# Buried government report calls for overdue reform of alcohol advertising

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### The Commonwealth Government is being urged to establish an independent review of Australia’s broadcast and digital alcohol advertising guidelines.

An expert report, buried by the Commonwealth Government for over a year has called for far-reaching changes to the rules governing alcohol advertising.

Among its 30 recommendations, the report calls for the loophole that currently allows the advertising of alcohol before 8:30pm during live sport broadcasts on weekends and public holidays to be closed, and for Pay TV alcohol advertising practices be brought into line with free to air TV.

Still yet to be formally released, the Australian National Preventive Health Agency (ANPHA) final report, *Alcohol advertising: The effectiveness of current regulatory codes in addressing community concern*, was obtained by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) under a freedom of information request.

FARE Chief Executive, Michael Thorn, says it is inexcusable that the government attempted to bury the report at a time when the industry is actively moving to expose children to even greater levels of alcohol advertising.

“The expert report confirms what we already know. The current system is broken. The loophole that increases children’s exposure to alcohol advertising is the most glaring and egregious shortcoming, but is far from the only failing of the current system. It’s disappointing, but perhaps not surprising that while Free TV Australia  actively lobby to allow for even greater alcohol advertising, the government sat on its hands and did its best to keep this report buried,” Mr Thorn said.

The comprehensive report, handed to the Commonwealth Government in April 2014, includes a total of 30 recommendations. Among those, a call for government to legislate to control alcohol advertising and marketing if industry fails to voluntarily remove the live sports broadcast exemption.

“ANPHA recommended the industry be given twelve months to get its own house in order, to close the alcohol advertising loophole and to implement far reaching reform of the industry’s Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code. Failing that – and make no mistake, to date the industry has categorically failed – ANPHA recommended that government legislate to control alcohol advertising and marketing,” Mr Thorn said.

Mr Thorn says despite the delay of 17 months, the report’s release comes at a critical juncture and repeated his call for a government-instigated review to resolve the failings of the current self-regulatory regime.

“The current self-regulatory framework is failing our children. It’s leaving them exposed to harmful alcohol advertising.  More damning, is industry’s efforts to weaken that framework further. With Free TV signalling the intention to further weaken their own code, it is now time for government to admit that in its current form, Australia’s alcohol advertising and marketing regulations are providing inadequate protection to our children, and to signal its intention to fix this,” Mr Thorn said.

[view media release in pdf](https://www.fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Media-Release-BURIED-GOVERNMENT-REPORT-CALLS-FOR-OVERDUE-REFORM-OF-ALCOHOL-ADVERTISING-Final.pdf)

[view the report](https://www.fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Alcohol-Advertising-Final-Report-30-April-2014.pdf)

### Metadata