# Alcohol summit highlights industry failure

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A national alcohol summit has shown how young people are regularly exposed to alcohol marketing and highlighted industry’s inability to self-regulate. The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) has today endorsed a call by the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA) for the establishment of a major Parliamentary Inquiry to examine the issue. The National Summit on Alcohol Marketing to Young People at Parliament House in Canberra highlighted how pervasive alcohol advertising and promotion has become through the promotion and sponsorship of music festivals and sporting events, and in the online space across digital platforms and social media. Noting the failure of industry self-regulation to protect young people from exposure to alcohol advertising, FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn says the current industry voluntary code has proven ineffective for over two decades and the shifting media landscape has only served to make it less relevant. “Media has changed. The way companies advertise and promote their products has changed and so has the way we receive them. We can’t expect a code developed in the 90’s, before Twitter, and before Facebook, to be capable of regulating marketing and advertising practices in this new digital age,” Mr Thorn said. Mr Thorn has echoed calls by the AMA and NAAA for the introduction of government regulation. “Eighty per cent of alcohol consumed by young people aged 14 to 24 is consumed in ways that put their health and the health of others at risk, and in absence of effective regulation, the government can no longer stand on the sidelines and observe,” Mr Thorn said. Mr Thorn says this isn’t just the health sector’s view, and points to FARE’s Annual Alcohol Poll which indicates that Australian’s want action to curtail alcohol advertising and promotion “A majority of Australians recognise that alcohol advertising and promotion influences the behaviour of people under 18, and over two thirds of Australian adults support a ban on alcohol advertising before 8:30pm. The current self-regulatory environment is failing to protect Australians youth and the government needs to move to an effective government regulatory regime,” Mr Thorn said.

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