



# Beer that's cheap as water

Drink	Price
Medium coffee	\$4.20
Orange Juice	\$2.10
Mother energy drink	\$2.90
Mount Franklin	\$1.85
Coca-Cola	\$2.00
Farmers Union Iced Coffee	\$2.15

**CHEAP AS CHIPS:** The full-strength Henninger beer is as cheap as most other non-alcoholic drinks in its range

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# Budget booze raises binge drinking fears



BEER that costs as little as a can of Coke is an "invitation for young people to get drunk", an expert says.

At the price of \$1.99 for an individual 330ml bottle, the full-strength Henninger beer imported from Frankfurt can be bought at Vintage Cellars.

McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth director Professor Mike Daube said alcohol this cheap was worrying.

"What we're seeing with beer at that price is that it's an invitation to drink too much," he said. "These prices will appeal to the young and it's hard not to see this as

partly targeted to younger drinkers."

"Beer at these prices will lead to more drinking by young people, more crime, more road crashes and more violence."

With a high tax on alcopops, there are concerns cheap beer could be an attractive alternative for cash-strapped teenagers.

Professor Daube said the Government should mandate a price level that alcohol could not be sold under.

"When alcohol is as cheap as bottled water, then I think we're looking down the barrel at some very big social

problems," he said.

"I am very worried about the impact on young people because we know price is an issue."

AMP Capital Investors chief economist Shane Oliver said the beer could be cheap for many reasons.

"The Aussie dollar has been so strong," he said.

"Five or six years ago, the normal was about .60 but coming into this year it's up at about .70 euros."

"That would make products coming in from Europe and Germany much cheaper.

"Aussies drink Aussie beers, so it could be a mar-

keting strategy to introduce people to the German beer. They might be trying to get people to have a taste of it and then put the price up later."

Consumer group Choice spokesman Christopher Zinn said prices would always fluctuate. "People probably have traditional ideas that beer should cost more than milk because it was like that a long time ago," he said.

"The prices are much more flexible because markets are more open and the cost of shipping has dropped."