

MEDIA STATEMENT  
April 29, 2008



**Just the start of the fight! - Fr Riley welcomes Alcopop tax and calls government to act further to enforce health warnings on Alcohol products and alcohol related marketing.**

Father Chris Riley, CEO and Founder of the charity organisation, Youth Off The Streets, commends the Government's moves following his recent 'call for action', with their introduction of additional taxes on Alcopops, and has vowed to continue his fight to ensure that alcohol is not marketed to vulnerable teenagers.

*"Raising the price of alcohol is a great starting point for the prevention of alcohol abuse among teenagers. However, if we are serious about protecting our young people, we must ensure that they are aware of the harmful effects that alcohol will have on them,"* said Father Riley.

The introduction of the new tax; the recent moves by major breweries to reduce the number of standard drinks in pre-mixed packages; and the cessation by some brewers of production of alcohol beverages containing added energy, are in direct response to the concerns raised by Fr Riley and other stakeholders that alcohol is currently being marketed with the aim of coercing young people into using products that are potentially dangerous to their future development.

*"When we have one in 10 under 17 year olds drinking to harmful levels in any given week, we know that the marketed message they are getting about alcohol is very different from reality. It is our responsibility as adults to ensure that we educate our young people of the harmful effects of alcohol in every piece of communication and message we disseminate about the drug,"* he continued.

*"We must ensure that alcohol labels, packaging and marketing carry a health warning stating that: **Alcohol is proven to cause permanent damage to the developing brain of teenagers,**"* said Fr Riley.

*"We must ensure that all schools communicate the negative health effects of alcohol and we must ensure that parents and carers of young people understand the effects on young developing brains and are encouraged to set the example for their children, by drinking responsibly,"* said Father Riley.

**Youth Off The Streets Mission:**

*Helping disconnected young people to discover greatness within, by engaging, supporting and providing opportunities to encourage and facilitate positive life choices.*

**About Youth Off The Streets:**

Youth Off The Streets is a non-denominational community organisation working for young people who are chronically homeless, drug dependent and recovering from abuse. We support these young people as they work to turn their lives around and overcome immense personal traumas such as neglect and physical, psychological and emotional abuse.

Since opening in 1991, Youth Off The Streets has grown from a single food van delivering meals to young homeless people on the streets of Kings Cross to a major youth specific agency providing a wide range of services offering a full continuum of care.

It is our goal that these young people will leave our care drug free, with a high school education, living skills and a full or part time job in hand. **To donate to Youth Off The Streets, please call: 1800 06 22 88 or visit:**

**[www.youthoffthestreets.com.au](http://www.youthoffthestreets.com.au)**

**-ENDS-**

**For more information, about Youth Off The Streets please contact:  
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