

## **DSICA welcomes Greens call for halt to alcopop tax plan**

The Senate's passing of a motion by Greens leader Bob Brown to oppose the Government's controversial RTD tax increase until a comprehensive and costed plan to address alcohol abuse is presented has been welcomed by the Distilled Spirits Industry Council of Australia (DSICA).

Mr Stephen Riden, Information and Research Manager for DSICA, described Senator Brown's motion as an important and timely 'circuit-breaker' that would focus attention on the need for far-reaching strategies to reduce excessive alcohol consumption in the Australian community.

"The ongoing debate over the RTD tax hike and its unintended yet significant social consequences has overshadowed the need to present Australians with a real and comprehensive solution to binge-drinking and substance abuse.

"Anybody serious about reducing binge-drinking knows that a holistic approach to the problem is essential. Simply increasing the cost of pre-mixed drinks provides no meaningful solution to problem-drinking. Instead it has created its own set of social problems."

DSICA points to a number of submissions to the Senate Community Affairs Committee Inquiry into Ready-To-Drink alcohol beverages which highlighted the level of substitution to cheaper and more potent forms of alcohol that has occurred since the 70% tax increase on RTDs was introduced.

"The RTD tax hike punishes the vast majority of Australians who enjoy these products in a responsible manner. It also deflects attention from the far more important issue of why some Australians drink to excess," Mr Riden said.

"Assigning blame for binge-drinking to one form of alcohol product is overly simplistic. This is a complex social issue that requires a comprehensive and properly costed plan that involves government, industry and the medical and alcohol treatment professions."

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