



BREWERS SLAMMED FOR DESPERATE AND MISLEADING ATTEMPT TO MARKET BEER AS A HEALTHY PRODUCT

10 December 2015: A new digital advertising campaign launched today pokes fun, and holes, in attempts by Australian brewers, Lion and Carlton & United Breweries, to market beer as a healthy choice for Australians.

Slamming the brewer's marketing as deceptive and misleading, the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), says that alcohol companies should be prohibited from using language that can mislead consumers into thinking that alcohol products have positive health qualities when they don't.

In response to those industry efforts, FARE will today launch a counter-advertising campaign, [*Beer the obvious truth*](#).

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn says most consumers see past the industry spin.

"Despite what the brewers might imply, beer still hasn't made its way into the food pyramid. The big brewers talk up their low-carb, low-calorie, sugar-free or preservative-free beer. But the reality is that if you're concerned about your weight and your health, there's just no ignoring the alcohol," Mr Thorn said.

Leading nutritionist Dr Rosemary Stanton OAM says that all beer – whether it be full-strength, mid-strength, low-carb or sugar-free – has kilojoules and claims about being almost sugar-free makes products seem healthier than they are.

"Health concerns about beer relate to its alcohol content, not its very modest carb content. It's the alcohol that contributes the kilojoules, at a rate of 29 kilojoules per gram. Beer contains very little in the way of valuable nutrients. There's next to no protein, and no significant amount of other nutrients. More importantly, the alcohol these products contain negatively affects your body's ability to metabolise kilojoules you've consumed from foods or from your stored fat," says Dr Stanton.

The *Beer the obvious truth* health campaign will counter the brewer's misleading marketing efforts ahead of the summer months, with Lion's *Beer the beautiful truth* campaign in its sights.

An integral part of Lion's campaign is the promotion of its newly introduced nutrition information panel (NIPs) across its range of beers.

While public health organisations including FARE have long argued that alcohol products should have warning labels together with the same nutrition labelling requirements of other foods and beverages,



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Mr Thorn says the inclusion of a nutrition information panel alone does not magically make a product nutritious and should not be used as a marketing tool to mislead consumers.

“Lion would have you believe that their new nutrition information labels are a generous and civic-minded gift to consumers. When in truth, the new labels are nothing more than a misleading marketing ploy to turn around beer consumption that this year has sunk to a 68-year low as Australians turn to other types of beverages,” Mr Thorn said.

Far from being healthy, alcohol can cause more than 200 diseases and conditions including cancer, heart and liver disease. In Australia, it is responsible for 5,500 alcohol-related deaths and a further 157,000 hospitalisations each year.

FARE has renewed its calls for the introduction of government regulated health warning labels to replace the industry’s current weak consumer messages.

“If Australia’s brewers can roll out new product labelling across its entire product range when it sees an opportunity to give its beer a marketing edge, then consumers are justified in asking why Lion, Carlton & United Breweries and the entire industry continue to resist calls to introduce effective warning labels which would provide consumers with valuable health information that allows them to make a truly informed decision about the alcohol products they consume,” says FARE Director of Policy and Research Caterina Giorgi.

Ms Giorgi called out Lion for its cynical appropriation of community concern about sugar.

“Consumers have a right to expect truth in advertising, but Lion have distorted the truth on this occasion. That’s not good enough, and no level of spin and distortion can be acceptable when it’s an attempt to market a drug as a healthy choice,” Ms Giorgi said.

Michael Thorn and Caterina Giorgi are available for interview.

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For further information visit: www.beertheobvioustruth.com

FARE acknowledges Lion-Beer, Spirits & Wine Pty Ltd and the ‘Beer the Beautiful Truth’ campaign for the purposes of Copyright Act.

Alcohol Truth is a Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education campaign that puts the facts at the forefront of discussion on alcohol. Alcohol Truth explores alcohol industry efforts to counter evidence-based strategies to tackle alcohol harm in Australia.



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The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)** is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to stop the harm caused by alcohol. Alcohol harm in Australia is significant. Over 5,500 lives are lost every year and more than 157,000 people are hospitalised making alcohol one of our nation's greatest preventative health challenges.

For over a decade, FARE has been working with communities, governments, health professionals and police across the country to stop alcohol harms by supporting world-leading research, raising public awareness and advocating for changes to alcohol policy. In that time, FARE has helped more than 750 communities and organisations, and backed over 1,400 projects around Australia.