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National Alliance calls for Alcohol health labelling

The National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA) has called for early action to introduce evidence-based alcohol labels and product information, following the release by the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (AER) of a policy paper on alcohol labelling. The NAAA is urging the Federal Government to make the proposed warning labels mandatory.

Professor Mike Daube, Co-Chair of the Alliance and Director of the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth, said clear and effective health warnings for alcohol were long overdue.

“Australians are simply not aware of the acute and long-term health and social problems caused by alcohol,” said Professor Daube.

“There is a world of difference between the soft, barely noticeable warnings favoured by the drinks industry and the kind of warnings that are needed”

“It is also absurd that alcohol products are exempt from the requirement to provide consumer information required for all other food and beverage products.”

“The warnings proposed cover themes such as alcohol and injury, drink driving, alcohol and pregnancy, alcohol and cancer, and the impact of alcohol on the developing brain”

“Mandatory health warnings on alcohol products and packaging, as part of a comprehensive program including public education, will provide consumers with clear information about the wide range of disease and injury linked to alcohol, and help reduce Australia’s massive toll of alcohol-related harm.”

Professor Daube said that health warning labels can be effective in both raising awareness of health risks and changing people’s behavior, because they target consumers at critical decision points – when they are buying and when they are drinking alcohol.

“Health labels also have strong community support, with research conducted by VicHealth showing that 85 per cent of Victorians support health advisory labels on alcohol.”

“Decisions about health information and warnings should be made by governments and health authorities, not by an industry whose first interest is in maximising sales of its products”.

The NAAA represents more than 50 health and community organisations from across Australia.

For further information/comment:

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