

LEGENDS RALLY TO ‘RED CARD’ ALCOHOL ADS IN SPORT

10 October 2018: AFL identities Mick Malthouse and Rod Butterss, Australian cricketing hero John Inverarity, dual Olympian Clover Maitland, extreme sportswoman and mountaineer Cheryl Bart, NRL great Steve Ella, and hockey legend Ric Charlesworth are among an elite group of sporting greats calling for a lifetime ban on alcohol advertising in sport.

This powerhouse line-up has teamed up to help launch the *End Alcohol Advertising in Sport* campaign in Melbourne today, as a new report reveals children were exposed to more than **three** instances of alcohol advertising every minute of the 2018 National Rugby League Grand Final.

The study, *Alcohol Marketing During the 2018 Australian Football Grand Finals*, produced by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) investigated the amount and type of alcohol advertising broadcast on free to air television during the 2018 Australian Football League (AFL) Grand Final (Channel Seven) and the 2018 National Rugby League (NRL) Grand Final (Channel Nine).

In the AFL Grand Final **118** occurrences of alcohol advertising were identified across the **161** minutes of game time including quarter/half time coverage analysed, all of which took place during children’s viewing hours.

Saturation of alcohol advertising during the NRL grand final was more than three times higher with a total of **365** occurrences of alcohol advertising and **3.3** instances per minute during the broadcast of the game (including half time).

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn says that children’s exposure to alcohol advertising during two of the biggest sporting contests of the year is the alarming consequence of a nonsensical exemption in the Commercial Television Code of Practice.

“The evidence is very clear that children’s exposure to alcohol advertising encourages them to start drinking earlier, to binge drink more often, and to start a journey toward alcohol-related harm.

“It’s time for regulators to put an end to the alcohol industry’s deliberate efforts to encourage systematic alcohol harm and abuse in its customers of tomorrow,” Mr Thorn said.

Campaign Champion and Former President of the St Kilda Football Club, Rod Butterss agrees that for too long booze has been a part of AFL culture. He says it’s now time for League to cut its ties with alcohol.

“These kids, they love their sport, they idolise their sporting heroes. And in the same breath the League is showing them that drinking and binge drinking is acceptable and healthy. It is not,” Mr Butterss said.

AFL Premiership winning coach and player Mick Malthouse concurs and says young children are impressionable, vulnerable and must be protected.

“Kids should be able to watch sport and identify with just sport; not harmful advertising that impacts their health,” Mr Malthouse said.

Former Rugby League great Steve Ella laments that his sport has gone down the same dangerous path.

“The game I love is awash with alcohol promotion. It has become increasingly difficult to know where the game ends and alcohol advertising begins.

“The NRL must rethink its toxic association with alcohol and get on with playing the game that we love,” Mr Ella said.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Australia’s three major codes, the NRL, and AFL, together with Cricket Australia account for the greatest volume and most highly visible alcohol advertising in sport.

Looking to the future, John Inverarity, former Australian cricketer and Cricket Australia Chairman of Selectors (2011-2014) says it is up to sporting bodies like Cricket Australia to step up as appropriate role models for young Australians and be a force for good.

“We have no greater responsibility than raising our children and giving them the right values and the right habits with regard to health.

It’s irresponsible and inappropriate for the athleticism and the healthy specimens that play sport to be linked with alcohol”, Mr Inverarity said.

Campaign Champion, leading public health figure and former Chairman of the Melbourne Storm, Rob Moodie says change is possible.

He is calling for the Free TV Code to be revised so that its original principled guidelines to protect children are not completely negated by the current sports exemption.

“We have to remember that we’ve been here before with tobacco. There was a time when unhealthy products were accepted as part of the game but that time has long passed.

“The good news is we have the nation strongly behind us. Nine out of 10 Australians agree that children shouldn’t be exposed to alcohol advertising during children’s hours, and in the coming months we will ensure those voices are heard,” Mr Moodie said.

Australians are being asked to lend their support to the campaign and ensure Australia’s political leaders hear their voices by signing up online at the End Alcohol Advertising in Sport campaign website. <http://www.endalcoholadvertisinginsport.org.au/take-action/>

One politician already hearing that message is Campaign Champion, Federal member for Bennelong and former tennis great John Alexander.

“As a parent, you know it’s not what you say but what you do that kids pick up. Kids model the behaviour of their sporting heroes so it’s important they aren’t exposed to alcohol advertising in sport,” Mr Alexander said.

Official *End Alcohol Advertising in Sport* Campaign Champions:



- **Cheryl Bart AO**, Order of Australia and 31st person to achieve Explorers Grand Slam. Australian Himalayan Foundation Ambassador, Patron of Sports Connect and Football Federation Australia Director
- **Rod Butters**, Former AFL St Kilda Football Club President
- **Richard Charlesworth AO**, Former hockey player, World Cup and Champions trophy winning coach for Kookaburras and Hockeyroos
- **Steve Ella**, Former Parramatta Eels, State of Origin and Australian Test representative NRL football player
- **Clover Maitland**, Olympic Gold winning Hockeyroo
- **Mick Malthouse**, Former AFL footballer for St Kilda and Richmond, Premiership winning AFL coach - West Coast and Collingwood
- **John Inverarity MBE AM**, Former Australian Test cricketer 1968-72, Chairman of selectors for Cricket Australia 2011-14
- **Mitch Edwards**, Major League baseballer for the Philadelphia Phillies
- **Rob Moodie**, Professor, Melbourne Storm Chairman (2006-2010)
- **John Alexander OAM MP**, Australian politician and former professional tennis player

End Alcohol Advertising in Sport will be officially launched today in Melbourne.

Mr Thorn and campaign ambassadors are available for interview.

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Event details:

Wednesday 10 October
 The Glasshouse, Olympic Park, Melbourne.
 9:45am – 10:15am Media Doorstop
 10:30am – 11:30 Launch

Media kit: (please note all digital assets embargoed until 12:01am, 10 October 2018)

- Official campaign launch video (broadcast quality – post production, music, titling)
- Individual ambassador videos (broadcast quality – no post production)
- Photo/testimonial tiles

Embargoed digital assets available for download [here](#).

