

MEDIA STATEMENT

AER WELCOMES GOVERNMENT'S REINTRODUCTION OF ALCOPOPS MEASURE

15th April 2009: The Alcohol Education Rehabilitation Foundation (AER), Australia's leading alcohol harm minimisation body, today welcomed the Federal Government's reintroduction of an RTD tariff proposal with effect from 14 May 2009. The proposal includes the introduction of legislation to validate the revenue collected between 27 April 2008 and 13 May 2009.

AER Chair Scott Wilson said, if successful, the RTD tax measure would provide a key step forward in the area of Government-led alcohol policy reform. "We are pleased the Government continues its commitment to providing solutions to reduce binge drinking and the impacts of alcohol misuse in our communities. AER hopes to see greater bipartisan support for this legislation next month – particularly in light of positive research findings and the potential impact this measure could have on our preventative health system.

"The RTD tariff is important on many levels. Early research shows the alcopops measure has been effective in deterring high consumption of this product. This measure also provides an important way to offset the cost of alcohol related harms.

"The health related impact of alcohol misuse is costing the Australian economy more than **\$15.3 billion** each year. When we talk about the price of drinking, this is the real cost that needs to be considered by all Australians as well as governments. Without the appropriate funding, our health and social services can no longer afford to carry the growing burden created by excessive drinking. Therefore, it's important that a significant portion of the tax revenue is channelled towards the health and community organisations who facilitate and deliver the frontline services in this area.

"AER recognises that taxation and alcohol pricing measures do not provide a panacea, and that a range of policy steps are needed. However, this alcopops bill would pave the way for investment in other elements of the national strategy to reduce alcohol related harms," said Mr Wilson.

AER research shows **Australians would support more money being spent on supporting alcohol related issues. Galaxy research(**) shows more than three quarters** of Australians believe the recent revenue collected from the alcopops tax

should be channelled into helping people affected by excess drinking or used for education campaigns about the effects of drinking.

AER also continues to support the introduction of a fair taxation model which assists in reducing excessive alcohol consumption in advance of the Henry Inquiry into the Taxation System.

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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 950 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>

() About the Galaxy Research:** The Galaxy study was commissioned by AER. It was part of the Galaxy Omnibus on the weekend of 12-14 September 2008. The Interviews were conducted using CATI (computer assisted telephone interviewing) with telephone numbers randomly selected from electronic White Pages. It was a national survey (excluding NT) and was weighted by age, gender and location (based on ABS population estimates) to the national population. There were 1046 respondents aged 18 years and above.