

Submission to Senate Committee on:

Inquiry into Alcohol Toll Reduction Bill 2007

I fully support terms of reference and objectives of this Bill. I fully support the aim of creating a culture of responsible drinking, and the facilitation of reducing the alcohol toll resulting from excessive alcohol consumption.

Following is my submission to the Senate Committee:

1. Require health information labels on all alcohol products.

- I believe this would have a greater impact on alcohol toll reduction, if the labels were to also carry health warning as the tobacco industry has been required.

2. Restrict TV and radio alcohol advertising to after 9pm and before 5am, to stop alcohol being marketed to young people.

- I support this, however I submit that TV advertising be moved later to 10pm.

3. Require all alcohol ads to be pre-approved by a government body comprising an expert from the medical profession, alcohol and drug support sector, accident trauma support sector and the alcohol industry.

- I agree in principal with this however, I recommend that there be an indigenous representative and that the alcohol and drug sector include in particular the ARIBAs group which is able to give invaluable evidence of the alcohol toll on the lives of the unborn FASD (Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder, as well as the impact of Alcohol and other Substance Related Brain Impairment. www.arbias.org.au

4. Ban alcohol advertisements which are aimed at children or which link drinking to personal, business, social, sporting, sexual or other success.

- A whole generation is at risk because of the un-restricted advertising of alcohol and it's promotion as the means to increase social interaction, make new friends, and worse of all the false impression that it will be the means of making someone who is lacking self- esteem to be the 'life of the party', uninhibited in their social interaction.
- IN today's world where thousands of young suffer from low self-esteem this creates a very high risk factor for their futures.
- Children, as they enter adolescence, may not be aware of either a family history of alcoholism or the tendency to addiction. These young people may there start on the downward spiral to alcoholism or drug addiction though even one drink. This is a risk and a cost that is far too high!
- The Business world well knows that even though many deals are initiated and celebrated with alcohol, most wise business people would know that one is far better to make decision with no alcohol in the system. Alcohol may well then be the source of some failed business deals due to the 'Dutch courage actor' it is

blight on our society to promote to children and teens that drinking alcohol is the way to do business.

- The Social Sporting and sexual aspect of alcohol advertising.
- Football and other sporting heroes: A code of conduct MUST be implemented within all sporting bodies and ALL breeches of such a code of conduct must be treated seriously by all clubs, if they wish to remain licensed as sporting clubs, supported in the courts of law, and backed by appropriate legal requirements. Behaviour of our 'so called heroes' over the last 12 months is NOT something that Australians could be proud of and certainly these people must not be seen as the role models of our children. They need to be treated like the disgrace they are and banned from their chosen sport till such time as they have learned to be adults and role models.
- A few nights ago my husband and I were watching a Football game and an advertisement cam on for Jim Bean. A young attractive woman of probably South American extraction made sexual comments on the effect of Jim Bean on footballers and how she would 'enjoy' what they would do with her etc under the effects of Jim Bean. Implication: footballers will be sexually successful under the influence of Jim Bean. I had not seen this previously and recommend that it taken off air.

5. Other issues: Licences I am concerned at the extending of trading hours in clubs and hotels. Particularly in Qld and no doubt other places, there has been a huge increase in street crime particularly in the vicinity of these premises.

- I would like to submit that the hours of trading be reduced to close at 12mn.
- That a code of behaviour is enforced both inside and outside of these premises and any breeches of this be treated as breaking the law. That this behaviour be treated with heavy fines and if repeated a jail sentence.

6. Alcohol toll on unborn babies:

In previous years Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder has been seen as a disease that more commonly impacted on indigenous communities, however more recently, it is acknowledged that this disorder is becoming more prevalent across the community as particularly young and single mothers indulge in higher alcohol intake during their pregnancies. This disease impact on the ability of a child to learn and social skills and the functionality of families and in time will increase the health burden of our Nation. This is a highly preventable disease that is believed to affect up to 1 in 100 of Australian babies. www.arbias.org.au

All Alcohol advertising must also include the warning of the affects to the unborn child and therefore the warning re drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

7. Substance related Acquired Brain Impairment:

While NOT all brain impairment is due to alcohol abuse, this impairment may cause temporary, permanent or partial disability. This burden of health cost to our Nation is unnecessary and very preventable. Advertising MUST include warnings of these health issues. . www.arbias.org.au

8. Alcohol toll on families through abuse:

Though it is difficult to find actual statistics that confirm alcohol as the source of much domestic violence, it is agreed that it many times alcohol enflamed behaviour

that is the source of domestic violence and sexual abuse against intimate partners in the home. As seen in the statement below, though alcohol was the source of violence, women felt that the men were actually to blame.

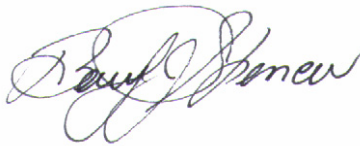
Alcohol's role in men's violence to women is a controversial issue. In the United Kingdom, little research has been conducted on the link between the two, and no in-depth studies have sought the views of the women who suffer such violence. This article reports on in-depth research with 20 women that aimed to hear their views on the role of alcohol in men's violence to them. The results of the research show that women do not blame alcohol for their partner's violence; they hold the men, not their alcohol consumption, responsible for their actions. [©2006 SAGE Publications. All rights reserved. For further information, visit [SAGE Publications link.](#)]

These statics below are an inditement on Australian society and a huge cost to the Nation.

- Intimate partner violence has wide ranging and persistent effects on women's physical and mental health and contributes 8.8% to the total disease burden in Victorian women aged 15 to 44 and 3% in all Victorian women.
- It is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15 to 44, being responsible for more of the disease burden than many well-known preventable risk factors such as high blood pressure, smoking and obesity.
- Direct health consequences for women exposed to violence include depression, anxiety and phobias, suicide attempts, chronic pain syndromes, psychosomatic disorders, physical injury, gastrointestinal disorders, irritable bowel syndrome and a variety of reproductive consequences.
- The influence of the abuse can persist long after the abuse has stopped and the more severe it is, the greater its impact on a woman's physical and mental health.
- The economic consequences of violence against women are also increasingly recognised with Australian businesses losing at least \$500 million per year because of the effects of family violence on their employees
- <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Content.aspx?topicID=115#top>

Even if it were agreed that even half of this violence were due to indulgence in Alcohol, then it would be an argument for the reduction in alcohol intake.

Therefore I submit that the Inquiry into Alcohol Toll Reduction Bill 2007 find in favour of the terms of reference and take action to reduce alcohol indulgence in our Nation.



Beryl J. Spencer

Mrs. Beryl Spencer,

"What lies behind us & what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us" Ralph Emerson