



# Media Release

## Senator Alan Eggleston

### Liberal Senator for Western Australia

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22 May 2006

#### **Wine tax will save Indigenous lives: Senator**

WA Liberal Senator, Alan Eggleston, has renewed calls for a tax to be placed on wine by volume, rather than price.

Senator Eggleston's comments follow recent suggestions by Sturt MP Christopher Pyne to increase the price of alcohol on Aboriginal communities as a means of curbing problems associated with excessive alcohol consumption.

The Senator, however, believes it would be more equitable to increase the tax on cask wine to reduce the overall consumption of alcohol, rather than selectively reducing consumption based on racial grounds.

"Currently, wine from flagons (average 12 per cent alcohol) is taxed at about six cents per standard drink, compared to beer (average three per cent) which is taxed at 43 cents," Senator Eggleston said.

"The current system appears to favour those buying their alcohol in bulk quantities and a new system needs to be considered in order to discourage binge drinking."

The Senator referred to a 1999 Curtin University study into cask wine drinking patterns in the NT which found that, with the introduction of a levy, the average consumption of alcohol dropped significantly.

"The Curtin University study concluded that taxation was an effective way to reduce excessive alcohol consumption and related harms," the Senator said.

"If Australia wants to curb problems associated with excessive drinking in aboriginal communities, it seems obvious that increased tax on cask wine will reduce consumption."

"During my two decades as a GP practicing in Port Hedland I often witnessed the destruction alcohol brought on families and communities."

"It is a sad fact that the more readily available alcohol is, the more likely people are to abuse it."

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