

# MEDIA RELEASE

## NEW ALCOHOL WARNING LABELS NEED STRENGTHENING

New alcohol warning labels announced today by the drinks industry's DrinkWise organisation are long overdue recognition by the industry that change is needed – but fall a long way short of anything that will have a real impact.

Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) spokesperson and Director of the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth (MCAAY), Professor Mike Daube, said, “Australian alcohol consumption is at a 20 year high. It is good that the drinks industry accepts the need for warnings – but their proposed warnings look more like public relations than public health. Decisions about health and health warnings should not be left to the industry.”

“There is good research showing that warnings need to be forceful, with new and specific health information. These warnings give us phrases such as “Kids and alcohol don't mix” or “Is your alcohol use harming yourself or others?”, which will hardly stop any drinkers in their tracks. There appears to be nothing about some of the most serious consequences of alcohol, from brain damage to road crashes or cancer. There is nothing that will give a moment's pause for thought to kids who are binge-drinking.”

“The recent ‘Labelling Logic’ report for Australian government on food labelling (the Blewett Report) recommended alcohol warnings, but only as part of a comprehensive educational campaign targeting public health problems.”

“We welcome the industry's acceptance that alcohol products should at last carry health warnings – but their feeble initiative should not in be used to prevent action by governments to impose strong, factual warnings that will make a real difference”.

**For further information/comment:**

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