



## **Alcohol marketing – an update**

Briefing paper supplement

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Alcohol Healthwatch is charitable trust working to reduce alcohol-related harm. We employ an evidence-based public health approach to promote healthy public policy and practice in relation to alcohol use in the Auckland region and nationally, and provide information, support and co-ordination for inter-agency and community groups.

In 2003 Alcohol Healthwatch released a briefing paper "*The Advertising of Alcohol: in Support of Increased Restrictions*". This supplementary paper builds on the 2003 paper, providing a brief update on developments in this fast changing field. It briefly looks at some recent research on the effects of alcohol advertising, and at some of the more recent marketing practices both internationally and within New Zealand. It also provides key considerations for a Government led review of the regulatory regime for alcohol advertising and looks at some of the recent changes in relation to the regulation of alcohol advertising in similar countries.

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## **Summary**

- Recent studies from the U.S. provide further evidence that alcohol advertising predisposes young people to drink alcohol, strengthening the argument that alcohol marketing instils pro-drinking attitudes and increases the likelihood of heavier drinking (Babor et al., 2003). At the same time, evidence of the impact of early onset of drinking as a risk factor for a range of negative outcomes continues to grow.
- A series of studies show that youth under the legal drinking age in the U.S. are exposed to substantially more alcohol advertising on radio, television and in magazines than the rest of the population. They also found that exposure of underage girls to alcohol advertising is substantial and increasing, and that internet marketing is attracting a young audience. Almost 60% of visits to [www.bacardi.com](http://www.bacardi.com) were by underage youth (Centre on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2002-2005). The studies suggest a failure of industry self-regulation.
- In general, exposure to alcohol marketing is increasing, with diversification of placement of alcohol promotions. Use of newer technologies in alcohol marketing is widespread in most western and transitional countries and increasing in developing countries. Developments in contemporary marketing worldwide are most marked in the following areas: new product development; sponsorship in key areas of youth culture, sport, music, film and television; developments in naming and packaging; marketing via cell phone; product placement in movies and television programmes; use of “promotion girls”, competitions/prizes and merchandising, and internet-based marketing. Research on the impact and effective control of these techniques is undeveloped.
- The content of alcohol marketing has also become considerably more sophisticated. Messages are based on research into the lifestyles and desires of specific subcultures and are increasingly subtle. They are also increasingly interactive and complex – an advertisement is often part of a wider campaign that uses a range of media and techniques to build awareness and participation by the consumer in a campaign.
- Examples from New Zealand illustrate that the complete range of contemporary marketing strategies are common practice, particularly in youth environments.

- Alcohol Healthwatch strongly recommends that terms of reference for any forthcoming Government led review of the regime for regulating alcohol advertising should not be restricted to consideration of advertising on traditional media, but should cover alcohol marketing in its broadest sense.
- Consideration should be given to the impact of the current level of alcohol marketing in New Zealand on the effectiveness the ‘culture change’ programme.
- Assessment of exposure to alcohol promotion should include assessment of ‘spillage’ beyond the intended audience.
- Contemporary marketing practices have high impact on target audiences, yet generally avoid breaching content codes. In any review, the question needs to be asked whether code based systems are still relevant to the way in which contemporary alcohol marketing works and therefore an adequate means of control.
- A review should cover an assessment of other forms of regulation, including bans and partial bans, as well as an assessment of the feasibility of a statutory body to monitor exposure and impact of content in all media and oversee the regulation of alcohol marketing.
- Alcohol Healthwatch believes that regulation of alcohol marketing is public health policy and any decisions regarding its future should be made independent of commercial interests. We believe that a policy of no alcohol promotion is most compatible with goals of reducing alcohol-related harm. If alcohol marketing is allowed to continue, however, we recommend statutory control be reasserted and a more co-ordinated and rigorous system of regulation developed.

## ***Introduction***

Last year the Government embraced a campaign to change the culture of binge drinking in New Zealand. The messages in this campaign are competing against the hugely better resourced promotion efforts of the alcohol industry. In the U.S., for example, for every one responsibility advertisement aired by alcohol companies in 2002, there were 226 product ads (CAMY, 2005). (Recent figures for this ratio in New Zealand are not available.)

Discussions of the regulation of alcohol marketing still commonly focus on control of ‘alcohol advertising’ on traditional broadcast and print media. While this form of alcohol promotion remains important, state of the art ‘alcohol marketing’ – a term which better reflects the diverse strategies currently used to promote alcohol products – is far broader than this. Alcohol marketers have embraced the opportunities provided by rapid developments in information technology, often using an innovative mix of technologies to promote a brand. The practices employed in contemporary marketing are increasingly innovative, clever and pervasive of more areas of our lives. Many of these strategies are targeted to younger segments of the drinking population.

When considering marketing regulation, it is essential to update ourselves on these techniques, many of which may not be highly visible to policy makers (Casswell, 2004). It can then be assessed whether voluntary codes are sufficient to control the impact of these more recent marketing practices.

Alcohol Healthwatch believes that a policy of no alcohol promotion is most compatible with goals of reducing alcohol-related harm. If alcohol marketing is allowed to continue, however, we believe statutory control needs to be reasserted and a more co-ordinated and rigorous system of regulation developed.

## **Section 1: New international evidence**

Evidence of the impact of early onset of drinking as a risk factor for a range of negative outcomes continues to grow. There is growing evidence that alcohol use in adolescence can interfere with brain development – including memory and spatial skills (White et al., 2003). This evidence strengthens the argument for minimising the impact of repeated positive associations with alcohol on young people's attitudes towards drinking and their subsequent drinking behaviour.

### **New evidence of the impact of alcohol marketing on young people**

The following recent studies from the U.S. provide further evidence that alcohol advertising predisposes young people to drink alcohol.

- Ellickson, Collins, Hambarsoomians, and McCaffrey (2005) examined the relationship between exposure to different forms of alcohol advertising and subsequent drinking among adolescents. Exposure to in-store beer displays, alcohol ads in magazines, at beer stands and sports or music events was found to predict adolescent drinking, with the relative impact varying according to the young person's prior experience.
- A longitudinal study of 7<sup>th</sup> graders assessed the impact of televised alcohol commercials on adolescents' alcohol use. Exposure to televised alcohol ads in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade was associated with an increased risk of subsequent beer consumption, wine use and three-drink occasions in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade (Stacey, Zogg, Unger et al., 2004).
- In a sample of 591 adolescents in California, several advertising exposure measures including liking for advertisements and media receptivity were found to be significantly associated with alcohol use after controlling for possible confounders. The researchers suggested that repeated exposures to alcohol advertising might cause adolescents to form more favourable opinions of alcohol and may be a risk factor for alcohol use (Unger, Schuster, Zogg, Dent and Stacy, 2003).
- Another large survey in the U.S. demonstrated that the amount of money spent advertising beer brands in 1998 and 1999 strongly predicted adolescents' subsequent brand awareness, preference, use and loyalty behaviours. For example, the beer companies that spent the most money on advertising had the highest brand awareness, brand preference, brand use and brand loyalty among adolescents. While many variables were found to be important predictors of

intention to drink, media-related variables accounted for the greatest amount of variance in intention to drink and, along with peer variables, were a good predictor of actual adolescent drinking (Gentile, Walsh, Bloomgren et al., 2001).

Although studies such as the above have linked advertising with consumption, on the whole research studies to “prove” that alcohol advertising leads to increased consumption are methodologically difficult and not likely to show very large effects. Rather, it is increasingly recognised that alcohol marketing inculcates pro-drinking attitudes and increases the likelihood of heavier drinking (Babor et al., 2003), and has an important role in influencing the social climate around alcohol (WHO, 1994). Policies to minimise exposure to alcohol advertising are therefore important.

### **New evidence of alcohol advertising reaching young people**

Specific “targeting” or even direct exposure of young people is not necessary for the messages in alcohol advertising to influence young people, who will assimilate attitudes modelled by their elders. There is, however, increasing evidence of “spillage” outside the intended older audience to children and young people, as well as indications of direct targeting of young people.

#### ***Young people under the legal drinking age***

The Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth (CAMY) at Georgetown University has conducted a series of studies indicating that youth under the legal drinking age in the U.S. are exposed to substantially more alcohol advertising than the rest of the population, pointing to the failure of industry self-regulation.

- Teens heard more beer and distilled spirits radio commercials in 2001 and 2002 than did people of legal drinking age. Seventy-three percent of alcohol advertising on radio was on programmes that had a disproportionately large listening audience of 12-20 year olds (CAMY, 2003).
- Underage youth were consistently exposed to far more advertisements for distilled spirits and beer in magazines than adults on a per capita basis between 2001 and 2003 (CAMY, 2005).
- Almost a quarter of the television alcohol advertising in 2001 was more likely to be seen by youth than by adults (CAMY, 2002b).

CAMY concluded that young people under the legal drinking age are a major target audience in the U.S. for the alcohol industry's radio and magazine and television advertising, despite their documented claims to the contrary (CAMY, 2003).

### ***Young women***

In the U.S., as in many similar countries including New Zealand, drinking by young women is increasing. CAMY found that exposure of underage girls to alcohol advertising is substantial and increasing. Placement of alcohol ads and audience was audited in 103 national magazines. Girls aged 12 to 20 years were more likely to be exposed to beer, ale, and low-alcohol refresher (alcopop) advertising than women in the group aged 21 to 34, or older. Girls' exposure to advertising for alcopops increased by 216% from 2001 to 2002, while boys' exposure increased 46% (CAMY, 2004).

## **Evidence of diversification of marketing techniques globally**

### ***Exposure***

It has been estimated that only a third of alcohol promotion spending in the U.S. is on traditional media that is typically measured using advertising ratings, the rest of spending is on newer 'unmeasured', often unregulated media (Federal Trade Commission, 1999). The U.S. is not alone in this trend. Use of newer technologies and approaches is widespread in most western and transitional countries and increasingly appearing in developing countries, where controls are often poor or absent.

Developments in contemporary marketing world wide are most marked in the following areas:

- Diversification of product development – such as Ready to Drinks, ice lollies, alcohol flavoured spring water and alcoholic energy drinks. These newer beverages are increasingly common in non-Western countries including India, China and Malaysia.
- Sponsorship in key areas of youth culture, sport, music, film and television is increasingly common in developing as well as established economies. Stella Artois, for example, sponsors film festivals globally.
- Developments in naming and packaging, point of sale promotions and novel modes of delivery of products such as shooters, shots and sachets are frequently targeted to appeal to a young market.



- Marketing via cell phone using personalised text ‘viral marketing’ techniques is increasing, including exploration of the possibilities presented by pixed phones and phone internet access.

*“Mobile channels work very effectively with this particular target audience, especially when integrated with broadcast, in-store and online media”* (Touchpoint New Zealand – provider of multi-channel marketing systems)

- Product placement in movies and television programmes has been identified as a common strategy in Sri Lanka, for example, but there is also evidence that product placement has occurred in PG rated films and television programmes in Western countries (Federal Trade Commission, 1999).
- Use of “promotion girls” to sell a brand – a common marketing strategy in Asia where it is associated with drinking to meet sales quotas and supplementing incomes with prostitution (Lubek, 2004), but is also evident in Western countries.
- Competitions/prizes and alcohol branded merchandising such as clothing, drinking paraphernalia and trinkets, are increasingly common throughout the world
- The internet has unprecedented interactive potential as marketing tool. The Centre on Alcohol Marketing and Youth reviewed 74 web sites operated by alcohol companies over a three-week period in 2003 and found widespread use of the kinds of features attractive to underage youth including games, cartoons, music and downloads. They found that 13.1% of the total in-depth visits to 55 alcohol sites were initiated by persons under age 21 and almost 60% of visits to www.bacardi.com were by underage youth. They also found wide variation in the effectiveness of the filtering software, with 76% of alcohol brands eluding parental control programmes half the time or more (CAMY, 2004).

There is little study as yet on the impact of alcohol marketing through newer media, nor of effective means of control.

### ***Content***

The content of alcohol marketing has become increasingly sophisticated. Messages, based on the needs and lifestyles of specific subcultures, are increasingly subtle. They frequently have high impact value to target subcultures while avoiding breaching any content codes.

Frequently an advertisement is not used in isolation, but is part of a wider campaign that uses a range of media and techniques, such as billboards which draw users to a web site; or its impact

may be maximised by being part of a series of related advertisements. Examples from New Zealand include the Tui 'Yeah Right' campaign, the Lion Red 'Chin-heads' and 'Tips for drinkers'.

An overall marketing strategy ensures the "right product is sold for the right price in the right place" (Hastings, 2005).

## ***Section 2: New evidence of diversification of alcohol marketing in New Zealand***

A study currently being conducted by Massey University's Te Ropu Whariki and SHORE Research Centre is interviewing groups of 14-18 year olds about their experience of alcohol advertising. Interim results show growing exposure to alcohol marketing in youth environments, with diversification of sites for alcohol promotion and "naturalisation" of alcohol promotion in youth cultures (Borell, Gregory and Kaiwai, 2005).

The following examples provide a glimpse of current alcohol marketing strategies in New Zealand that fall outside of traditional broadcast and print advertising.

### ***Marketing via internet***

Young people in New Zealand spend a great deal of leisure time on the web. The following examples illustrate how prominent brands in New Zealand are making use of the interactive potential of this medium. While most sites require the user to enter date of birth, this is not an effective deterrent to minors. A notable feature of internet marketing is the use of competitions in which the entrants, self selecting on the basis of identifying with a certain subculture, become themselves advertisers of the brand. Many competitions illustrate the strongly promoted associations between alcohol, sport and sex.

[www.tui.co.nz](http://www.tui.co.nz)

- "Miss Tui" competition — the winner receives the title of Miss Tui 2005, a cash prize of \$2500 and numerous promotional endorsements from Tui.



- 2005 'Best Tui Beer Drinking Town' competition – “Your chance to win beer for a year (that’s 52 DOZEN!)”. A winning example featured below, where a street is strung with Tui bottles and merchandise, illustrates the marketing potential of this competition.



Visitors to the Tui website can also buy Tui merchandise, download images from ads, replay their favourite ads and Tui “BlipVerts”, post their own Tui photos on the “Tui Album”, and “Tui Gnome” competitions, (winning photos that “really capture the Tui spirit” receive Tui merchandise and/or a fridge full of Tui); join the Tui “Handle Club” or sign up for the Tui “Amber card” to get discounts at bottle stores and public bars around the country.

[www.getssponsoredbycoruba.co.nz](http://www.getssponsoredbycoruba.co.nz) a two month promotion advertised through youth popular media including C4, The Rock, NZ Surfing magazine, Performance Car magazine, Ralph magazine, [www.varsity.co.nz](http://www.varsity.co.nz), and billboards. Entrants are screened through a questionnaire (used for publicity purposes) about how they would conduct a Coruba party. Prizes consist of a sponsorship package including a fridge stocked with Coruba, equipment and branded merchandise for holding a Coruba party.

<http://www.lionred.co.nz>

Features surfing games, images of “Lion Red surf babes”, a party planner, a personal advice posting with strong masculine themes and competitions such as the following:

- “Brewery Survivor 2005”— Four key Lion Brewery brands based in Auckland, Hamilton, Christchurch and Dunedin each have 10 people living on their brewery for three days.
- The Lion Red Furuno Fishing Tournament — “full-on with hard out fishing during the day but then relaxing in the evenings with a live band and a beer or two to quench the thirst”.
- Promoted through “The Rock” youth station, the “Undies 500” Lion Red underwear run in Queen St. in October 2004 was “Aucklanders’ chance to show friends, workmates, parents and employers what they are really made of”. Winners receive a year's supply of Lion Red (52 dozen).

<http://www.mooloo.co.nz/index.php?pid=62>

“Buy Waikato Draught and go in the draw to watch Waikato [rugby team] from the perfect spot. Free Waikato Draught will be served by lovely Willie's Waitresses”.

### ***Merchandising/sponsorship***

Jim Beam was promoted as a drink for the young and trendy at the Big Day Out, a youth rock concert in Auckland, with giveaways of “cool” sunhats and fashionable trinkets.

*We're focusing fairly strongly on recruitment to Jim Beam. We're aiming to make it relevant to the new age of drinkers coming through. We don't want them seeing Jim Beam as a drink for oldies or bikies (DrinksBiz, 2002 – industry magazine).*

### ***Examples of a mixed media marketing***

The “Export Gold Rock Ride Party” was promoted through a leading youth radio station in Auckland in 2004 with participation encouraged using email and cell phone. Listeners texted entries for winning tickets for three nights of partying at a ski resort with Export Gold at an “Export Gold Rock Ride Party” – “the ultimate weekend you’ll never remember”.

In 2002 a repeat of the award winning Smirnoff half day off campaign of the previous year was held, where people were encouraged to take a half day off and drink Smirnoff. The target audience was 18-24 years. A wide mix of targeted media was used to build awareness and participation and provide consumers with a “unique Smirnoff brand experience”. A complex six-week integrated campaign led up to the official Half Day Off, where participants could redeem \$25 bar tabs for Smirnoff drinks in participating bars. A mix of media including television, radio, outdoor, internet, email and text messaging was used to lead the campaign and “drive traffic to the website to register”. In order to enter for a free bar tab the applicant had to enter the email address of three friends, who received a personalised message from their mate encouraging them to go to the Smirnoff site for their own free bar tab. Outdoor, point of sale and direct mail (for prize fulfilment) were also used. The campaign “outperformed all key business objectives across brand health measures, market share and on-premise volumes”. A separate texting promotion was used through off-licensed premises using necktags on Smirnoff bottles, where purchasers could text in a unique number from their necktag to go in the draw to win Smirnoff party packs. (<http://www.touchpoint.co.nz/case-studies/smirnoff.html>)

Heinekin Jammin 2001 campaign, among other objectives, aimed to “associate Heineken with contemporary music and add more energy to the brand”. With the launch of a Heineken 15-bottle “music pack”, drinkers were encouraged to “trade up” from their normal dozen purchase and had the opportunity to win a trip to the internationally renowned Heineken Jammin music festival in Italy. Customers entered by texting an in-pack code or going online, they were sent a reply email

or text message. To encourage repeat purchases, subsequent entries earned twice as many chances to win.

*“Combining mobile and web promotion with on-pack and point of sale is a cost effective way to launch a sales promotion” ([www.touchpoint.co.nz/case-studies/heineken.html](http://www.touchpoint.co.nz/case-studies/heineken.html))*

### ***New products***

New products are usually designed to appeal to a niche market. “Wipeout” a blend of coconut and rum (21% alcohol) is marketed with a strong surf theme. Others are marketed with strong sexual themes such as “QF” – well known (though not mentioned) slang for “quick f\*\*k” – which comes in a pack of divided shot glasses. Vodka Chocolate Mudshake and Vodka Twistee Shots are marketed with colours and flavours which are likely to appeal to a younger teens. Alcohol brands on are also increasingly common on food products, such as biscuits and ice cream.

The self-regulatory Code for Advertising Liquor currently covers packaging only when the product is advertised.



### ***Sponsorship***

Alcohol sponsorship is particularly a feature of sport in New Zealand. Increasingly, however, the liquor industry is actively engaged with major cultural, business and educational endeavours, and many of these are strongly aligned with the younger market.

- “Speights is heavily involved in rugby sponsorship at both club and representative levels to a point where Speights has become synonymous with rugby in the south” ([www.speights.co.nz](http://www.speights.co.nz)). Speights also sponsors an Otago netball team and is the major sponsor of the Coast to Coast multi-sport event . Coruba, Tui, Steinlager and Lion Red are also sponsors of rugby.
- Surfing is another sport where sponsoring by beer companies is common. The daily surf reports and surf “shot of the day” photo page, for example, feature the Coruba banner advertisement on [www.surf.co.nz](http://www.surf.co.nz) home page (costing \$1500 a week, expected impressions 30,000 per week). The main demographic of the site is youth male. 13% of visitors to the site are 10-17 years of age. Surfing magazine also features Lion Red sponsorship — unofficial

target audience cited as males 13 to 30 years (Personal communication, April, 2005). Lion also sponsors surfing competitions and surf life saving.

- Speights sponsors orientation at the University of Otago.

“Only on Juice TV”



Timed to orientation week, Auckland University, 2004



*Promotion girls:* Lion Red “nurses” at a rugby match. Complaints about this particular promotion were upheld, but similar promotions are in evidence.



The preliminary event for Smirnoff International Awards was held in Auckland in 2001.

*Radio giveaways*

For example Montana Fall Harvest Wine “Guess the Guest” – Classic Hits

### ***Section 3: Recommendations regarding a Government review of the regulatory regime for alcohol advertising***

Alcohol Healthwatch believes that regulation of alcohol marketing is public health policy and any decisions regarding its future should be made independent of commercial interests. We recommend that any review panel have:

- significant public health representation
- representation by experts in media/ marketing studies
- representation by persons with expertise in children or young persons' issues.

The National Committee for the Review of Advertising formed to oversee the 2003 Australian review of the self-regulatory system consisted of representatives from three health related government departments, a representative from the Drug and Alcohol Services Council and two police representatives.

The precautionary principle, which is used in public health to advocate the taking of preventive action even in the face of uncertainty, advocates that “the promotion of alcohol through advertising should be guided by the likelihood of risk, rather than the potential for profit” (Babor et al. 2003, p. 273).

In the context of contemporary alcohol marketing techniques, Alcohol Healthwatch strongly recommends that any forthcoming Government review of the voluntary regime for regulating alcohol advertising should not be restricted to advertising on traditional media, which forms only a small, if more visible form of marketing, but should cover alcohol marketing in its broadest sense.

#### **Key considerations for a review**

##### ***1. Contemporary alcohol marketing in New Zealand***

What is the extent and nature of it, why should it be regulated and what needs to be regulated?

##### *Exposure:*

What do we know about exposure to alcohol promotion in New Zealand, particularly that of children and young people, through use of traditional media (radio, television, magazine, billboard), sponsorship (sports, events, television) as well as through use of the internet, cell phones, point of sale promotions, product placement, etc?



Assessment of exposure to alcohol advertising needs to cover:

Placement of advertising and sponsorship including:

- media, association with sport and high risk activity, youth oriented events
- ‘spillage’ beyond target audience
- watersheds

Saturation

- overall frequency of population exposure
- exposure by specific vulnerable audiences such as children, young people, heavy drinking sectors of society
- new products, packaging, point of sale promotions

*Content*

What is the impact of the content of various approaches to marketing on a population level, as well as on particular subgroups?

What is the impact of the current level of alcohol marketing in New Zealand on the effectiveness of health promotion messages, including the ‘culture change’ programme?

*Overall marketing mix*

What do we understand about the overall marketing mix – the interaction of price, promotion, product and place?

Are code based systems still relevant to the way in which contemporary alcohol marketing works and an adequate means of control?

## ***2. The current-self regulatory system***

An assessment of the adequacy of using self-regulation as a means to restrict the impact of contemporary marketing.

What are the issues concerning self-regulation? For example:

- turn around period/ after-the-fact removal of advertisements where complaints are upheld
- code boundaries
- public awareness of the code
- sanctions
- effectiveness of pre-vetting

- representation from people with public health expertise on drafting, adjudication and review panels
- review process – independence and terms of reference

### ***3. An assessment of other options for regulation***

#### *Bans/Partial Bans*

An exploration of the benefits and risks of the following levels of ban on alcohol promotion:

- a complete ban on all New Zealand controlled media
- partial bans including risks/benefits of:
  - bans on traditional broadcast media
  - bans on sponsorship – sports, arts, cultural, youth events and activities
  - specific placement restrictions
  - content restrictions on “lifestyle” advertising (strict product and price only)
  - prohibition of alcohol marketing practices that reach those under legal purchase age

#### *Statutory oversight:*

Assessment of the feasibility of a statutory body to monitor exposure and impact of content in all media and oversee the regulation of alcohol marketing. In this model all alcohol promotions and new products would be screened and any voluntary codes overseen by a statutory body.

Ideally, during a government led review of alcohol regulation, other policy options could also be explored, including Sale of Liquor Act possibilities and tax manipulations.

## ***Update on some international developments in the area of alcohol marketing***

Controls on alcohol advertising in many European countries remain on the restrictive end on the spectrum, however, European trade treaties which ensure free movement of goods have proven to be a threat to strong advertising legislation in several member states.

**Norway:** Prohibits all types of mass communication for alcohol marketing purposes, including advertising for goods and services. In 2003 more effective sanctions were introduced for breaches of the Norwegian Alcohol Act which legislates this prohibition.

**Denmark:** A ban on advertising on Danish television and radio channels was withdrawn in 2004 for reasons of trade advantage.

**Sweden:** Alcohol marketing on radio or television continues to be prohibited, but a 25 year old ban of alcohol advertising in print media ended in 2003 when it was ruled that it violated European Union legislation. A ruling since January 2005 requires every alcohol advertisement to include a specified text relating to the risks of alcohol consumption.

**France:** France's controversial strict law regulating alcohol advertising, the Loi Evin, has recently survived a challenge based on European trade agreements. In 2004 the European Court ruled that, while such a ban constitutes a restriction on the freedom to provide services, it is justified in that it is "appropriate and does not go beyond what is necessary in order to attain the objective of protecting public health that it pursues" (Court of Justice of the European Community, 2004). The Loi Evin was introduced in 1991 and covers restrictions on both exposure and content of all alcohol over 1.2%. Restrictions on exposure include bans on television and cinema advertising and prohibition of most cultural or sports event sponsorship. Alcohol advertising is allowed only in adult press, billboards, on radio under certain conditions and certain special events. It also severely restricts content, allowing referral only to the product features and requiring the ad to be accompanied by a health message.

**The Netherlands:** Public health groups report that the self-regulatory code is vague, regularly violated, the public are unaware of the process, decisions are lengthy and that concern about the influence of alcohol marketing is mounting (van Dalen, 2003).

**Australia:** A governmental review of the effectiveness of the self-regulatory system for was held in 2003. The review followed concerns about the alcohol industry's ability to comply with its own code and the system's ability to curb opportunistic marketing to young people. They found that the system was complex, there was a high dismissal rate for complaints, the general public was unaware of the complaints system, the system lacked transparency, did not apply to all forms of promotion, and took a long time to resolve complaints (National Committee for the Review of Alcohol Advertising, 2003). The industry agreed to make the recommended changes to strengthen the system. Public health bodies raised concerns that the code does not cover product names, packaging, sponsorship, and point of sale marketing. However, the committee did not expand the code to address these mediums.

**UK:** Since 2003 broadcast advertising has been co-regulated by Ofcom, a statutory body which is responsible for auditing; the Advertising Standards Authority, an industry body which deals with all advertising standards and consumer complaints; and the Portman Group, an industry social aspects organisation which has developed a code that covers the naming, packaging and marketing of alcoholic drinks as well sampling, websites, advertorials and press releases. The Portman Group code also has a pre-vetting component. This system screens out the worst examples but is subject to the same difficulties of interpretation as other voluntary code systems and boundaries are pushed.

Some alcohol producers have responded to concerns about new products and marketing practices with "sensible drinking" messages on bottles and cans. Critics claim that these messages are weak, and that publicising recommended daily units may encourage the majority of moderate drinkers to 'drink up' to a level that could cause long term ill effects on health.

**U.S.:** Beer and distilled spirits industries announced a "reform" of their voluntary advertising codes in 2003, pledging not to place ads where the underage audience is 30% or more of the audience. The Centre for Alcohol Marketing and Youth (2003) pointed out that, since 30% is twice the percentage of youth in the general population, the threshold allows ad placement where underage youth are twice as likely to see them as adults. There has been no systematic review of the implementation of the recommendations that came out of the Federal Trade Commission inquiry in 1999 (Jernigan and O'Hara, 2004). New regulations have been developed in Florida to halt 'alcohol without liquid' vaporisers.

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