



MEDIA RELEASE

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BUDGET FAILS PUB TEST

Australians will continue to pay the fourth highest draught beer taxes in the world after modest calls for a cut in beer excise were ignored by the Federal Government.

The Government silently increases its hidden beer tax every 1 August and 1 February.

More than 20 backbenchers, in touch with their communities, supported the move to cut the tax on socialising by 50%.

AHA National CEO Stephen Ferguson said the Association's 5000 members, 250,000 workers and millions of patrons would feel let down.

"The way we are going draught beer poured at a pub is becoming a luxury item," Mr Ferguson said.

"It's safe to say our members, staff and patrons feel let down. A hidden beer tax doesn't pass the pub test and it was great so many backbenchers agreed with us."

"A cut to this hidden twice-yearly tax would shave about 30c off the cost of a schooner – that might not mean much to a politician, but it means a hell of a lot to many people in the front bar struggling to make ends meet.

"Pubs have been doing it tough for two years now – in some states many venues have had just six weeks of normal trade without density restrictions due to COVID.

"Our request to the Government would've sent a small price signal to the electorate that after a tough two years it was time to encourage people to come back to the pub and have a drink with friends, rather than drink alone at home.

Mr Ferguson said publicans were also disappointed there had been no changes to the Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT), which he said was unfair and favoured large-scale sophisticated employers or "the big end of town."

"Exempting FBT on meals and accommodation would level the playing field and provide a much-needed stimulus creating instant jobs and an economic boost to a sector hard hit by the pandemic," he said.

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