



MEDIA RELEASE

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HIDDEN BEER TAX SET TO RISE AGAIN

The nation's peak hospitality body is warning anyone who enjoys a drink to prepare for a price rise when the Federal Government's excise on alcohol goes up yet again this week.

AHA National CEO Stephen Ferguson said the crippling tax, which increases August 1, is another blow for everyday people struggling with the rising cost of living.

"We are calling on the Government, Opposition and Cross Bench to support reducing the excise on all beer and spirits poured into a glass and served to a customer in a pub.

"It's not the politicians who cop the grief from customers every time the business has to pass this hidden tax on – it's the worker or owner behind the bar who cops it.

"This hidden tax - which has gone up every six months for the last 35 years - will hit pub-goers in the hip pocket at a time they can least afford it," Mr Ferguson said.

"Australia's hidden beer tax rate is now the third highest in the OECD and the excise on beer and spirits this financial year alone will be nearly \$8 billion.

"It's nothing but a hidden tax on socialising - when we know how important it is for people to spend time with their friends out of the home.

"And it's a hidden tax on the jobs of the people pouring your beer or making your gin and tonic."

Mr Ferguson said pubs have a range of costs including energy, insurance, interest and wages that are all sky-rocketing – "but at least they have a degree of control over those."

"Pubs have no control over excise and it adds up - it is the cumulative increase every six months that is the killer," he said.

"For example, this hidden tax collected on beer in a small country pub selling 15 kegs is more than \$1,000 per week - that amount can make a huge difference to a small business in the bush.

"This is much more than just reducing a hidden tax on one of life's small pleasures.

"The majority of our hotels are locally-owned family businesses which employ locals and sell Australian made products.

"This hidden tax is just chipping away at pub customers when they can least afford it."

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