



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

HOW THE ALCOHOL INDUSTRY TARGETS ITS UNDERAGE CUSTOMERS OF TOMORROW

4 October 2017: International health experts are increasingly concerned by the deliberate targeting of children by the alcohol industry and the absence of government regulatory frameworks to protect children and keep the industry in line.

Big Alcohol's deliberate and dangerous marketing practices are as much a problem in Australia as they are a global problem and will be a major focus, when researchers and health professionals from around the world attend the Global Alcohol Policy Conference (GAPC) 2017 in Melbourne, this week.

Keynote speaker, Dr David Jernigan, Director of the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, a United States (US) based institute funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health, will present today on the growing body of research that documents the association between exposure to alcohol marketing and the impact on youth drinking and related harms.

Dr Jernigan's latest research, [Alcohol Advertising in Magazines and Underage Readership](#), aimed to identify if underage youth in the US were disproportionately exposed to alcohol advertising in magazines with greater youth readership.

The study analysed the advertising of 680 alcohol brands across 49 magazines between 2006 and 2011.

"What we found was that alcohol brands popular among underage drinkers are more likely than other brands to advertise in magazines with a high underage readership, resulting in a disproportionate and concerning exposure of underage youth," Dr Jernigan said.

The findings point to the complete inadequacy of the alcohol industry's voluntary guidelines in protecting youth from exposure to alcohol marketing, a shortcoming the US shares with Australia

Health experts in Australia have long argued that the current regulation of alcohol marketing in Australia is ineffective and fails to protect children.

A case in point, the Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice is the key instrument to control the placement of alcohol advertising on television, and was reviewed in 2015.

Julia Stafford, Executive Officer of the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth will present a case study at GAPC 2017 on the review, which resulted in significant weakening of existing alcohol advertising provisions.

The analysis identifies the industry forces that shaped the review and ultimately weakened the code in favour of the industry.



“At a time when alcohol advertising and sponsorship in televised sport has never been more aggressive and pervasive, the review should have served as an opportunity to close the egregious loophole that allows alcohol to be advertised on free-to-air TV before 8:30pm on weekends and public holidays. Instead the code was further weakened,” Ms Stafford says.

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) Chief Executive Michael Thorn says that when it comes to televised sport Aussie kids are effectively trapped in a pincer movement, by the sporting codes desperate to capture future fans’ and grow their audience, and Big Alcohol which is very deliberately grooming its customers of tomorrow.

“There is now a mounting and irrefutable body of evidence that points to the ways in which the alcohol industry very deliberately markets alcohol to children. Big alcohol’s motivation is simple. Like tobacco before it, it’s a dying industry if it can’t recruit new customers,” Mr Thorn said.

Mr Thorn is calling on Aussie parents to become a catalyst for change and throw their support behind a campaign to remove alcohol sponsorship from professional sport.

[#BoozeFreeSport](#) is a campaign endorsed and supported by the Public Health Association of Australia, McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth, St Vincent’s Health Australia, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, the Australian Health Promotion Association and the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education.

“A strong majority of Australians want to see an end to alcohol sponsorship in sport. We’re asking Australians to get behind the #BoozeFreeSport campaign and ensure their voices are heard by the Commonwealth Ministers who can address their concerns.” Mr Thorn said.

Dr Jernigan, Ms Stafford and Mr Thorn are available for interview

Media contact:

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<https://www.gapc2017.org.au/>

Media Notes:

GAPC 2017 Conference

WHAT: From 4-6 October 2017, world-leading alcohol policy makers, researchers and practitioners will arrive in Melbourne for the Global Alcohol Policy Conference (GAPC) 2017.

The first of its kind to be held in Australia, GAPC 2017 will build on earlier conferences’ translation of evidence into action, and contribute to the increasing momentum around the world to stop harm caused by alcohol.



GAPC is co-hosted by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA), National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA) and Global Alcohol Policy Alliance (GAPA). The 2017 conference theme is *Mobilising for Change – Alcohol policy and the evidence for action*.

GAPC 2017 will maintain the tradition of focusing on advocacy, overcoming vested interests in alcohol policy development, and the need for international collaboration.

Each day of the GAPC 2017 will be distinct. Through eight plenary sessions, workshops and presentations, a diverse range of national and international experts will provide opportunities for discussion about their research and experience and how these can be applied to alcohol policy environments and reinvigorate efforts to reduce alcohol-related harm worldwide.

WHO: A range of international and national speakers will be available for interview

Please see program for more details.

WHEN: 8:30am to 5:00pm, Wednesday – Friday 4-6 October 2017 ([see full event program here](#)). Advance embargoed copies of GAPC media releases are available on request.

WHERE: Pullman Melbourne Albert Park, 65 Queens Road, Albert Park, Melbourne.

Media can collect passes from the conference registration desk onsite and can pre-register via email to events@phaa.net.au.

CONTACT: Jeremy Henderson 0425 559 710

The **Global Alcohol Policy Alliance (GAPA)** is a network of non-governmental organisations and people working in public health agencies who share information on alcohol issues and advocate evidence-based alcohol policies, “free from commercial interests.”

Resource centres affiliated to GAPA operate in Africa, European Union, South America, South East Asia, USA and Western Pacific regions. <http://globalgapa.org/>

The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)** is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to stop the harm caused by alcohol. Alcohol harm in Australia is significant. Over 5,500 lives are lost every year and more than 157,000 people are hospitalised making alcohol one of our nation’s greatest preventive health challenges.

For over a decade, FARE has been working with communities, governments, health professionals and police across the country to stop alcohol harms by supporting world-leading research, raising public awareness and advocating for changes to alcohol policy. <http://fare.org.au/>

The **Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA)** provides forums for the discussion of public health in Australia and a voice of a wide variety of professional public health workers.

Via the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health (ANZJPH), PHAA provides Australia’s basic public health infrastructure that links those undertaking research in public health and those undertaking policy and program development and implementation. <https://www.phaa.net.au/>

The **National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA)** is a national coalition of health and community organisations from across Australia that has been formed with the goal of reducing alcohol-related harm.

Currently comprising major organisations with an interest in alcohol and public health, the formation of the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol represents the first time such a broad-based alliance has come together to pool their collective expertise around what needs to be done to address Australia’s drinking problems. <http://actiononalcohol.org.au/>