

MEDIA RELEASE

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The bloated cost of Alcohols Harm outweighs slim tax revenue



The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) is very concerned that government revenue from alcohol is only half the actual cost posed by the harms associated with alcohol.

The Australian Institute of Criminology today released a paper entitled, 'The societal costs of alcohol misuse in Australia' which details government revenue from alcohol taxation as totalling \$7.075 billion in 2010. This figure compares to a cost to the Australian community from alcohol harms of \$14.352 billion in the same year.

The paper takes into account a range of factors including alcohol related law and order, health, traffic and productivity expenses in producing these statistics.

Mr Sam Biondo, EO of VAADA says, 'alcohol is the most prevalent substance in the alcohol and other drug treatment statistics, consisting of 47% of all Victorian treatment episodes in 2010 – 11, up from 36% in 2002-03.'

'Ambulance callouts in Victoria for alcohol have increased from 6187 in 2009-10 to 6946 in 2010-11', Mr Biondo says.

Disturbingly, law and order involuntary alcohol and other drug treatment in prisons and in the community has also been inundated with alcohol related presentations, increasing from 1500 in 2000 to over 4500 in 2010. This is accentuated by the pending prison 'capacity crisis' of 2016, as identified by the Victorian Auditor-General.

Furthermore, the former Victorian Police Commissioner has cited that alcohol is involved in half of all police family violence callouts.

Mr Biondo says, 'these disturbing statistics speak for themselves, but, like salt in the wound, the alcohol industry enjoys continued permission to advertise at sporting events for which it's advertising not only receives a tax deduction but acculturates us all into complacency. Alcohol advertising should progress down the same path as that for tobacco and we need to commence a real dialogue on an alcohol taxation system.'

The social, health and economic cost of alcohol is a cost which Australians should not carry whilst the alcohol industry continues to enjoy a boom.

VAADA is the peak body that represents over 100 Alcohol and other Drug services across Victoria. On a daily basis these services are dealing with the effects of harmful alcohol and other drug consumption.

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Sam Biondo on 0414 974 121 for comment or if unavailable, David Taylor on 0413 914 206.

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association Inc. acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

