

Media Release –3rd April 2009

AER WELCOMES END TO TV SPORT & ALCOHOL LINK DURING FAMILY VIEWING TIME

First step towards a responsible advertising & marketing code

The Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (AER) today welcomed the Distilled Spirits Industry Council of Australia's (DSICA) announcement they will place a moratorium on TV advertising of alcohol brands represented by the Spirits Council before 9pm for a period of twelve months, with its effects to be assessed.

AER Chairman Scott Wilson said the move is an encouraging step towards the more responsible alcohol marketing and advertising code called for by Senator Steven Fielding, AER and many public health organisations.

“The delinking of alcohol and sport must be a top priority for a Government and an industry concerned about alcohol abuse and binge drinking. We hope DSICA's initiative provides leadership to the other alcohol industry groups and that they will follow suit.

“Alcohol misuse costs Australians well over \$15 billion a year in health and social impacts. Governments and the health sector have been the traditional custodians of the issue and we are encouraged to see some responsibility being shared by the alcohol industry. However, AER believes broader action needs to be taken to address the often dangerous links between alcohol and sport.

“This proactive announcement by DSICA covers a handful of alcohol brands that pay significant amounts to promote their products to sporting enthusiasts, young and old. It is important to ensure that alcohol brands across the board adopt a more responsible advertising code, and we believe all alcohol promotion, advertising and sponsorship of sport at all levels should be Government regulated. Without this regulation in place, we risk giving other alcohol brands an opportunity to take centre stage - and the game, the players and the audience will suffer the hangover.”

Mr Wilson said AER would like to see the twelve month moratorium on advertising outlined by DSCIA effectively and independently assessed.

“Sound methodology and evidence base must be used in order to properly gauge the effectiveness of the advertising ban. To complement this evaluation, AER encourages the formation of a taskforce to review and revise the effects of sponsorship, marketing and advertising of alcohol products in sport at all levels – and across all advertising and marketing platforms.

“AER has funded a number of programs which address alcohol awareness and safe alcohol use within sporting codes, clubs and community groups. The foundation firmly believes the two can happily coexist provided an alcohol policy outlining responsible consumption is supported.

“We recognize the need for a graduated approach, and look forward to striking a balance that will ensure greater health, wellbeing and sporting pride for all Australians,” said Mr Wilson.

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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>