

2015/05: Should alcohol sponsorship of sports and advertising during sports telecasts be phased out?

What they said...

'Alcohol promotion during live sports broadcasts is a major cause for concern, particularly as children and young people form a large part of the cricket viewing audience'

Sondra Davoren, senior legal policy adviser for Cancer Council Victoria

'Alcohol marketing is used solely to drive brand choice, not motivate consumption by those who would otherwise abstain'
Brewers Association of Australia and New Zealand

The issue at a glance

On March 30, 2015, Channel Nine telecast Shane Warne interviewing members of the winning Australian Cricket team after the World Cup final against New Zealand. The interviews were criticised for their focus on how much beer the players were about to drink.

Cricket Australia's long-standing advertising and sponsorship arrangement with Victoria Bitter is a prominent part of the public debate around whether such sponsorship and advertising should be phased out.

In 2009 the National Preventative Health Task Force recommended the phasing out of alcohol sponsorship of sporting associations, clubs and fixtures and an end to the advertising of alcohol during live-to-air sports telecasts.

The bans were not implemented though many codes accepted federal funding as a substitute for their previous advertising and sponsorship arrangements with alcohol companies.

Key among those codes that continued their association with alcohol advertising and sponsorship are Cricket Australia, the AFL and the NRL.

In 2012, the AFL announced a 10-year extension to a major sponsorship deal with Carlton United Brewers. Cricket Australia has been sponsored by Victoria Bitter for years while the NRL has commercial partnerships with Fosters and Diageo, which makes Bundaberg Rum and Johnnie Walker.

Not only have the bans not occurred within the major codes, it is currently being proposed that alcohol advertising during live-to-air sports telecasts be extended to include all weekend sports telecasts, whether live-to-air or not, beginning on Friday evening. It is also being proposed that the 'adult' television viewing period be pushed forward by an hour to 7.30pm. This would allow an additional hour each night during which alcohol advertising could be telecast.

Health experts are concerned that rather than prohibiting the association of sport and alcohol, Australia is about to extend it.

Background

(In 2009, the Australian Government's Preventative Health Taskforce released its 'Technical Report 3: Preventing alcohol-related harm in Australia: a window of opportunity, including addendum for October 2008 to June 2009'.

The following information has been abbreviated from this technical report.

It can be accessed in full at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/preventativehealth/publishing.nsf/Content/tech-alcohol>

The particular section from which the information has been drawn can be accessed at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/preventativehealth/publishing.nsf/Content/tech-alcohol-toc~tech-alcohol-4~tech-alcohol-4.7>

Extent of alcohol advertising in Australia

Total alcohol advertising expenditure in Australia in 2007 was reported to be \$128 million. However, this figure is highly conservative, given that it relates to the advertising of products rather than of alcohol outlets, for which alcohol advertising expenditure is now very significant. Nor does it include sponsorship, 'below the line' advertising or internet advertising, the latter being a significant growth area in recent years.

In Australia, the main sectors in which alcohol advertising expenditure occurs, and through which the greatest exposure is achieved, are through commercial television advertising (38%) and outdoor advertising (32%). Globalised alcohol manufacturers (for example, Diageo; Pernod Ricard Pacific) are among the biggest spending advertisers in Australia.

The amount spent on advertising by spirits and wine producers combined, now equals that of the traditionally dominant beer market in Australia, reflecting an increasingly competitive alcohol beverage market.

The effectiveness of alcohol advertising

The impact of advertising on individuals can be seen as having both immediate effects, such as influencing decision making with regard to brand preference, as well as longer term effects such as reinforcing pro-drinking messages. In this way, it is both the content and frequency of exposure to advertising that can have an impact on individuals' attitudes and behaviours.

The impact of alcohol advertising on young people is an area where there has been considerable research, but of somewhat poor quality, yielding conflicting results that range from positive associations between young people who have been exposed to and/or enjoy alcohol advertising and an increased risk of harmful consumption of alcohol, to negative associations or inconclusive results. Numerous studies have found a link between alcohol advertising and alcohol-related knowledge, beliefs and intentions of young people.

Regulation of alcohol advertising in Australia

Unlike tobacco advertising, which was banned in Australia in 1995, there are no alcohol advertising bans in Australia, although some restrictions, including advertising content controls, do apply.

In Australia, alcohol advertising is subject to a number of different laws and codes of practice. The Australian Association of National Advertisers Code of Ethics covers general advertising issues. Other applicable laws and codes include:

- The Trade Practices Act
- State and territory fair trading legislation
- The Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice
- The Commercial Radio Code of Practice
- The Outdoor Advertising Code of Ethics.

The Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice states that advertisements can only be shown during M, MA or AV classification periods. However, on weekends and public holidays, alcohol advertisements can be shown as an accompaniment to the live broadcast of a sporting event. Alcohol advertising is covered in detail by the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) Scheme. The main aims of the scheme are to ensure that alcohol advertising presents a responsible approach to drinking, and does not have appeal to children or adolescents. Among other rules in the code, the administration of the following is often questioned by community members: 'Advertisements for alcohol beverages must not depict the consumption or presence of alcohol beverages as a cause of or contributing to the achievement of personal, business, social, sporting, sexual or other success'.

Effectiveness of alcohol advertising self-regulation

As a self-regulatory scheme, the ABAC's effectiveness largely depends on the independence of its complaints body with the powers to sanction.

Recent research has revealed that less than three in 10 (28%) people surveyed reported an awareness of restrictions or regulations covering the advertising of alcohol, in terms of what can be said or shown.

It is estimated that only 3% of the total adult population are aware of the existing ABAC scheme and know what it relates to. Among the 30% of people who reported being concerned about any alcohol advertising, only 2% had made a formal complaint.

Some of the reasons why those who were concerned did not make a complaint included the belief that it would not achieve anything (30%), not having time (25%) and not knowing who/how/where to complain (15%).

The ABAC currently has no powers to sanction advertisers who breach the code rules.

Attempts to relax the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice

In February, 2015, Free TV Australia (the body which self-regulates Australian commercial television) proposed a series of changes to the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice.

One of these changes is to move the time at which the M classification time zone begins from the current 8.30pm to 7.30pm. A consequence of this change, if it is accepted, is that certain types of advertising, including the advertising of alcohol products could begin an hour earlier. Currently the advertising of what are deemed adult products are limited to adult viewing time slots.

If this time slot were to be brought forward an hour, this would place the advertising of these products within what has traditionally been seen as a child-suitable viewing period.

Another change is that alcohol advertising would be allowed during sports broadcasts on weekends (including Friday nights) or public holidays (currently alcohol advertising is only permitted during live sports broadcasts on Saturdays and Sundays and public holidays).

Currently such advertising is only allowed for live weekend telecasts.

Alcohol sponsorship of Australian sport

There are no regulations limiting alcohol manufacturers from sponsoring sporting clubs, associations or fixtures.

In 2012, Netball Australia and Football Federation Australia agreed to ban alcohol sponsorship within their codes in return for federal funding. The AFL, NRL and Cricket Australia did not take up the offer.

Internet information

On March 30, 2015, The Age published an opinion piece by Michael Thorn titled 'ICC Cricket World Cup: Alcohol-drenched culture needs to change'

The comment argues that the mix of alcohol, sport and television advertising is detrimental to the Australia's public health.

The opinion piece can be accessed at <http://www.theage.com.au/comment/icc-cricket-world-cup-alcohol-drenched-culture-needs-to-change-20150330-1mau4y.html>

On March 30, 2015, the ABC's online opinion site The Drum published a comment by Dominic Knight titled 'Thirsty for a 'Stray less obsessed with booze'

The comment criticises the connections between sport and alcohol (especially cricket) in Australia.

The text can be accessed at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-30/knight-thirsty-for-a-straya-less-obsessed->

[with-booze/6358928](#)

On March 24, 2015, Cancer Council Victoria issued a media release titled 'Alcohol advertisers benefit from sneaky changes to TV broadcasting code'

The media release details and opposes the proposed changes to the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice to allow an additional hour of alcohol advertising per day and extended advertising opportunities of a weekend during sporting telecasts in addition to live telecasts.

The full text of the media release can be accessed at <http://www.cancervic.org.au/about/media-releases/2015-media-releases/march-2015/alcohol-advertisers-benefits-changes-tv-code.html>

On March 23, 2015, Crikey published an opinion piece by Melissa Sweet titled 'A call to remove alcohol from the Official Drinks Cabinet of sports'

The comment looks at the extent of alcohol advertising and sponsorship associated with sport in Australia and overseas and argues that this practice should end.

The opinion can be accessed at http://blogs.crikey.com.au/croakey/2015/03/23/a-call-to-remove-alcohol-from-the-official-drinks-cabinet-of-sports/comment-page-1/?wmp_switcher=mobile&comments=0

On March 4, 2015, Cancer Council Victoria issued a media release titled 'Young cricket fans bombarded by alcohol advertising, as regulators move to relax alcohol advertising restrictions'

The release considered both the extent of alcohol advertising during live sport telecasts and the current move to amend the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice to allow for an additional hour a day of alcohol advertising.

This release can be accessed at <http://www.cancervic.org.au/about/media-releases/2015-media-releases/march-2015/young-cricket-fans-bombarded-by-alcohol-advertising.html#>

On February 20, 2015, Free TV (the body regulating free-to-air television in Australia) issued a media release calling for public submissions to the 'Review of the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice'

The review includes provisions that would extend the hours and occasions during which alcohol can be advertised on free-to-air television.

Submissions can be submitted up to April 3, 2015.

The full text of this document can be accessed at http://www.freetv.com.au/media/Code_of_Practice/Commercial_Television_Industry_Code_of_Practice_2015_-_New_Code_and_Explanatory_Materials.pdf

Public Health Association Australia has published its Alcohol Policy online. The policy is backgrounded by a summary of current research findings regarding levels of alcohol consumption in Australia, the harms associated with such consumption and the impact of advertising on promoting such consumption.

The full document can be accessed at <http://www.phaa.net.au/documents/AttachmentBAAlcoholPolicy.pdf>

The Brewers Association of Australia and New Zealand has a section of its Internet site given over to an explanation of its position on the aims and effects of alcohol advertising.

These claims can be accessed at <http://www.brewers.org.au/our-views/alcohol-promotion-2/>

The Association also presents statistics indicating that beer consumption in Australia is actually in decline.

These statistics can be accessed at <http://www.brewers.org.au/our-views/alcohol-consumption-in-australia/>

In February, 2014, Free TV (the body regulating free-to-air television in Australia) issued a fact sheet titled 'Producing a TV commercial promoting or including reference to alcohol'

The fact sheet details the restrictions that are imposed on alcohol commercials on television.

The full text can be accessed at http://www.freetv.com.au/media/CAD/Info_Sheets/Alcoholic_Beverages.pdf

On January 6, 2014, Ad News published a report by Rosie Baker titled 'Alcohol brands defend sports sponsorships'

The article is a defence by alcohol manufacturers of their advertising during advertised sport and their promotion of sporting competitions.

The article can be accessed at <http://www.adnews.com.au/news/alcohol-brands-defend-sports-sponsorships>

On April 27, 2013, ABC News ran a report titled 'Alcohol advertisers "exploit sports broadcast loophole"'

The article indicates the extent of alcohol advertising during weekend sports telecasting.

It can be accessed at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-04-27/alcohol-advertisers-exploiting-loophole-during-sports-broadcasts/4654810>

On February 27, 2013, The Conversation published a comment by Kerry O'Brien, head of Behavioural Studies at Monash University, titled "'As a matter of fact, I've got it now": alcohol advertising and sport'

The article analyses the rationale for alcohol advertisers associating their product with sport and the probable effects of this.

The comment can be accessed at <http://theconversation.com/as-a-matter-of-fact-ive-got-it-now-alcohol-advertising-and-sport-9909>

3. Advertising associated with sport is particularly likely to attract children and teenagers

The Public Health Association Australia has noted that research on alcohol advertising suggests that adolescents and children are a uniquely vulnerable audience. The evidence indicates that advertising and other positive media portrayals of alcohol are significantly reinforcing factors and help 'normalise' alcohol consumption in the eyes of young potential drinkers. The content of advertising for ready-to-drink beverages has been found to contain messages regarding the 'benefits' of consumption in social and sexual attractiveness that appeal to not only young but under-age drinkers. In 2009, the World Health Organisation stated, 'Generally, there is a dose-response relationship between young people's exposure to alcohol marketing and the likelihood that they will start to drink or drink more. The greater the exposure, the greater the impact.'

Critics of allowing alcohol manufactures to advertise during sporting telecasts or to sponsor sporting clubs, associations or fixtures have noted that sport is a high prestige activity for many young people, epitomising qualities of excitement, success and mateship which they desire. Associating alcohol consumption with this set of values is likely to increase its attractiveness to young people.

Currently many young people watch televised sport. Oztam data (the television industry's own ratings data generator) shows that a very large number of young people watch sport on television. 376,000 children aged 0-17 years in capital cities alone watched the 2014 AFL grand final; 342,000 watched the NRL grand final; and 332,000 watched the FIFA World Cup match between Australia and Chile, representing 19% of the total audience.

Critics have expressed concern that exposure in such numbers makes children vulnerable to the advertising of alcohol which is permitted during live sporting telecasts and to the brand recognition factor which comes with the sponsorship of such fixtures by alcohol manufacturers.

4. Participation in sport promotes qualities that are not consistent with alcohol consumption

Increasingly, participation in sport is being associated with improving public health.

The Australian Government's Department of Health recommends that for health benefits, young people aged 13-17 years should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity every day.

The recommendations further suggest that young people's physical activity should include a variety of aerobic activities, including some vigorous intensity activity; that on at least three days per week, young people should engage in activities that strengthen muscle and bone; that to achieve additional health benefits, young people should engage in more activity - up to several hours per day.

One of the suggestions made as to how such exercise targets can be met is that young people participate in competitive sport.

Health experts are concerned that associating alcohol with sporting activities sends a dangerously mixed message.

In an article published in the Medical Journal of Australia in September, 2005, Yvonne Bonomo stated, 'Mixed messages are delivered on a daily basis when drink-driving advertisements brand people over the legal limit of blood alcohol concentration as "bloody idiots" while prominent personalities in sport and entertainment who drink to excess are, in effect, applauded for their entertainment value.'

In 2009, Professor Gerard Hastings stated, 'The favourable emotions and images which consumers have of the [sporting] event itself transfer to the sponsoring brand, creating an unthinking association in consumers' minds between the event and the brand, positive attitudes, and emotional connections.'

In 2012, the Australian Medical Association warned of the mixed message of associating alcohol consumption with the power, prestige and health associated with high level sporting competitions. The Association stated, 'Sports sponsorship...serves to link alcohol with sporting prowess, fitness and masculinity.'

This is sometimes referred to as the 'halo effect', whereby the health-giving qualities of one activity or situation are falsely associated with another activity or situation which is actually injurious to health.

Kerry O'Brien, the head of Behavioural Studies at Monash University, has explained the phenomenon in this way, 'Pairing a healthy activity, such as sport, with an otherwise unhealthy product, such as alcohol or fast food, makes that product seem less unhealthy and more acceptable and normal.'

5. Current regulations regarding the advertising of alcohol on television are inadequate and are likely to be relaxed further

The current regulations supposed to restrict the advertising of alcohol on television have been condemned as inadequate.

Public Health Association Australia has noted that voluntary advertising codes controlled by the advertising and alcohol industries were established with the promise that the industries would be responsible in their marketing approaches. Numerous breaches of the codes have been documented, but have generally failed to move governments into taking more strict action. A study of complaints dismissed by the national Advertising Standards Board found that independent reviewers rated seven of the nine advertisements as breaching voluntary industry codes, suggesting that self-regulation was inadequate and biased towards discouraging and dismissing complaints.

It has also been noted that there are weaknesses the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice which allow for alcohol advertising. There is a loophole in current regulations that put no limit on the amount of alcohol advertised during weekend sports broadcasts or special live broadcasts.

A 2013 analysis tallied the amount of alcohol advertising shown during the NRL finals series and the AFL grand final, Australia's most watched sporting event. The analysis found more than 18 per cent of the NRL's grand final broadcast

contained some form of alcohol promotion. The 2012 AFL grand final featured a similar amount of alcohol advertising. While traditional commercials accounted for just five per cent of all alcohol marketing in the broadcasts, integrated advertising, including sponsor-related advertising, was weaved throughout the games. Similar findings were made in 2014. A report by Cancer Council Victoria and the University of Wollongong reveals that viewers were exposed to more than 4600 incidents of alcohol promotion, during three of the five One Day International (ODI) cricket games in the 2013/14 season. This included ads during commercial breaks, fixed and electronic banner signage within the stadium, live announcements, broadcast sponsorship announcements, logos on players' uniforms and team banners, among other marketing tactics. The research also reveals that during one of the T20 games analysed, one in every four ads shown was for an alcohol product or retailer.

Arguments against phasing out alcohol sponsorship of sports and advertising during sports telecasts

1. Advertising alcohol is not intended to increase alcohol consumption or recruit new drinkers

Alcohol manufacturers claim that they do not advertise their product with the intention of increasing consumption. Rather, they maintain their aim is to cause existing drinkers to switch brands.

The Brewers Association of Australia and New Zealand states on its Internet site, 'Alcohol marketing is used solely to drive brand choice, not motivate consumption by those who would otherwise abstain. As an indicator, beer sales have actually dropped over recent years despite an increase in total promotional spending.'

Manufacturers have similarly argued that there is no conclusive evidence linking alcohol advertising with increased consumption among young people. The Brewers Association states, 'A myriad of research exists that is aimed at evaluating associations between alcohol promotion and underage drinking. The findings have generally found no effects or minimal effects. These inconsistencies have failed to establish any conclusion that alcohol promotion is a causal factor for underage drinking.'

The Brewers Association has also noted that a total prohibition on alcohol advertising does not appear to be linked to a reduction in alcohol consumption.

The Association has claimed, 'Evidence from France and New Zealand suggest that the banning of alcohol advertising and sponsorship has no impact on reducing alcohol misuse. While France opted to ban alcohol advertisements in the early 1990s and New Zealand chose to allow television advertising, the per capita consumption of alcohol continued to fall at similar rates in both countries.'

The Association has concluded, 'Furthermore, Denmark continues to rank as having one of the highest reported rates of alcohol consumption among the underage population despite their heavy restrictions on print and outdoor advertising and the ban of broadcast advertising of anything but low-alcohol products.'

2. Alcohol consumption in Australia is not excessive

Alcohol manufacturers maintain that average consumption of alcohol in Australia is not excessive.

The Brewers Association of Australia and New Zealand states on its Internet site 'The overwhelming majority of Australians consume beer in a positive and responsible way. Over recent decades, the consumption of beer has moderated in Australia.'

The Association further claims, 'There is no evidence that alcohol consumption patterns have changed and created a crisis. The Federal Government's own Preventative Health Taskforce report noted that "overall levels of alcohol consumption and drinking patterns have not changed markedly over the past decade".'

The Association has also observed that Australian consumption rates are in decline. 'Statistics show that millions of Australians drink beer in a moderate and healthy way. Our per capital alcohol consumption rates in Australia have been on consistent decline over the past three decades.'

Australia's per capita alcohol consumption peaked in the 1970's, and now sits at around 20 per cent below that peak. It has remained steady or in decline for the past three decades. Latest statistics on pure alcohol available for consumption indicate a decrease of 0.8% in 2011-12 from 2010-11.'

The Association has further noted that consumption among high risk groups, such as youth, is also declining. 'A higher proportion of 12-17 year olds abstained from alcohol (61.6%) than those who had consumed any within the last 12 months (38.4%). The proportion of 12-15 year olds who abstained from alcohol increased in 2010 (from 69.9% in 2007 to 77.2% in 2010). Similar increases occurred for 16-17 year olds, rising from 24.4% in 2007 to 31.6% in 2010.'

3. Strict regulations govern the advertising of alcohol products on television

Alcohol manufacturers and advertisers stress that their behaviour is strictly controlled via a number of regulations.

The Brewers Association of Australia and New Zealand has stated, 'The key system is the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC) which covers acceptable content for all alcohol promotion, including television, print, billboard advertisements, digital marketing, sports sponsorship and the naming and packaging of products.'

The Association explains, 'Key elements of the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code include that the promotion of alcohol; must present a mature, balanced and responsible approach to the consumption of alcohol beverages must not encourage excessive consumption or abuse of alcohol; must not encourage under-age drinking; not have a strong or evident appeal to children or adolescents.'

The Association also notes, 'Complaints about alcohol advertisements can be lodged with ABAC. An independent complaints panel headed by Chief Adjudicator, The Hon Michael Lavarch AO, determines the complaint.'

The ABAC system also provides a pre-vetting process whereby advertisements are independently reviewed against the

code before they are made public.

Alcohol beverage advertising must also be consistent with other applicable laws and codes, including the Trade Practices Act, the Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA) Code of Ethics, the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice, the Commercial Radio Codes of Practice and the Outdoor Media Association Code of Ethics.'

4. Sponsorship from alcohol manufacturers assists the sporting codes involved

Some sporting codes and alcohol manufacturers have argued that if there were a ban on alcohol brands sponsoring sports events, that would leave a significant gap in funding for sports associations and fixtures that would need to come from elsewhere.

In 2009, when the federal government was considering acting against alcohol sponsorship of and advertising through sporting codes and fixtures, it was estimated this would cost the codes some \$300 million annually.

The then chief executive officer of the AFL, Andrew Demetriou, claimed, 'It would cripple football.'

Cricket Australia's then spokesperson, Peter Young, similarly claimed, 'The danger with a simplistic approach like "let's ban alcohol sponsorship of sport" is that all you do is significantly damage sport.'

Diageo, the makers of Bundaberg Rum and Johnnie Walker, claimed via a spokesperson, 'We use our sports sponsorships to deliver responsible drinking campaigns that help drive better behaviours.'

More recently, in 2013, the head of corporate relations for Diageo, Ailish Hanley, stated, 'Any investment that goes into sports codes has a benefit to the wider community so that's a factor that needs to be considered.'

Both these announcements from Diageo stress the community benefits that the company supports via its sporting sponsorship.

In 2009, the NRL chief executive David Gallop made related claims. Mr Gallop stated, 'Our sponsors do a great deal of work promoting positive messages about responsible drinking and anyone who suggests sports could simply replace their support without substantial financial hardship is mistaken.'

By 2012, even the then federal government which had actively campaigned against alcohol sponsorship of sport had shied away from imposing a total ban.

The then health minister, Tanya Plibersek, stated, 'We're not interested in, you know, over the top policing in this area. We know that a lot of sports depend on alcohol sponsorship.'

5. Advertising from alcohol manufacturers makes an important contribution to free-to-air channels' revenues

Conventional free-to-air television channels are facing unprecedented competition from other types of service all vying for viewer attention.

In addition to satellite TV, digital technology now makes available a range of other subscriber services. Apple TV, Netflix and Quickflix, for example, all give subscribers access to a wide range of streamed films and made-for-television series. Smart TVs and various casting devices will allow viewers to access these programs for discretionary audience viewing. David Knox, an analyst who writes for the industry blog TV Tonight, has stated, 'We're all still drawn to content but the way we watch has changed dramatically and the power has shifted back towards the viewer. Yes, we still watch live in big numbers but we also timeshift, use catch-up, watch DVDs, use second screens and there are big numbers illegally downloading shows that are not fast-tracked.'

The average prime-time live audience in metropolitan areas for Channel Nine dropped by a third between 2005 and 2013, excluding Easter and the Summer Olympics, according to media analyst Fusion Strategy. Channel Seven shed 23 per cent over that time. While the live audience on Ten fell by more than 50 per cent. Such a decline in audience has a large impact on the rates these channels can charge advertisers and so their very existence is at risk.

Sport, especially live-to-air sport remains prime content for these stations. Nine's revenue, for example, was boosted by coverage of the London Olympic Games and two Ashes cricket series. It is in this context that the link between alcohol and sport becomes vitally important for the free-to-air channels. Sport attracts viewers and alcohol manufacturers see promotional advantages in advertising during sport telecasts.

It is therefore not surprising that Free TV has proposed allowing alcohol advertising during all weekend sports telecasts, not, as is currently the case, only during those that are live to air. It is also to be expected that the channels have sought to increase their advertising revenue by increasing by an hour a day the time given to 'adult' programming. This will allow a further hour a day during which alcohol advertising can be telecast.

Further implications

The commercialisation of sport in Australia has dramatically increased the profits to be made by players, clubs and associations; however, it has also dramatically increased the costs associated with running the sport. Sponsorship has become an accepted (and some would argue necessary) part of the sporting landscape. The difficulty is the public health costs associated with such sponsorship.

Governments have sought for decades to harness the public health benefits of Australians' passion for sport. They have sought to use this enthusiasm to get young people, in particular, to become more physically active. However, such efforts are frustrated at the source, when alcohol advertising during and sponsorship of sporting events confuses the message received by young players and spectators. The health benefits of participating in sport are dramatically undermined, if not negated, if part of that participation becomes an encouragement to drink alcohol to excess.

In Australia, both State and Commonwealth governments have implemented programs that provide a replacement source of funding for activities sponsored by alcohol. When Health

Promotion Foundations such as VicHealth (Victoria) and Healthway (Western Australia) were initially established, a key

function was to provide alternative sources of funding for sports and cultural organisations reliant on tobacco sponsorship.

More recently, the Federal Government established the Community Sponsorship Fund to provide alternatives to alcohol industry sponsorship for local sporting and cultural organisations and events and, in exchange for Federal Government funding, twelve of Australia's top sporting Codes signed a pledge to shun alcohol sponsorship. To expand these funding programs, some commentators have suggested that, much like was done with tobacco, a proportion of the excise duty currently gathered by governments from alcohol sales could be set aside for funding sporting and cultural events.

In the current political climate, where so much emphasis is being placed on governments exercising fiscal restraint, such a move is likely to prove unattractive to governments. Yet in the longer term, while we struggle as a country to reduce the burdens placed on our health care system, reducing the harm caused by excessive alcohol consumption is a major benefit.

A number of countries have banned alcohol sponsorship without any significant impact on cultural and sporting sectors. The sponsorship of sports by alcohol brands is prohibited in

France, Norway, Denmark, Russia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Turkey, Jordan, Mauritius, Algeria, Qatar and Indonesia.

Although France has had a longstanding ban in place, it has successfully hosted various international sporting events, such as the 1998 FIFA World Cup and, most recently, the multi-nation Heineken Cup Rugby competition. The latter event was renamed the H-Cup in France and references to the alcohol beverage company Heineken were omitted from media coverage and merchandise associated with the event. The fact that upcoming Football World Cups are to be hosted by two countries which ban alcohol sponsorship of sports (Russia in 2018 and Qatar in 2022) suggests that alcohol sponsorship bans do not undermine the capacity to host international sporting events.

As free-to-air television stations struggle in a diminishing sector, the appeal of alcohol advertising is likely to become greater. However, if the nexus between sport and alcohol through sponsorship could be broken, there would presumably be many advertisers prepared to vie for the chance to advertise substantially during sport telecasts.

Please note: some of the material discussed within this outline was first addressed in issue outline No.8/2013. It may be of interest to readers to see the manner in which the issue has developed in the intervening period.

Newspaper items used in the compilation of this issue outline

Links to newspaper items associated with this issue outline can be found in the Internet Information section above.