# Alcohol Tax Open Letter

## Open letter: Put the health, wellbeing and safety of Australians first and abandon any plans to cut the price of alcohol

For us all, the most important thing is the health and wellbeing of our families and communities. Right now, this includes doing all we can to prevent people from contracting COVID-19 and also preventing the shadow pandemics of worsening mental health and increases in family violence, both of which are exacerbated by alcohol.

As health, social and community organisations and advocates, we strongly oppose any moves to reduce the price of alcohol through reductions in the beer and spirit excise in the next Budget or as an election commitment. It is well established that decreasing the price of alcohol results in increases in alcohol use and the associated health and social harms.¹

Any reductions to the price of alcoholic products would be absolutely devastating, at a time when we are seeing increases in the many harms from alcohol that negatively impact on far too many Australians.

Between 2019 and 2020, we saw an 8.3% increase in the rate of alcohol-induced deaths.² We saw an approximate doubling in calls to the National Alcohol and other Drug (AOD) hotline from early 2020, compared to the same period in 2019.³ There have also been reports of increased involvement of alcohol in family violence incidents.⁴

These alcohol harms are the result of significant increases in alcohol sales during the pandemic. Alcohol manufacturers and retailers have been making super profits, with an increase of 29% in revenue between 2019 and 2021, resulting in an additional $3.6 billion from alcohol retail sales.⁵

Any reductions in alcohol excise rates would result in alcohol being cheaper relative to the cost-of-living, and result in increases in alcohol harm. A reduction to the usual level of taxation revenue would also lower government resources that are desperately needed to manage this pandemic.

We urge you to abandon any plans to cut the excise of alcoholic products, and to prioritise the health, wellbeing and safety of families and communities.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr Tanya Buchanan**
CEO, Cancer Council Australia

**Professor Fiona Stanley AC,FAA, FASSA, FAHMS**
Patron, Telethon Kids Institute
Distinguished Research Professor, University of Western Australia

**Ms Patricia Turner**
CEO, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)

**Ms Shanna Whan**
CEO and Founder, Sober in the Country (SITC)

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Executive Officer, Victorian Alcohol & Drug Association (VADA)

**Ms Louise Gray**
CEO, NOFASD Australia

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President, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM)

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Physician, University of New South Wales

**Mrs Cynthia Kilah**
District Secretary, Independent Order of Rechabites Queensland

**Ms Kym Valentine**
Member of the Victim Survivors Advisory Council (VSAC), Victoria

**Mr Shane Varcoe**
Executive Director, Dalgarno Institute

**Associate Professor Michael Livingston**
National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University

**Mr Toby Hall**
Group CEO, St Vincent’s Health Australia

**Mr Michael White**
Executive Officer, SA Network of Drug and Alcohol Services (SANDAS)

**Ms Karen Booth**
President, Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA)

**Ms Jill Rundle**
CEO, Western Australian Network of Alcohol & other Drug Agencies (WANADA)

**Dr Danielle McMullen, President**
Australian Medical Association (AMA) (NSW)

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Spokesperson, People’s Alcohol Action Coalition, NT (PAAC)

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Narrawallee, NSW 2539 (Federal seat of Gilmore)

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## Join our community

Will you join the community taking action on alcohol?