



For immediate release

Date: 8 August 2023

AUSTRALIAN CONSUMERS CONTINUE TREND TOWARDS NO SUGAR DRINKS WITHOUT RECESSIONARY SUGAR TAX

SYDNEY – Renewed calls for a sugar tax on non-alcoholic drinks will add a strain to family finances without providing a concrete, wholistic solution to a decades old problem. The non-alcoholic beverages industry is leading the way in supporting healthier consumer choices with initiatives like the nation’s first Sugar Reduction Pledge and prioritising low-and-no sugar beverages across members’ portfolios.

The Australian Beverages Council CEO, Geoff Parker says the non-alcoholic beverages industry has for some years been making tangible, proactive changes to help support healthy consumer choices – including, through the Pledge, to reduce sugar consumption.

“The industry’s Sugar Reduction Pledge is a commitment to reduce sugar across signatory portfolios by 25% by 2025 and as at end of 2022 an 18% reduction in sugar had already been achieved which means the Pledge is on track to achieve its goal but more work is still needed” said Parker.

The latest Sugar Reduction Pledge report shows that for the first time, more than half of all drink sales are low and no-sugar beverages which includes plain bottled water, showing that Australians continue the two-decade trend away from sugar-sweetened drink consumption. This has occurred without the need for regressive taxes.

While the consumption of sugar from drinks has decreased significantly over a 20-year period, obesity rates have continued to rise. “The reality is that obesity is a multifaceted problem and simply adding cost to a beverage won’t solve the problem and will only serve to add to the weekly shopping bill. This is why a number of jurisdictions around the world have removed these taxes” said Parker.

“Obesity is complex and while simplistic solutions like a tax might appear attractive in a university lab model, real-world experience shows these types of discriminatory taxes deliver no discernible public health benefit but only hit the poorest households the hardest” said Parker.

ABOUT

The Australian Beverages Council Ltd (ABCL) is the peak body representing the non-alcoholic beverage industry. Our Membership comprises of small, medium-sized and large companies. Collectively these companies produce over 95% of the industry’s volume. Our members make a substantial \$7+ billion contribution to the Australian economy each year, and nationally employ over 46,000 people. Every one job in the industry supports 4.9 jobs in the supply chain.

Contact: Cathy Cook, Head of Corporate Affairs

Phone: 0406 399 211

Email: cathy@ausbev.org