



**HEALTH OF AUSTRALIAN FAMILIES PRIORITISED OVER  
 ALCOHOL PROFIT MARGINS - AMA**

The AMA has welcomed the decision to prioritise the health of Australian families and communities over the profit margins of the alcohol industry, after Australian and New Zealand Health Ministers today introduced mandatory pregnancy warning labels on alcohol products.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said that the AMA has been advocating for a clear, noticeable label on alcohol products for many years, and is enormously pleased to see this advocacy come to fruition.

“Warning people about the potential harms of alcohol cannot be left in the hands of an industry motivated by increasing its sales and profits,” Dr Bartone said.

“The approved black, white, and red label gives consumers the best chance of being informed of the potential harms of consuming alcohol during pregnancy, compared to the watered down version that was preferred by alcohol industry groups.

“Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause a range of seriously harmful health conditions, including Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) – the leading cause of preventable intellectual disability in Australia.”

Alcohol consumed during pregnancy crosses the placenta and can cause complications of pregnancy and damage to the developing foetus. The risks are greatest with high, frequent alcohol consumption during the first trimester of pregnancy.

“Educating Australians about the dangers of drinking alcohol while pregnant is a vital way to reduce FASD incidence – and this label is an important step in that direction,” Dr Bartone said.

“The decision to introduce mandatory pregnancy warning labels will lead to reduced harm to individual drinkers and, more importantly, reduced harm to their unborn children.”

**Background**

- The current Australian guidelines (NHMRC) recommend that adults limit themselves to two standard alcoholic drinks per day;
- For women planning to become pregnant, or who are already pregnant, the safest option is to avoid alcohol altogether;
- Recent research found that 40 per cent of Australian women drink at least some alcohol during their pregnancy; and
- Alcohol consumption during pregnancy may be attributable to a number of factors, including the possibility that some women are unaware that they are pregnant (and therefore are not avoiding alcohol).

---

17 July 2020

CONTACT: Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753