

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### 'Alcopop' tax not enough

Alcohol is one of the most abused substances in the Australian community. Alcohol providers are targeting young people in particular in advertising and media, and through providing an increasing array of attractive ready-to-drink mixed drinks. A major culture change is required to assist Australians in cutting down alcohol abuse and in particular binge drinking, which affects individuals, families and whole communities.

The Australian Psychological Society supports the government's 70% tax on 'alcopops', but argues that the tax should be extended to all but low alcohol content drinks.

"Alcohol is the most abused substance in Australian society and the costs to the community are very high" said APS President Amanda Gordon. "New ways to discourage teenage binge drinking are important in tackling Australian booze culture." But Gordon says that by itself, a tax on 'alcopops' is not enough.

The tax on 'alcopops' is an example of one attempt at demand reduction, which are strategies designed to prevent the uptake of harmful alcohol use. However, the APS's recently developed *Position Statement on Substance Use* argues that a comprehensive and multi-faceted range of prevention and treatment approaches are needed to address this complex issue. These approaches need to include supply reduction (strategies designed to control the supply of alcohol) and harm reduction (strategies designed to reduce alcohol-related harm for individuals and communities), as well as a diverse range of effective demand reduction strategies.

While the 'alcopop' tax is an example of a targeted measure designed to offset the enticement of young people into an alcohol-soaked culture, such legislation—by itself—will not change Australia's drinking culture.

*The APS Position Statement on Substance Use was prepared by a specially commissioned Task Group consisting of Debra Rickwood, Lynne Magor-Blatch, Richard Mattick, Stefan Gruenert, Neos Zavrou, and Amanda Akers, in collaboration with the APS Psychology and Substance Use Interest Group. The Statement can be accessed at [http://www.psychology.org.au/community/public\\_interest/#s1](http://www.psychology.org.au/community/public_interest/#s1) along with previous APS publications on substance use issues.*

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*The APS is the largest professional association for psychologists in Australia, representing more than 15,700 members. The APS is committed to advancing psychology as a discipline and profession. It spreads the message that psychologists make a difference to peoples' lives, through improving psychological knowledge and community wellbeing.*

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