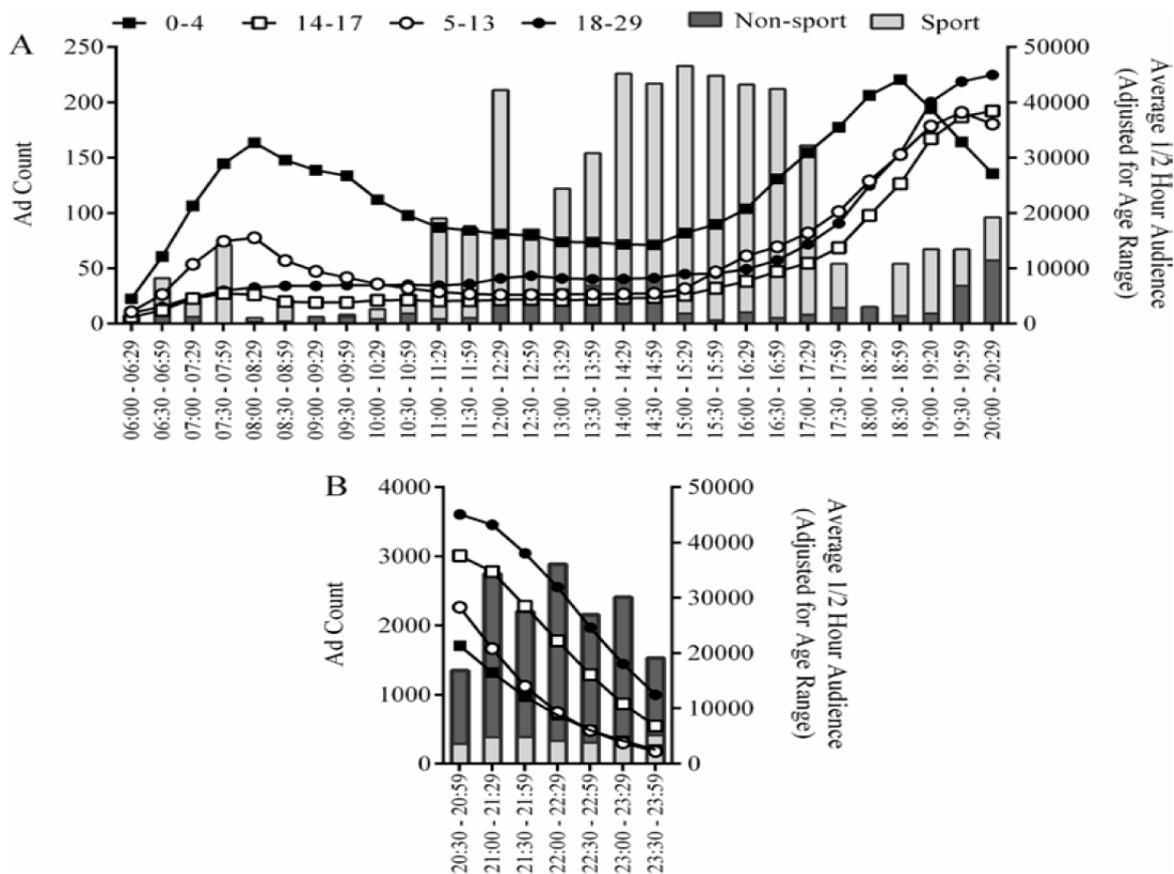


Figure 1. Frequency and children and young people's exposure to alcohol advertising when watching sport and non-sport TV across a complete year.

O'Brien KS, et al. (2015). Alcohol advertising in sport and non-sport TV in Australia, during children's viewing times. *PLoS ONE* 10 (8): e0134889.

Research Evidence:

- O'Brien KS, et al. (2015). Alcohol advertising in sport and non-sport TV in Australia, during children's viewing times. *PLoS ONE* 10 (8): e0134889.
- Carr S, O'Brien KS et al. (2016). Child and adolescent exposure to alcohol advertising in Australia's major televised sports. *Drug and Alcohol Review* 35, 406– 411.

Recent research on alcohol sponsorship in sport from Australia and elsewhere, demonstrates that alcohol industry sponsorship of sport is associated with more hazardous drinking.

Research Evidence:

- O'Brien, K.S., Miller, P., Kolt, G., Martens, M., & Webber, A. (2011) Alcohol industry and non-alcohol industry sponsorship of sportspeople and drinking. *Alc & Alcohol* 46, 2, 210-213.
- O'Brien K.S., Ferris J., Greenlees I., Jowett S., Rhind D., Cook P., & Kypri K. (2014). Alcohol industry sponsorship and hazardous drinking in UK university students who play sport. *Addiction* 109; 1647–1654
- O'Brien K.S., & Kypri K. (2008). Alcohol industry sponsorship and hazardous drinking among sportspeople, *Addiction*, 103 (12), 1961-1966.

- Pinsky I, O'Brien KS, et al., (2017) Alcohol industry sponsorship of university student sports clubs in Brazil. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* 78(2): 306-312

And alcohol sponsorship in sport is associated with more alcohol-related aggression/violence, anti-social behaviour.

Research Evidence:

- O'Brien, K.S., Lynott, D., & Miller, P.G. (2013). Alcohol industry sponsorship and alcohol-related harms in Australian university sportspeople/athletes. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 32 (3), 241-247.

This research has important implications for public policy, and may be used to guide strategies to reduce the harm caused by alcohol in our communities. For this reason, I urge you to consider this research in the context of the Northern Territory's *Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review*.

In my view, this research warrants consideration of the regulations concerning the promotion of alcohol (i.e., alcohol advertising and sponsorship).

Specific Recommendation:

1. Removal of the clause in the Australian Commercial Television Industry Code of Conduct that currently permits alcohol advertising and sponsorship messages in sport programming before 9pm on weekends and public holidays.
2. No alcohol advertising and sponsorship messages on free-to-air before 9pm on any day of the week.

These two recommendations have been identified as the most cost effective means of reducing alcohol-related problems, and have been recommended in other countries with similar drinking cultures as Australia and the NT.

Evidence:

- Casswell S., Thamarangsi T. Reducing harm from alcohol: call to action. *The Lancet* 2009; 373: 2247-57.

If you have any questions relating to my work, or would like to discuss the issue further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to raise these important issues with you.

Yours sincerely

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