# 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)

**Emeritus Research Fellow Professor Carol Bower**   
Telethon Kids Institute

**Dr Gemma Crawford**   
President, Australian Health Promotion Association

**Ms Hayley Foster**   
CEO, Full Stop Australia

**Mr Jamie Crosby**   
CEO, Families Australia

**Ms Caterina Giorgi**   
CEO, Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)

**Dr John Crozier**  
Chair of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (National Trauma Committee) & Co-Chair, National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA)

**Mr Terry Slevin**   
CEO, Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA)

**Dr Anne-Marie Laslett**   
Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Alcohol Policy of Research (CAPR)

**Dr Sandro Demaio**   
CEO, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth)

**Mr Sam Biondo**   
Executive Officer, Victorian Alcohol & Drug Association (VADA)

**Ms Louise Gray**   
CEO, NOFASD Australia

**Dr Clare Skinner**   
President, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM)

**Adjunct Associate Professor Scott Wilson**   
CEO, Aboriginal Drug & Alcohol Council (ADAC)

**Mr Andy Moore**   
CEO, Hello Sunday Morning (HSM)

**Dr Ingrid Johnston**   
CEO, Australasian College of Road Safety

**Mr Paul Hateley (Major)**   
Head of Government Relations   
The Salvation Army Australia Territory

**Dr Gabrielle O’Kane PhD, MPH, BSc, Dip Nutr & Diet**   
CEO, National Rural Health Alliance

**Mr Robert Hunt**  
CEO, Dietitians Australia

**Professor Michael Farrell**   
Director, National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC)

**Jennifer Duncan**  
CEO, Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council (AADC)

**Dr Erin Lalor**  
CEO, Alcohol and Drug Foundation

**Ms Louise Wightman**  
Chair, Maternal, Child and Family Health Nurses Australia (MCaFHNA)

**Professor Peter Miller**   
Director, Centre for Drug use, Addictive and Anti-social behaviour Research (CEDAAR)

**Professor Elizabeth Elliott AM FAHMS FRSN**   
Professor of Paediatrics and Child Health, University of Sydney

**Emeritus Professor Ian Webster AO, FRSN**   
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)

**Dr John Boffa**   
Spokesperson, People’s Alcohol Action Coalition, NT (PAAC)

**Mr Robert Stirling**   
CEO, Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies

**Ms Jody Wright**   
Executive Director, Drug Awareness & Relief Foundation (Australia)

**Professor Jake Najman**   
Chair, Queensland Coalition for Action on Alcohol (QCAA)

**Ms Abigail Wetherton**   
Community Development Officer, Odyssey House NSW

**Dr Rosemary Stanton OAM**   
Public Health Nutritionist

**Dr Hester Wilson BMed (Hons) FRACGP FAChAM MMH**   
General Practitioner and Staff Specialist in Addiction Medicine

**Ms Alison Lai**   
CEO, Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council Tasmania (ATDC)

**Dr Alex Wodak AM**   
Ambassador, Harm Reduction Australia

**Professor Simone Pettigrew**   
Director, Health Promotion and Behaviour Change, The George Institute for Global Health

**Ms Julie McCrossin AM**   
Broadcaster and Cancer Advocate

**Dr Jeff McMullen AM**   
Journalist, Author, Film maker

**Mr Brett Holmes**   
General Secretary, NSW Nurses & Midwives’ Association (NSWNMA)  
Branch Secretary, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) NSW Branch

**Professor James Smith**   
Deputy Dean Rural and Remote Health – NT, Matthew Flinders Professor (Health and Social Equity), College of Medicine & Public Health, Flinders University

**Professor Nick Lintzeris**   
President, Australasian Chapter of Addiction Medicine (AChAM)

**Professor Adrian Dunlop**   
President-elect, Australasian Chapter of Addiction Medicine (AChAM)

**Ms Maria Mitchell**   
Manager, The Ulladulla & Districts Community Resources Centre

**Ms Joy Marie Butler**   
President, WCTU (Woman’s Christian Temperance Union) Australia Ltd

**Ms Anne Bergen**   
President, WCTU (Woman’s Christian Temperance Union) Victoria

**Dr Libby Topp**   
Narrawallee, NSW 2539 (Federal seat of Gilmore)

**Dr Emma Gilberg MBBS FRACGP**   
General Practitioner, Lakelands Medical Centre

**Dr Michael Tam, BSc(Med) MBBS MMH(GP) FRACGP**   
Staff Specialist in General Practice, South Western Sydney Local Health District

**Dr Ignatius Eric Hadinata MBBS BMedSci FRACGP**  
Barwon Family Medical Practice

**Dr Deborah Wiens MD, FRACGP, FRACP(CHAM)**   
Addiction Medicine Specialist, Metro North Hospital and Health Service

**Dr Mahendran Gajaharan**   
General Practitioner, Addiction Medicine

**Dr Paul Grinzi**   
General Practitioner, Royal Park Medical

**Dr Maggie Brady**   
Honorary Associate Professor, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, the Australian National University

**Dr Lyn Crehan**   
Riverlands Alcohol & Other Drugs Center

**Dr Chris Davis BSc MBChB DCH DFSRH FRACGP**   
Chief Medical Officer, Clean Slate Clinic and GP East Sydney Doctors

**Dr Nicholas Pelzer**   
General Practitioner, Newhealth Medical Centre

**Dr Alison Taylor**   
General Practitioner, Trial Bay Family Practice

**Dr Jenny James MBBS, DCH, MPM**  
General Practitioner, Aboriginal Medical Service Western Sydney

**Dr Claire Wilkinson**   
NHMRC Senior Research Fellow, University of New South Wales (UNSW)

**Mr Tony Brown**   
Chairperson, Hunter Multicultural Community Drug Action Team

**Dr Kashif Murtaza MBBS, MWH, FRACGP**   
General Practitioner, DPV Health and Nexus Primary Health

**Dr Noel Plumley**   
Addiction Medicine Specialist

**Dr Christine Longman**   
General Practitioner, The Western Medical Centre

**Dr Joanne Woodford MBBS FRACGP**   
General Practitioner, Margate Medical Centre

**Dr Ferghal Armstrong FAChAM, FRACGP**   
Addiction Medicine Specialist & General Practitioner

**Dr Michael Atalla FRACGP, MBChB, MRCGP, Diploma In Skin Cancer Surgery, M(Med)Sci-GP, D(OBST)**   
Skin Cancer Doctor

**Dr Andrew McDonald FRACGP, Grad. Dip Alcohol & Drug Studies**   
General Practitioner, The Ballarat Group Practice

**Professor Billie Bonevski**   
Professor and Lead of Public Health, College of Medicine & Public Health, Flinders University

**Dr Antony Bolton MBBS FRACGP**   
Addiction Medicine & General Practitioner

**Dr Michelle Atkinson B Med (Newc) FRACS (A.Orth.A.)**   
State Chair, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) NSW

**Dr Terry Lu**  
General Practitioner, Longford clinic, Tasmania

**Dr Kathy James**  
General Practitioner, Special interest Addiction Medicine

**Dr Layla Yasmeen**   
General Practitioner, Wentworthville medical and dental centre

**Dr Elizabeth Connor**  
Branch President, Public Health Association of Australia (WA Branch)

**Dr Isabel Hanson MBBS, BSc, BA (Hons)**   
General Practitioner, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Registrar

**Professor Leanne Hides**  
Senior Research Fellow & Clinical Psychologist Deputy Director, Centre for Youth Substance Abuse Research (CYSAR)

**Professor Jacqueline Bowden**   
Director, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA)

**Dr Chris Davis BSc MBChB DCH DFSRH FRACGP**  
Chief Medical Officer, Clean Slate Clinic and GP East Sydney Doctors

**Dr Rob Phair**  
President, Rural Doctors Association Victoria (RDAV)

**Dr Sarah Chalmers**  
President, Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)

**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)

**Emeritus Research Fellow Professor Carol Bower**   
Telethon Kids Institute

**Dr Gemma Crawford**   
President, Australian Health Promotion Association

**Ms Hayley Foster**   
CEO, Full Stop Australia

**Mr Jamie Crosby**   
CEO, Families Australia

**Ms Caterina Giorgi**   
CEO, Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)

**Dr John Crozier**  
Chair of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (National Trauma Committee) & Co-Chair, National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA)

**Mr Terry Slevin**   
CEO, Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA)

**Dr Anne-Marie Laslett**   
Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Alcohol Policy of Research (CAPR)

**Dr Sandro Demaio**   
CEO, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth)

**Mr Sam Biondo**   
Executive Officer, Victorian Alcohol & Drug Association (VADA)

**Ms Louise Gray**   
CEO, NOFASD Australia

**Dr Clare Skinner**   
President, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM)

**Adjunct Associate Professor Scott Wilson**   
CEO, Aboriginal Drug & Alcohol Council (ADAC)

**Mr Andy Moore**   
CEO, Hello Sunday Morning (HSM)

**Dr Ingrid Johnston**   
CEO, Australasian College of Road Safety

**Mr Paul Hateley (Major)**   
Head of Government Relations   
The Salvation Army Australia Territory

**Dr Gabrielle O’Kane PhD, MPH, BSc, Dip Nutr & Diet**   
CEO, National Rural Health Alliance

**Mr Robert Hunt**  
CEO, Dietitians Australia

**Professor Michael Farrell**   
Director, National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC)

**Jennifer Duncan**  
CEO, Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council (AADC)

**Dr Erin Lalor**  
CEO, Alcohol and Drug Foundation

**Ms Louise Wightman**  
Chair, Maternal, Child and Family Health Nurses Australia (MCaFHNA)

**Professor Peter Miller**   
Director, Centre for Drug use, Addictive and Anti-social behaviour Research (CEDAAR)

**Professor Elizabeth Elliott AM FAHMS FRSN**   
Professor of Paediatrics and Child Health, University of Sydney

**Emeritus Professor Ian Webster AO, FRSN**   
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)

**Dr John Boffa**   
Spokesperson, People’s Alcohol Action Coalition, NT (PAAC)

**Mr Robert Stirling**   
CEO, Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies

**Ms Jody Wright**   
Executive Director, Drug Awareness & Relief Foundation (Australia)

**Professor Jake Najman**   
Chair, Queensland Coalition for Action on Alcohol (QCAA)

**Ms Abigail Wetherton**   
Community Development Officer, Odyssey House NSW

**Dr Rosemary Stanton OAM**   
Public Health Nutritionist

**Dr Hester Wilson BMed (Hons) FRACGP FAChAM MMH**   
General Practitioner and Staff Specialist in Addiction Medicine

**Ms Alison Lai**   
CEO, Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council Tasmania (ATDC)

**Dr Alex Wodak AM**   
Ambassador, Harm Reduction Australia

**Professor Simone Pettigrew**   
Director, Health Promotion and Behaviour Change, The George Institute for Global Health

**Ms Julie McCrossin AM**   
Broadcaster and Cancer Advocate

**Dr Jeff McMullen AM**   
Journalist, Author, Film maker

**Mr Brett Holmes**   
General Secretary, NSW Nurses & Midwives’ Association (NSWNMA)  
Branch Secretary, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) NSW Branch

**Professor James Smith**   
Deputy Dean Rural and Remote Health – NT, Matthew Flinders Professor (Health and Social Equity), College of Medicine & Public Health, Flinders University

**Professor Nick Lintzeris**   
President, Australasian Chapter of Addiction Medicine (AChAM)

**Professor Adrian Dunlop**   
President-elect, Australasian Chapter of Addiction Medicine (AChAM)

**Ms Maria Mitchell**   
Manager, The Ulladulla & Districts Community Resources Centre

**Ms Joy Marie Butler**   
President, WCTU (Woman’s Christian Temperance Union) Australia Ltd

**Ms Anne Bergen**   
President, WCTU (Woman’s Christian Temperance Union) Victoria

**Dr Libby Topp**   
Narrawallee, NSW 2539 (Federal seat of Gilmore)

**Dr Emma Gilberg MBBS FRACGP**   
General Practitioner, Lakelands Medical Centre

**Dr Michael Tam, BSc(Med) MBBS MMH(GP) FRACGP**   
Staff Specialist in General Practice, South Western Sydney Local Health District

**Dr Ignatius Eric Hadinata MBBS BMedSci FRACGP**  
Barwon Family Medical Practice

**Dr Deborah Wiens MD, FRACGP, FRACP(CHAM)**   
Addiction Medicine Specialist, Metro North Hospital and Health Service

**Dr Mahendran Gajaharan**   
General Practitioner, Addiction Medicine

**Dr Paul Grinzi**   
General Practitioner, Royal Park Medical

**Dr Maggie Brady**   
Honorary Associate Professor, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, the Australian National University

**Dr Lyn Crehan**   
Riverlands Alcohol & Other Drugs Center

**Dr Chris Davis BSc MBChB DCH DFSRH FRACGP**   
Chief Medical Officer, Clean Slate Clinic and GP East Sydney Doctors

**Dr Nicholas Pelzer**   
General Practitioner, Newhealth Medical Centre

**Dr Alison Taylor**   
General Practitioner, Trial Bay Family Practice

**Dr Jenny James MBBS, DCH, MPM**  
General Practitioner, Aboriginal Medical Service Western Sydney

**Dr Claire Wilkinson**   
NHMRC Senior Research Fellow, University of New South Wales (UNSW)

**Mr Tony Brown**   
Chairperson, Hunter Multicultural Community Drug Action Team

**Dr Kashif Murtaza MBBS, MWH, FRACGP**   
General Practitioner, DPV Health and Nexus Primary Health

**Dr Noel Plumley**   
Addiction Medicine Specialist

**Dr Christine Longman**   
General Practitioner, The Western Medical Centre

**Dr Joanne Woodford MBBS FRACGP**   
General Practitioner, Margate Medical Centre

**Dr Ferghal Armstrong FAChAM, FRACGP**   
Addiction Medicine Specialist & General Practitioner

**Dr Michael Atalla FRACGP, MBChB, MRCGP, Diploma In Skin Cancer Surgery, M(Med)Sci-GP, D(OBST)**   
Skin Cancer Doctor

**Dr Andrew McDonald FRACGP, Grad. Dip Alcohol & Drug Studies**   
General Practitioner, The Ballarat Group Practice

**Professor Billie Bonevski**   
Professor and Lead of Public Health, College of Medicine & Public Health, Flinders University

**Dr Antony Bolton MBBS FRACGP**   
Addiction Medicine & General Practitioner

**Dr Michelle Atkinson B Med (Newc) FRACS (A.Orth.A.)**   
State Chair, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) NSW

**Dr Terry Lu**  
General Practitioner, Longford clinic, Tasmania

**Dr Kathy James**  
General Practitioner, Special interest Addiction Medicine

**Dr Layla Yasmeen**   
General Practitioner, Wentworthville medical and dental centre

**Dr Elizabeth Connor**  
Branch President, Public Health Association of Australia (WA Branch)

**Dr Isabel Hanson MBBS, BSc, BA (Hons)**   
General Practitioner, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Registrar

**Professor Leanne Hides**  
Senior Research Fellow & Clinical Psychologist Deputy Director, Centre for Youth Substance Abuse Research (CYSAR)

**Professor Jacqueline Bowden**   
Director, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA)

**Dr Chris Davis BSc MBChB DCH DFSRH FRACGP**  
Chief Medical Officer, Clean Slate Clinic and GP East Sydney Doctors

**Dr Rob Phair**  
President, Rural Doctors Association Victoria (RDAV)

**Dr Sarah Chalmers**  
President, Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)

1. Elder RW, Lawrence B, Ferguson A, Naimi TS, Brewer RD, Chattopadhyay SK, et al. The Effectiveness of Tax Policy Interventions for Reducing Excessive Alcohol Consumption and Related Harms. American Journal of Preventive Medicine. 2010;38(2):217-29.
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics, ‘Causes of Death, Australia’ (cat no. 3303.0, 29 September 2020).
3. Data supplied by the Australian Government Department of Health
4. Family violence and alcohol during Covid-19, May 2020, [Family-violence-and-alcohol-during-COVID-19\_final.pdf](https://www.womenssafetynsw.org.au/impact/publication/family-violence-and-alcohol-during-covid-19/)
5. Alcohol retail during COVID-19 (2020-2021), February 2022, [Alcohol-retail-during-COVID-19-2020-2021.pdf](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Alcohol-retail-during-COVID-19-2020-2021.pdf)

## Join our community

Will you join the community taking action on alcohol?