# Why Baseball Australia said no to alcohol advertising

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### The culture of alcohol and sport has to be changed from the top

It might be a well-worn sporting idiom, but Baseball Australia is stepping up to the plate to protect children from the harm of alcohol, and I for one, as the Chief Executive Officer of Baseball Australia, could not be prouder.

Junior players and the children and families who support Baseball in Australia are the past, present and future of our sport.

In this, we are not alone. Listen to the head of any sporting code in Australia, be it the professional codes or my fellow National Sporting Organizations in the so called “second tier”, we are all family friendly and about the kids in our sports.

But sporting administrators have a duty of care that goes beyond simply identifying and securing this audience for financial gain.

And it’s fair to ask why we don’t then see a greater alignment between the audience they covet and the values the codes represent.

Our junior competition program *Little League*, which is part of the broader *Little League International* platform, promotes values of citizenship, discipline, teamwork and physical well-being.

We believe these sporting values sum up how most of the eco-system of sport should be lived and visible beyond our strategic plans. Which is why Baseball Australia has pledged to no longer accept alcohol advertising at the national representative level of the game.

In so doing we are the first Australian sporting code to partner with the national campaign, *End Alcohol Advertising in Sport*, which sends a strong message that Baseball Australia is proactively building a sport and a business model for our sport that aligns to a family-friendly and healthier sporting environment.

The partnership with *End Alcohol Advertising in Sport* will see the campaign promoted nationally at Little League games and on Baseball Australia’s digital and media platforms. We will also promote this crucially important campaign to baseball clubs and members throughout Australia.

This is far from an empty gesture. Testament to our serious resolve on alcohol advertising, we recently rejected a sponsorship proposal with an overseas alcohol brand.

Extensive research tells us that exposure to alcohol marketing leads kids to commence drinking at an earlier age, more frequently and at dangerous levels.

We walked away because alcohol is the major contributor to the three leading causes of death among Australian teenagers: unintentional injury, homicide and suicide.

There are plenty of avenues for alcohol advertising that don’t require Baseball Australia or other sports that engage those under 18.

This is not about prohibition – fans at the Australian Baseball League who choose to have a beer at the game can still do so as part of the experience. This is no different to dining out in any venue, club or other institution that serves alcohol responsibly to those old enough to enjoy it.

The Perth Heat in our ABL are already partnered with and have been for some time with Alcohol Think Again organization as an example in our sport.

While Baseball Australia is the first national sporting code to partner with the *End Alcohol Advertising in Sport* campaign, I hope and fully expect that we will soon be joined by other national codes.

Sporting administrators have a duty to lead the organization for the betterment of those that enjoy and play the sport.

This problem cannot be resolved on a case-by-case basis – our sports administrators must realise that the culture of alcohol and sport has to be changed from the top, which means taking serious action that changes the business of sport.

Only then can we proudly execute our duty of care for the health and welfare of all players and our cherished supporter base.

### Metadata

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