

**ADCA response to DoHA Consultation Paper for the  
Expansion of the National Binge Drinking Strategy:  
Community Sponsorship Fund**

**18 November 2010**

ABN: 39 008 455 525

## Introduction

The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing is seeking the community's views regarding the implementation of the Community Sponsorship Fund to provide an alternative to alcohol sponsorship for community sporting and cultural organisations.

The Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia (ADCA) is the peak, national, non-government organisation representing the interests of AOD sector, providing a national voice for people working to reduce the harm caused by alcohol and other drugs. ADCA works collaboratively with the government, non-government, business and community sectors to promote evidence-based, socially just approaches aimed at preventing or reducing the health, economic, and social harm caused by alcohol and other drugs to individuals, families, communities, and the nation.

## Background

The National Preventative Health Taskforce released its final report in September 2009, titled *Australia: the Healthiest Country by 2020*. The Taskforce put forward 136 recommendations and 35 areas for action, tackling obesity, tobacco, and alcohol as key drivers of chronic disease, and the resultant health system and social costs (Moodie et al., 2009).

As part of its response to the report, the Australian Government has announced \$25 million dollars over four years for a Community Sponsorship Fund to provide an alternative to alcohol sponsorship for community sporting and cultural organisations. To be eligible for sponsorship under the community fund, organisations will need to agree not to accept sponsorship from the alcohol industry.

## Aim

As the peak body for the AOD sector ADCA is pleased to respond to the consultation paper and has chosen to address the draft objectives of the Community Sponsorship Fund while concurrently addressing those questions that are relevant to the function of ADCA.

## Summary

ADCA's recommendations contain the following measures;

- That the Australian Government re-evaluates its decision not to action the 3.1 recommendation outlined in the National Preventative Health Taskforce's final report *Australia: the Healthiest Country by 2020*;

- Any corporations whose business is mainly concerned with liquor should be classified as being part of the 'alcohol industry' for the purposes of this sponsorship fund, but only if it is for the ultimate purpose of making a profit;
- That as funding is limited; sponsorship funding should be restricted to those who currently receive funding from the alcohol industry, those who received funding from the alcohol industry within 24 months of the date of application for funding and be administered on a basis of need according to a recommended criterion;
- That all branding of groups classified as being part of the alcohol industry be removed from uniforms, venues, websites and any other promotional material belonging to any and all community sporting or cultural groups;
- That organisations receiving funding from the Community Sponsorship Fund should promote a Government logo and/or a message that helps to raise the awareness of the dangers associated with alcohol misuse;
- That funding should be coupled with other measures to ensure that these community organisations do not return to relying on sponsorship from the alcohol industry after the funding period closes;
- ADCA supports the following measures and initiatives to effectively reduce risky consumption of alcohol at community sporting and cultural events;
  1. The use of Liquor Accords in local communities;
  2. Comprehensive data collection on alcohol outlets and alcohol sales;
  3. A reassessment addressing alcohol availability;
  4. National guidelines on alcohol outlet density, including temporary liquor licences.

ADCA's responses to the issues raised clearly show the significant degree of commitment and priority accorded by it to this program; a commitment it would be keen to convert into practical implementation. ADCA would be pleased to have the opportunity to further explore the matters raised with DoHA.

## Consideration of the issues

1. ***Information about the operational context of community sporting and cultural organisations, and the impact of these contexts on the appropriate size, duration and timing of grants.***

ADCA is not in a position to judge the extent of individual organisations' interest in the Community Sponsorship Fund and how that might be measured in dollar terms, or the duration of the grants.

2. ***Suggestions as to the conditions that funded organisations would need to accept to receive funds from the Community Sponsorship Fund.***

### **OBJECTIVE:**

*Provide support to community-based organisations to provide alcohol-free environments for minors.*

*(Relevant Consultation Paper questions:*

- A) *For the purposes of eligibility criteria for the Community Sponsorship Fund, should the definition of 'alcohol industry' include community-based licensee sponsorships and 'in-kind' sponsorship arrangements?*
- B) *Should Community Sponsorship Fund disbursements be restricted to organisations that are current or previous recipients of 'alcohol industry' funding?)*

### **ADCA RESPONSE:**

Any corporations whose business is mainly concerned with liquor should be classified as being part of the 'alcohol industry' for the purposes of this sponsorship fund, but only if it is for the ultimate purpose of making a profit.

The receipt of funds, resources and/or services to a community sporting or cultural group from any outside group should be considered as sponsorship.

ADCA recommends that as funding is limited (\$25 million over four years); sponsorship funding should be restricted to those who currently receive funding from the alcohol industry, or those who received funding from the alcohol industry within 24 months of the date of application for funding.

The Community Sponsorship Fund should also be administered on a basis of need;

- To groups that have a lengthy history of accepting sponsorship from the alcohol industry;
- To community sporting or cultural groups who have little option but to accept funding from the alcohol industry i.e. those in remote areas;
- To groups that have a tendency to have a culture of binge drinking after or during activities i.e. this could include sporting teams with participant age ranges of 18-25, where the culture of these teams can often leave an impression on younger players; and small-scale music

festivals that hold their events at local bars and pubs, where funding would help to both involve minors and remove the link between alcohol and these type of activities.

This criterion will directly target community sporting and cultural groups that have the strongest risk of promoting a link between alcohol and these types of activities.

**OBJECTIVE:**

*Reduce the exposure of young people and children to alcohol imagery and branding.*

*(Relevant Consultation Paper questions:*

*C) Should organisations that receive 'alcohol industry' sponsorship be required to remove all alcohol branding imagery e.g. from uniforms, venues?*

*E) Any other issues?)*

**ADCA RESPONSE:**

The suggestion is that all branding of groups classified as being part of the alcohol industry be removed from uniforms, venues, websites and any other promotional material belonging to the community sporting or cultural groups receiving funding from the Community Sponsorship Fund.

ADCA recommends that all branding of groups classified as being part of the alcohol industry be removed from uniforms, venues, websites and any other promotional material belonging to *any and all* community sporting or cultural groups, *including those who do not receive funding from the Community Sponsorship Fund*. This may result in a loss of funding for community sporting and cultural groups, creating implications for their survival, so this should be implemented in stages, or over a period of time.

ADCA recommends that organisations that receive funding from the Community Sponsorship Fund should promote a Government logo and/or a message that helps to raise the awareness of the dangers associated with alcohol misuse e.g. ADCA's Drugs Action Week slogan is *Alcohol is a drug – TOO!*

To ensure that these community organisations do not return to relying on sponsorship from the alcohol industry after the funding period closes – effectively making the Community Sponsorship Fund a short-term solution – funding should be coupled with other measures, including;

- Information on how to source alternative sponsorship; assisting these groups to make the transition from these sources of sponsorship to more appropriate alternatives;
- A communications package provided to all groups receiving funding from the Community Sponsorship Fund, ensuring that the key purpose of the National Binge Drinking Strategy is delivered effectively. This might consist of a visual presentation and promotional material such as a poster, flyers and fact sheets.

**OBJECTIVE:**

*Remove links between alcohol and the sporting and cultural activities that young people are often directly involved in. These links tend to normalise a strong association between alcohol consumption and these activities.*

*(Relevant Consultation Paper questions:*

*A) Any other issues?)*

**ADCA RESPONSE:**

Sponsorship of sporting events by the alcohol industry is common practice in Australia, and the potential is there for children to learn to associate alcohol with sport and sporting success.

ADCA strongly endorses the Australian Government's decision to action recommendations 2.1 and 2.2 to build on its National Binge Drinking Campaign, and disseminate alcohol education material through health services and liquor stores nationally. It is ADCA's position that the Australian Government now re-evaluate its decision not to action the 3.1 recommendation to:

In a staged approach phase out alcohol promotions from times and placements which have high exposure to young people aged up to 25 years, including;

- Advertising during live sport broadcasts;
- Advertising during high adolescent/child viewing;
- Sponsorship of sport and cultural events (e.g. sponsorship of professional sporting codes; youth-oriented print media; internet-based promotions); and
- Consider whether there is a need for additional measures to address alcohol advertising and promotion across other media sources.

(Moodie et al., 2009)

Research by Collins and Lapsley (2008) revealed that total social costs of alcohol abuse in Australia could be reduced by an estimated \$2.5 billion dollars as a result of moving from no advertising bans to partial bans (2004/05 prices), and by an estimated \$3.8 billion dollars as a result of moving from no advertising ban to a full ban (2004/05 prices) (Collins & Lapsley, 2008).

Historically, Australia has recognised the strong links between advertising and health behaviours, having restricted the practice of tobacco sponsorship of sport, as part of a total ban on tobacco advertising; but, to date, there has not been similar regulatory action in relation to alcohol (Jones, Phillipson & Barrie, 2010).

If the alcohol industry is banned from advertising on TV from 5.01am to 8.29pm during weekdays, the intention being to protect young people from advertising that might unduly influence them, why should weekends and public holidays be exempt from this restriction?

ADCA calls for a system of alcohol advertising and promotion that is regulated by Federal Government and thus independent of the alcohol industry and whose main objective is to reduce the health and social harm from alcoholic beverages.

**OBJECTIVE:**

*Reduce risky consumption of alcohol through appropriate responsible service of alcohol provisions and sporting and cultural events.*

*(Relevant Consultation Paper questions:*

- A) For organisations that either hold or will obtain a liquor licence concurrently with funding from the Community Sponsorship Fund, what undertakings or requirements should the department seek to ensure alcohol is served in a responsible manner?)*

**ADCA RESPONSE:**

National guidelines on alcohol outlet density are required and ADCA supports any reassessment addressing alcohol availability and the enforcement of legislation in jurisdictions. To this end ADCA envisages national guidelines stressing a risk management approach to the questions of planning and liquor licensing decision making related to outlet densities. This approach would also encompass temporary liquor licences.

Recognising the critical importance of research and evaluation to inform policy in this area, ADCA supports the development of nationally consistent, comprehensive and current data collection on alcohol outlets and alcohol sales.

Furthermore ADCA encourages the use of Liquor Accords and supports the initiatives taken on by local communities in an effort to reduce alcohol-related harm and anti-social behaviour in and around licensed premises in those areas.

These are all steps which can be taken by both communities and State and Territory Governments to help change attitudes toward the over consumption of alcohol during these types of activities.

**Conclusion**

Following consultation with strategic stakeholders across the AOD / NGO sector ADCA strongly recommends that the Community Sponsorship Fund would be best managed through an independent process outside the Department of Health and Ageing, but reporting to the Department.

Considering the nature of the Community Sponsorship Fund, ADCA is well positioned as the national peak for the AOD / NGO sector, is apolitical, and is an independent not for profit organisation that could be considered to coordinate and manage this initiative on behalf of DoHA. ADCA has established enduring collaborative partnerships throughout the sector, and the broader NGO Community.

The relationships and networks in place would enable a smooth and effective engagement of all parties, including the extensive range of community sporting and cultural organisations associated or concerned with addressing binge drinking among young people.

Should ADCA be invited to expand on this expression of interest, we must state at the outset that the organisation would require appropriate funding to establish a dedicated team to deliver the outcomes envisaged by Government.

## **Bibliography**

Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia (ADCA). (2010). *ADCA's policy position on Alcohol*, policy position, May, 2010.

Collins, D. and Lapsley, H. (2008). *The avoidable costs of alcohol abuse in Australia and the potential benefits of effective policies to reduce the social costs of alcohol*. *National Drug Strategy Monograph Series no. 70*. Canberra: Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

Jones, S. C., Phillipson, L. & Barrie, L. R. (2010). Most men drink... especially like when they play sports - alcohol advertising during sporting broadcasts and the potential impact on child audiences. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 10, (1-2), 59-73.

Moodie, R. & Daube, M. & Carnell, K. & Australia. National Preventative Health Taskforce. & Australia. Dept. of Health and Ageing. (2009). *Australia: the healthiest country by 2020: national preventative health strategy - the roadmap for action*. Canberra: National Preventative Health Taskforce.