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## Alcopops tax – a step in the right direction

Measures to reduce alcohol consumption, like the alcopops tax, will help reduce risky drinking behaviours in young people and ultimately improve their health, says Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) chair, Dr Emil Djakic.

“A number of health issues facing Australia today evolve from lifestyle choices – chronic disease caused by obesity, tobacco and excessive alcohol consumption, we can do a lot more in this area with Government support,” he said.

But Dr Djakic, a Tasmanian GP, said the Government could go further, by recognising that binge drinking is not just a youth issue and introducing a broader tax.

“Higher priced alcohol is associated with per capita decline in consumption. If we are serious about cutting back on drinking across the board, a volumetric tax is one of the most robust and cost effective public health measures we could adopt.”

Dr Djakic said Government had already made significant moves into the disease prevention/wellness rather than illness space, including the creation of the National Preventative Health Taskforce.

“However, in spite of clear evidence of the social and economic impacts of chronic disease in Australia, we only spend two per cent of the total health budget on prevention. Additional revenue from increased taxes on products like tobacco and alcohol provide a base from which to invest more in preventative health programs,” he said.

The Divisions of General Practice Network run a number of programs to assist general practice to make inroads in the fight against chronic disease and the harms associated with alcohol consumption. These include programs such as Lifescripts, diabetes prevention initiatives and youth mental health programs like **headspace**.

Dr Djakic said AGPN strongly supports the intention of Government to put the alcopops tax revenue already gathered into health programs aimed at preventing risky drinking behaviours.

“The move by the Minister to retain the alcopops tax is an important prevention measure for the health of all Australians,” Dr Djakic said.

**For media interviews please phone AGPN Communications Manager  
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