

21 February 2022

The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP
Treasurer
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Josh.Frydenberg.MP@aph.gov.au

Cc: The Hon Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care

Dear Treasurer

Put the health, wellbeing and safety of Australians first and abandon any plans to cut the price of alcohol

For us all, the most important thing is the health and wellbeing of our families and communities. Right now, this includes doing all we can to prevent people from contracting COVID-19 and also preventing the shadow pandemics of worsening mental health and increases in family violence, both of which are exacerbated by alcohol.

As health, social and community organisations and advocates, we strongly oppose any moves to reduce the price of alcohol through reductions in the beer and spirit excise in the next Budget or as an election commitment. It is well established that decreasing the price of alcohol results in increases in alcohol use and the associated health and social harms.¹

Any reductions to the price of alcoholic products would be absolutely devastating, at a time when we are seeing increases in the many harms from alcohol that negatively impact on far too many Australians.

Between 2019 and 2020, we saw an 8.3% increase in the rate of alcohol-induced deaths.² We saw an approximate doubling in calls to the National Alcohol and other Drug (AOD) hotline from early 2020, compared to the same period in 2019.³ There have also been reports of increased involvement of alcohol in family violence incidents.⁴

These alcohol harms are the result of significant increases in alcohol sales during the pandemic. Alcohol manufacturers and retailers have been making super profits, with an increase of 29% in revenue between 2019 and 2021, resulting in an additional \$3.6 billion from alcohol retail sales.⁵

Any reductions in alcohol excise rates would result in alcohol being cheaper relative to the cost-of-living, and result in increases in alcohol harm. A reduction to the usual level of taxation revenue would also lower government resources that are desperately needed to manage this pandemic.

We urge you to abandon any plans to cut the excise of alcoholic products, and to prioritise the health, wellbeing and safety of families and communities.

Yours sincerely,



SIGNATORIES ON FOLLOWING PAGE

1 Elder RW, Lawrence B, Ferguson A, Naimi TS, Brewer RD, Chattopadhyay SK, et al. The Effectiveness of Tax Policy Interventions for Reducing Excessive Alcohol Consumption and Related Harms. American Journal of Preventive Medicine. 2010;38(2):217-29.
2 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Causes of Death, Australia' (cat no. 3303.0, 29 September 2020).
3 Data supplied by the Australian Government Department of Health
4 Family violence and alcohol during Covid-19, May 2020. [Family-violence-and-alcohol-during-COVID-19_final.pdf \(fare.org.au\)](https://www.fare.org.au/family-violence-and-alcohol-during-COVID-19_final.pdf)
5 Alcohol retail during COVID-19 (2020-2021), February 2022, [Alcohol-retail-during-COVID-19-2020-2021.pdf \(fare.org.au\)](https://www.fare.org.au/alcohol-retail-during-COVID-19-2020-2021.pdf)

Dr Tanya Buchanan

CEO, Cancer Council Australia

Professor Fiona Stanley AC, FAA, FASSA, FAHMS

Patron, Telethon Kids Institute
Distinguished Research Professor, University of Western Australia

Ms Patricia Turner

CEO, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)

Ms Shanna Whan

CEO and Founder, Sober in the Country (SITC)

Emeritus Research Fellow Professor Carol Bower

Telethon Kids Institute

Dr Gemma Crawford

President, Australian Health Promotion Association

Ms Hayley Foster

CEO, Full Stop Australia

Mr Jamie Crosby

CEO, Families Australia

Ms Caterina Giorgi

CEO, Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)

Dr John Crozier

Chair of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (National Trauma Committee) & Co-Chair, National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA)

Mr Terry Slevin

CEO, Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA)

Dr Anne-Marie Laslett

Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Alcohol Policy of Research (CAPR)

Dr Sandro Demaio

CEO, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth)

Mr Sam Biondo

Executive Officer, Victorian Alcohol & Drug Association (VADA)

Ms Louise Gray

CEO, NOFASD Australia

Dr Clare Skinner

President, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM)

Adjunct Associate Professor Scott Wilson

CEO, Aboriginal Drug & Alcohol Council (ADAC)

Mr Andy Moore

CEO, Hello Sunday Morning (HSM)

Dr Ingrid Johnston

CEO, Australasian College of Road Safety

Mr Paul Hateley (Major)

Head of Government Relations
The Salvation Army Australia Territory

Dr Gabrielle O'Kane PhD, MPH, BSc, Dip Nutr & Diet

CEO, National Rural Health Alliance

Mr Robert Hunt

CEO, Dietitians Australia

Professor Michael Farrell

Director, National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC)

Jennifer Duncan

CEO, Australian Alcohol and other Drugs Council (AADC)

Dr Erin Lalor

CEO, Alcohol and Drug Foundation

Ms Louise Wightman

Chair, Maternal, Child and Family Health Nurses Australia (MCaFHNA)

Professor Peter Miller

Director, Centre for Drug use, Addictive and Anti-social behaviour Research (CEDAAR)

Professor Elizabeth Elliott AM FAHMS FRSN

Professor of Paediatrics and Child Health, University of Sydney

Emeritus Professor Ian Webster AO, FRSN

Physician, University of New South Wales

Mrs Cynthia Kilah

District Secretary, Independent Order of Rechabites Queensland

Ms Kym Valentine

Member of the Victim Survivors Advisory Council (VSAC), Victoria

Mr Shane Varcoe

Executive Director, Dalgarno Institute

Associate Professor Michael Livingston

National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University

Mr Toby Hall

Group CEO, St Vincent's Health Australia

Mr Michael White

Executive Officer, SA Network of Drug and Alcohol Services (SANDAS)

Ms Karen Booth

President, Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA)

Ms Jill Rundle

CEO, Western Australian Network of Alcohol & other Drug Agencies (WANADA)

Dr Danielle McMullen, President

Australian Medical Association (AMA) (NSW)

Dr John Boffa

Spokesperson
People's Alcohol Action Coalition, NT (PAAC)

Mr Robert Stirling

CEO, Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies

Ms Jody Wright

Executive Director, Drug Awareness & Relief Foundation (Australia)

Professor Jake Najman

Chair, Queensland Coalition for Action on Alcohol (QCAA)

Ms Abigail Wetherton

Community Development Officer, Odyssey House NSW

Dr Rosemary Stanton OAM

Public Health Nutritionist

Dr Hester Wilson BMed (Hons) FRACGP FACHAM MMH

General Practitioner and Staff Specialist in Addiction Medicine

Ms Alison Lai

CEO, Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council Tasmania (ATDC)

Dr Alex Wodak AM

Ambassador, Harm Reduction Australia

Professor Simone Pettigrew

Director, Health Promotion and Behaviour Change, The George Institute for Global Health

Ms Julie McCrossin AM

Broadcaster and Cancer Advocate

Dr Jeff McMullen AM

Journalist, Author, Film maker

Mr Brett Holmes

General Secretary, NSW Nurses & Midwives' Association (NSWNMA)
Branch Secretary, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) NSW Branch

Professor James Smith

Deputy Dean Rural and Remote Health – NT, Matthew Flinders Professor (Health and Social Equity), College of Medicine & Public Health, Flinders University

Professor Nick Lintzeris

President, Australasian Chapter of Addiction Medicine (ACHAM)

Professor Adrian Dunlop

President-elect, Australasian Chapter of Addiction Medicine (ACHAM)

Ms Maria Mitchell

Manager, The Ulladulla & Districts Community Resources Centre

Ms Joy Marie Butler

President, WCTU (Woman's Christian Temperance Union) Australia Ltd

Ms Anne Bergen

President, WCTU (Woman's Christian Temperance Union)

Dr Libby Topp

Narrawallee, NSW 2539 (Federal seat of Gilmore)

Dr Emma Gilberg MBBS FRACGP

General Practitioner, Lakelands Medical Centre

Dr Michael Tam, BSc(Med) MBBS MMH(GP) FRACGP

Staff Specialist in General Practice, South Western Sydney Local Health District

Dr Ignatius Eric Hadinata MBBS BMedSci FRACGP

Barwon Family Medical Practice

Dr Deborah Wiens MD, FRACGP, FRACP(CHAM)

Addiction Medicine Specialist, Metro North Hospital and Health Service

Dr Mahendran Gajaharan

General Practitioner, Addiction Medicine

Dr Paul Grinzi

General Practitioner, Royal Park Medical

Dr Maggie Brady

Honorary Associate Professor, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, the Australian National University

Dr Lyn Crehan

Riverlands Alcohol & Other Drugs Center

Dr Chris Davis BSc MBChB DCH DFSRH FRACGP

Chief Medical Officer, Clean Slate Clinic and GP East Sydney Doctors

Dr Nicholas Pelzer

General Practitioner, Newhealth Medical Centre

Dr Alison Taylor

General Practitioner, Trial Bay Family Practice

Dr Jenny James MBBS, DCH, MPM,

General Practitioner, Aboriginal Medical Service Western Sydney

Dr Claire Wilkinson

NHMRC Senior Research Fellow, University of New South Wales (UNSW)

Mr Tony Brown

Chairperson, Hunter Multicultural Community Drug Action Team

Dr Kashif Murtaza MBBS, MWH, FRACGP

General Practitioner, DPV Health and Nexus Primary Health

Dr Noel Plumley

Addiction Medicine Specialist

Dr Christine Longman

General Practitioner, The Western Medical Centre

Dr Joanne Woodford MBBS FRACGP

General Practitioner, Margate Medical Centre

Dr Ferghal Armstrong FACHAM, FRACGP

Addiction Medicine Specialist & General Practitioner

Dr Michael Atalla FRACGP, MBChB, MRCP, Diploma In Skin Cancer Surgery, M(Med) Sci-GP, D(OBST)

Skin Cancer Doctor

Dr Andrew McDonald FRACGP, Grad. Dip Alcohol & Drug Studies

General Practitioner, The Ballarat Group Practice

Professor Billie Bonevski

Professor and Lead of Public Health, College of Medicine & Public Health, Flinders University

Dr Antony Bolton MBBS FRACGP

Addiction Medicine & General Practitioner

Dr Michelle Atkinson B Med (Newc) FRACS (A.Orth.A.)

State Chair, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) NSW

Dr Terry Lu

General Practitioner, Longford clinic, Tasmania

Dr Kathy James

General Practitioner, Special interest Addiction Medicine

Dr Layla Yasmeen

General Practitioner, Wentworthville medical and dental centre

Dr Elizabeth Connor

Branch President, Public Health Association of Australia (WA Branch)

Dr Isabel Hanson MBBS, BSc, BA (Hons)

General Practitioner, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Registrar