



FAMILY FIRST



Steve Fielding **Family First** Senator for Victoria

MEDIA RELEASE

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TOMORROW'S ALCOPOPS INQUIRY MUST CONSIDER AUSTRALIA'S \$15.3 BILLION HANGOVER

Tomorrow the Senate inquiry into the Rudd Government's proposed alcopops tax will hold hearings in Canberra, but we need to do more to combat Australia's \$15.3 billion dollar binge drinking problem.

The Senate inquiry will hear from industry groups, welfare groups and other experts to discuss the pros and cons of increasing the tax on alcopops.

"We must change our culture in Australia, which celebrates alcohol and accepts drunkenness and binge drinking, and create a responsible drinking culture," Family First leader Steve Fielding said today.

The 2007 National Drug Strategy Household survey reveals that nearly twice as many people support alcohol warning labels and alcohol advertising restrictions as opposed to increasing tax on alcohol as a means to combat problem drinking.

"The survey showed 71% support adding health information labels to alcohol products and 72% of the population support restricting TV advertising of alcohol products until after 9.30pm," Senator Fielding said.

"In contrast, only 41% of the population surveyed support increasing tax on alcohol as a measure to combat the binge drinking epidemic.

"If the Rudd Government is serious about creating a culture of responsible drinking AND it wants to prove the alcopops tax is not just a tax grab, it would also introduce alcohol warning labels to alcopops and all other alcohol products.

"What harm can be done by putting warning labels on alcohol products? Surely warning labels would help in our nation's efforts to create a culture of responsible drinking.

"Australian alcohol exported to the United States already has to have health warnings labels and the British government has announced it will introduce alcohol warning labels on alcohol products by the end of 2008 in agreement with the alcohol industry.

"Alcohol ads are already restricted from running on TV until after 8.30pm. But there is a crazy 'loophole' in the law that exempts live sport on weekends, so that alcohol ads can run at any time of the day. This sends the wrong message as we are linking alcohol to sport."

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