

Media Statement

AER WELCOMES THE GOVERNMENT'S INTRODUCTION OF RTD EXCISE

Excise Tariff Amendment (2009 Measures No.1) Bill 2009 Customs Tariff Amendment (2009 Measures No.1) Bill 2009

11th February 2009: The Alcohol Education Rehabilitation Foundation (AER), Australia's leading alcohol harm minimisation body, today welcomed the Government's introduction of RTD tax bills 'Excise Tariff Amendment (2009 Measures No.1) Bill 2009' and 'Customs Tariff Amendment (2009 Measures No.1) Bill 2009' into the Parliament.

AER supports the Government's commitment to providing solutions to reduce binge drinking in our communities and acknowledges the Prime Minister, Mr Kevin Rudd, Health Minister Nicola Roxon and Senator Jan McLucas for their continued focus on addressing the importance of alcohol and its harms; the first Australian Government to give such priority to alcohol issues.

AER Chair Professor Ian Webster said "Through health, education, awareness and advertising campaigns funded by the Federal Government and organisations like AER, Australians are beginning to recognise the inherent danger in binge or risky drinking and to reconsider their behaviour. Alcohol can be consumed safely, so personal responsibility is of primary importance".

"The alcopops tax rise has been effective in deterring high consumption of this product in young people, particularly women. AER has economic modelling data which demonstrated, prior to the RTD tax increase, that young binge-drinkers preferred to drink RTD spirits. They are attractive and easy to drink, delivering alcohol at a relatively low price. As the 2007 National Household Drug Survey showed, teenagers and teen girls especially were bingeing on RTDs with alarming regularity" Professor Webster added.

AER welcomes the Henry Inquiry into the Taxation System and the Government's preparedness to examine the economics of the public health and social aspects of alcohol tax. AER has, as part of 19 public health organisations, made a formal submission to that inquiry.

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Alcohol Education & Rehabilitation Foundation (AER): AER is a not-for-profit company established in 2001 with a mandate to 'change the way we drink'. AER was initially established with funding from a federal government grant and is now a perpetual trust. AER has built up a comprehensive understanding of the alcohol and other drugs (AOD) sector and is a leading grant giving body for community groups and programs within the alcohol sector. Through donations, grants and utilisation of the perpetual trust: AER seeks to prevent alcohol and licit substance abuse especially amongst disadvantaged, indigenous and young people; to support evidence-based treatment, research and prevention programs in the AOD sector; and to highlight the dangers of licit substance abuse and promote the responsible consumption of alcohol within the community. AER has funded more than 850 programs throughout Australia (30% of which are within the Indigenous community) including numerous programs which contribute to shifting community attitudes towards a responsible approach to alcohol consumption. For further information: <http://www.aerf.com.au>