

NATIONAL SPORTING CODE SAYS NO TO ALCOHOL ADS

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26 February: Baseball Australia has stepped up to the plate to protect children from alcohol harm, today pledging to no longer accept alcohol advertising in its junior competitions and at the national representative level of the game.

In doing so, it becomes the first Australian sporting code to partner with the national campaign, *End Alcohol Advertising in Sport*, and sends a strong message that Baseball Australia is proactively building a more family-friendly and healthier sporting environment.

At the announcement today, Baseball Australia Chief Executive Cam Vale said their decision reflects community attitudes, and taking a stand on alcohol advertising leads the way for other sporting codes.

“Baseball Australia is proud to partner with the *End Alcohol Advertising in Sport* campaign. Our junior players, and the kids and families who support Baseball in Australia are the future of our code. They are tomorrow’s players, superstars and fans of our sport, and in partnering with *End Alcohol Advertising in Sport*, we aspire to create a healthier sporting environment for them all to thrive,” Mr Vale said.

Testament to Baseball Australia’s serious resolve to turn its back on alcohol advertising, Mr Vale says Baseball Australia recently rejected a sponsorship proposal with an overseas alcohol brand.

“Sport is a competitive market in Australia and we are not alone in positioning our particular game as being focused on junior participation and development; however, better leadership from sporting administrators is required,” Mr Vale said.

“Our Little League program, which is part of the broader Little League International platform, promotes values of citizenship, discipline, teamwork and physical well-being, which perfectly align with the values and spirit of this particular partnership” he said.

Alcohol is the major contributor to the three leading causes of death among Australian teenagers: unintentional injury, homicide and suicide. And there is extensive research showing that exposure to alcohol marketing leads kids to drink more frequently, at dangerous levels, and from an earlier age.

Baseball Australia’s decision does not extend to, or impact, the operations of the eight independently owned and operated Australian Baseball League teams competing in the professional domestic competition.

The three-year partnership with *End Alcohol Advertising in Sport* will see the campaign promoted nationally at Little League games and promoted on Baseball Australia's digital and media platforms and distributed to the baseball clubs and members throughout Australia.

Australia's rising baseball catcher Mitch Edwards, who's making a name for himself with Major League club Philadelphia Phillies, is a vocal ambassador for *End Alcohol Advertising in Sport*, and believes Baseball Australia has made a fantastic strategic play.

"It's really exciting that we get to step up, be the leader, and show the other codes the way. Baseball Australia is the first national sporting code in Australia to join the campaign to end alcohol advertising in sports, so it's massive and I'm really proud to be involved," said Mitch.

End Alcohol Advertising in Sport campaign spokesman and Chief Executive for the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), Michael Thorn congratulated Baseball Australia and said he was delighted that a national sporting code recognised the importance of prioritising the health and welfare of its player and supporter base above all else.

"Baseball Australia have today shown leadership that is sadly lacking in too many of our national sporting codes. Sport can and should be a powerful force for good. Rather than simply condemning player transgressions, sporting codes must show leadership, and that starts with walking away from alcohol advertising dollars, as Baseball Australia is doing," Mr Thorn said.

Baseball Australia/EAAiS Partnership Launch – Media Doorstop

Time: 10:00am – 11:00am
Date: Tuesday 26 February 2019
Venue: ELS Hall Park, 109 Kent Road, North Ryde (see map below)
Interviews: Baseball Australia Chief Executive Cam Vale; End Alcohol Advertising in Sport spokesperson and parent Kamara Buchanan
Media contact: Clare Ross, Campaign Media Liaison Officer 0429 291 120

