

Thursday March 19, 2009

## **ALSA MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Australian Liquor Stores Association says Members will not Profit from RTD Tax Refund!**

ALSA today supports the call that as a result of last night's RTD Tax decision in the Senate, any money that may be refunded be passed on to a suitable responsible drinking program.

ALSA asks consumers and the trade to be patient, as we note the tax changes decided by the Senate last night have not yet been passed on by the government and as there are many different points where the tax is applied, it may take some time to be reflected in lower retail prices.

We ask the government to clarify the timing of when the tax reduction will take effect.

Any tax money collected since April 26 last year may be refunded, and if it is, it should go towards a composite strategy of helping to promote Australia's drinking culture to one of a sustainable and healthy lifestyle.

DrinkWise Australia are responsible for the highly effective campaign currently running on Australian Television "Kids Absorb Your Drinking" which focuses on promoting change towards a more responsible drinking culture.

The Commonwealth Government has previously demonstrated their confidence in DrinkWise Australia with a small injection of funding and here is a golden opportunity to constructively support a long term, comprehensive and strategic approach, by using any RTD Tax refund to support the efforts of DrinkWise.

The Australian Liquor Stores Association (ALSA) acknowledges that the misuse of alcohol is a significant social issue and recognises that it is often young people who are in the public eye.

ALSA continues to encourage the responsible marketing and consumption of alcohol, education of consumers and the retail sector with successful campaigns that are highly visible in liquor stores around Australia, such as "ID-25" and "Don't Buy It For Them", to make it even more difficult for underage people to access alcohol from licensed premises.

Let's use some common sense and put the RTD Tax refund to good use!

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**Notes to Editor attached:**

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There has been a considerable amount of publicity today regarding the Senate's rejection of the Government's RTD tax increase introduced in April last year. As the merits or otherwise of this decision continue to be debated a number of points need to be kept in mind.

- Despite the tax having been rejected in the Senate the excise rate has not changed yet and consequently retailers are not in a position to reduce their sell prices on RTD's.
- At the time of writing the government is unable to tell us what the new tax rate will be or when it will take effect.
- The money that has been collected by the government as a result of the tax increase is still in the possession of the government.
- The government has not announced formally that any of the tax money is to be refunded.
- Should any tax money be refunded the vast majority of it will go to the spirit companies who have paid the tax not to the liquor retailers who have been collecting it.
- There may be some retailers who are entitled to tax refunds should they go ahead. These retailers would not intend to profit from any monies returned to them by the government.

ALSA believes that any tax money that is returned should be applied to a comprehensive and strategic approach to promoting change towards a more responsible drinking culture in Australia. Organisations such as DrinkWise – currently running the “Kids absorb your drinking campaign”