

## Action needed to protect kids from alcohol ads in sport

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New research published today in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* has found that Australian children are exposed to enormous volumes of alcohol advertising during live sports broadcasts each year.

The study funded by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) and undertaken by Deakin University analysed the volume of alcohol ads placed by alcohol companies during sport on free-to-air television networks. The study also examined the financial impact to TV networks if alcohol advertising during sport was removed.

The study found that the top 10 alcohol companies placed 10,660 alcohol ads during Australian sports broadcasts over a 12-month period. This amounts to an average of 75 minutes of alcohol advertising each week. Almost half (45 per cent) of the ads aired during children's viewing times (before 8.30pm).

Most of the advertising (89 per cent) aired during the Australian Football League (AFL), National Rugby League (NRL) and cricket.

FARE CEO, Ms Caterina Giorgi, said our children should be able to enjoy sport without being bombarded with alcohol advertising.

"Sport is a big part of the lives of many families across Australia. Having sport saturated with alcohol advertising, particularly at times when so many children are watching, is an appalling marketing tactic used by alcohol companies to recruit new drinkers," Ms Giorgi said.

"At the moment there is a loophole that allows alcohol companies to advertise during children's viewing times when there is a live sports broadcast. This loophole needs to be closed to protect our children from alcohol marketing."

Alcohol advertising was found to be a small proportion of advertising revenue for free-to-air television networks, with alcohol advertising revenue being \$14.4 million for the year.

Alcohol advertising during sports broadcasts equated to less than a maximum of one per cent of network ad revenue in total, with a maximum of 0.5 per cent of their ad revenue coming from alcohol ads in sports broadcasts during children's viewing times.

Lead researcher, Associate Professor Gary Sacks, from Deakin University's Institute for Health Transformation, said removing alcohol advertising during sport will not have major financial impacts on broadcasters, but the potential health and social benefits are substantial.

"We know the association of alcohol and sport normalises drinking and desensitises the community to significant harm caused by alcohol use," A/Prof Sacks said.

"It's time for Australian governments to get serious about protecting children from the harms associated with alcohol marketing. We need higher standards in place so that watching sport on TV doesn't contribute to poor health."

“This study shows that removal of alcohol advertising during televised sports broadcasts would not have any major financial impacts to TV networks, but there are likely to be considerable health and social benefits of reduced exposure to alcohol marketing.”

Read the research report in the latest *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*.

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**About the Research**

The research - *Potential financial impact on television networks of a ban on alcohol advertising during sports broadcasts in Australia* - included an analysis of television advertising data from Nielsen, a commercial market research company.

The data included details of all advertisements for the 10 highest-spending alcohol brands on free-to-air television networks in the five largest capital cities in Australia over a 12-month period (November 2018-October 2019).

Researchers estimated alcohol advertising spend during sports broadcasts. Financial value per network was estimated using ad duration and total spend per channel.

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The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)** is the leading not-for-profit organisation working towards an Australia free from alcohol harms. We do this through developing evidence-informed policy, enabling people-powered advocacy and delivering health promotion campaigns.

FARE has been working with communities across the country to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians for 20 years. To learn more about us and our work visit [www.fare.org.au](http://www.fare.org.au).