



## MEDIA RELEASE

### For immediate release

## ODI FLOODED WITH HARMFUL ALCOHOL PROMOTION

**13 January 2017:** Health experts are calling on Australian cricket team captain Steve Smith to demonstrate much-needed leadership and support efforts to phase out alcohol sponsors from professional cricket.

As the Victoria Bitter One Day International series kicks off at the Gabba in Brisbane today, the open letter signatories – who represent Australia’s leading alcohol advocacy groups – warn that Cricket Australia is selling its young fans unhealthy and inappropriate messages by flooding the game with alcohol promotions.

“Sadly, professional cricket is saturated with alcohol promotion. It’s almost impossible to know where the game ends and the alcohol marketing begins. What kind of message does this alcohol-drenched culture send to the many impressionable young Australians who tune in to watch their sporting heroes play?”

With Victoria Bitter as the official beer of the Australian Test team and Hardys as the official wine, alcohol will again feature more prominently than the cricket stars from Australia or Pakistan, regardless of how well they perform with bat or ball.

Alcohol brands are in constant view both on the grounds and during television broadcasts of the popular summer sport – from the naming rights and broadcast commercials, through to uniform branding, promotional merchandise, website and the scoreboard, fences, pitch and wickets.

The latest [data](#) shows that 6.2 million children are exposed to 11 million alcohol advertisements during cricket broadcasting, with the majority (72.7 per cent) occurring during daytime hours.

There is strong research evidence, from both international and Australian studies, that exposure to alcohol promotions is associated with young people drinking more and from an earlier age.

This week international scientific journal [Addiction](#) presented the latest evidence on alcohol marketing and its impact on children, making a strong case for urgent intervention.

In light of this research, the signatories urge Steve Smith and Cricket Australia to rethink their toxic association with alcohol sponsors and replace these brands with more appropriate family friendly partnerships.

“Sport is a health promotion activity and its association with an unhealthy product such as alcohol is counter-intuitive at best and harmful at worst. It is time to end this unhealthy relationship. Your support for this much-needed change will make a lasting difference to the lives of young fans.”



Foundation for Alcohol  
Research & Education

This is a problem not limited exclusively to the cricket, with sporting codes such as Tennis Australia, the Australian Football League (AFL), National Rugby League (NRL), Australian Rugby, and Formula 1 also profiting from similar marketing and sponsorship contracts with alcohol companies. The alcohol industry uses these relationships as a 'Trojan horse' to enhance its marketing efforts.

Former rugby league great Steve Ella has passionately led recent calls for an end to alcohol sponsorship in sport by fronting the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)'s [Booze Free Sport](#) campaign and calling out irresponsible NRL promotions.

"Since my days proudly representing New South Wales in the State of Origin, I have become increasingly dismayed as the Blues have become ever more saturated with alcohol sponsorship. Today, the game I love is awash with alcohol promotion. And that's a problem," says Mr Ella.

The campaign is reflective of the strong community sentiment for separating alcohol marketing from sport, with recent [polling](#) showing that 60 per cent of Australians think alcohol sponsorship should be banned from sport, while 70 per cent believe alcohol advertising should be banned on television before 8.30pm.

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn says that Australia cares deeply about this issue and is ready to see change.

"Alcohol harm is one of our nation's greatest preventive health challenges, yet young people are being targeted and recruited by alcohol industry advertising like the tobacco industry preyed on children in the past. It's time to inspire and ignite change across all sporting codes by removing alcohol sponsors from Australia's favourite games," said Mr Thorn.

**ENDS**

**Michael Thorn and Steve Ella are available for interview. Coalition representatives also available for comment include Michael Moore and Dr John Crozier, co-Chair's of the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol and signatories to the open letter.**

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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. To find out more visit [www.fare.org.au](http://www.fare.org.au).