

Media Release

RACP: SEAL THE LOOPHOLE FOR ALCOHOL ADVERTISING AND SPORTS

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The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) has again called upon the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to close a loophole that allows alcohol companies to advertise to children during sports broadcasts.

RACP President Dr Catherine Yelland said ACMA needed to start protecting children from alcohol advertising.

“The evidence tells us that promoting alcohol to children at an early age leads to increased awareness of alcohol and more positive attitudes towards drinking. This type of marketing leads children and adolescents to start drinking earlier and makes young drinkers prone to binge drinking patterns,” explained Dr Catherine Yelland.

“There’s currently an advertising loophole where alcohol companies can promote their products before 8:30pm, on weekends and public holidays, at times when children are most likely to be watching live sport on television.

“On every other day of the week, during every other program on free-to-air television, ACMA recognises that alcohol advertisements are harmful to children and does not allow for them to be shown before 8.30pm. So why don’t the same rules apply to sports broadcasts?”

Research shows there is ongoing community concern about alcohol promotion in sport. Of those surveyed, 54 per cent were concerned by influence of alcohol promotion in sport; 69 per cent were concerned by influence of alcohol promotion on children; and 54 per cent were concerned by the loophole.¹

Dr Yelland said the RACP would like to see alcohol sponsorship and advertisements phased out of Australian sports altogether. Closing the loophole was an important step.

“Almost every sporting code is supported by alcohol advertising and sponsorship,” Dr Yelland said. “Children are watching their heroes play sports on television, in major events like the State of Origin and are seeing images from brewers like XXXX.

“Children are getting the message, at a very young age, that alcohol consumption is a very attractive and normal part of playing sports. Children should be able to watch their favourite teams and players play sport without being inundated with alcohol promotion.

“As adults, most of us know that alcohol can be consumed safely so we’re not saying ‘ban alcohol’. Our concern is that children and adolescents are vulnerable to the health impacts of alcohol and alcohol promotion.

“The Government and the sporting community need to start taking an interest in the public health risks of alcohol advertising on children and adolescents just like it did with tobacco advertising.

¹ * Based on attitudinal research completed by Essential Media on behalf of the RACP in February 2016. Sample size of 2017 respondents.

“It’s time for ACMA to act and to close the loophole to prevent alcohol being advertised in times which have high exposure to young people.”

For more information on the RACP’s position on alcohol and sport, see the RACP’s [alcohol policy](#) and [factsheet](#), both available at www.racp.edu.au.

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About The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP): The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of more than 15,000 physicians and 7,500 trainee physicians across Australia and New Zealand. The College represents a broad range of medical specialties including general medicine, paediatrics and child health, cardiology, respiratory medicine, neurology, oncology, public health medicine, occupational and environmental medicine, palliative medicine, sexual health medicine, rehabilitation medicine, geriatric medicine and addiction medicine. Beyond the drive for medical excellence, the RACP is committed to developing health and social policies which bring vital improvements to the wellbeing of patients. The College offers 60 training pathways. These lead to the award of one of seven qualifications that align with 45 specialist titles recognised by the Medical Board of Australia or allow for registration in nine vocational scopes with the Medical Council of New Zealand.