

MEDIA RELEASE

WA alcohol campaign needs a reality check

The Brewers Association of Australia and New Zealand (Brewers Association) has called for a reality check in response to the Western Australian (WA) Government's launch of phase two of its alcohol and cancer campaign.

Brewers Association CEO, Mrs Denita Wawn, said that "the statements contained in the campaign needs to be put into perspective".

According to The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare there are over 100,000 new cases of cancer diagnosed in Australia each year. Of those only around 3% are believed to be attributed through excessive consumption of alcohol.

"The campaign ignores the fact that if alcohol is attributable to the disease it will probably be due to excessive consumption and can be interlinked with other lifestyle and genetic risk factors," said Mrs Wawn.

Likewise the campaign does not recognise the balance between health benefits and risks associated with alcohol consumption.

For example, research indicates that cancer is primarily a disease of the elderly and the number of elderly people affected with a cancer that is associated with excessive alcohol consumption is offset by an approximately equal number of elderly people whose lives may be saved by the reduction in cardiovascular risk associated with alcohol consumption¹.

Mrs Wawn said "The Brewers Association supports any government that wishes to provide informed choice to the community about the importance of moderate consumption but we do not believe a scare campaign assists in stopping excessive drinking.

"A decision on how much to drink should be determined by weighing up the benefits and risks of alcohol consumption from a health and social perspective for each individual.

"It would be more appropriate to provide a campaign on enabling individuals to understand their own overall risk from drinking alcohol given other dietary and lifestyle decisions and genetics", said Mrs Wawn.

ENDS

For media comment contact Mrs Denita Wawn, Chief Executive Officer, Brewers Association of Australia and New Zealand, 0416 145 233

¹ Connor J et al. The burden of death disease and disability due to alcohol in New Zealand, NZMJ 118, 2008