

# WCTU E-Issues 2008

*An email lobby group of WCTU Drug-Free Lifestyles*

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Dear WCTU supporters,

The item below is a copy of a votergram that I had sent yesterday via "Fairgo" to nearly every MP in all the Australian Parliaments. It is important that we seize the moment when there is real concern among our Members of Parliament about the problems of binge drinking. I have received replies from 17 MPs today and almost all were essentially supportive of the ideas in the votergram. I sent back replies with more information to 14 of them. Greg Bloomfield, who runs "Fairgo" will send your votergram to the MPs, suggests that **it would be really good if as many people as possible sent a short message about this issue to Federal MPs and your State MPs**. You can use my votergram as a guide but use your own words. There have been many articles in the newspapers lately to give you ideas about what needs to be done. For Victorian MPs you could include the need to reduce the number of liquor outlets and reduce the trading hours for clubs and bars that are currently open all through the night. The suggestion to raise the drinking age to 21 has not been well received. The other suggestions I made were mostly supported.

**Send your votergram to Greg Bloomfield at: Greg Bloomfield [vmail@fairgo.org]. Let him know that you are doing it because of WCTU and it will be done free on WCTUs subscription, but just sign your name and address. Do it as an individual. Ask for a reply: e.g. I would appreciate your feedback.**

Thanks, Anne Bergen for WCTU E-Issues.

My votergram:

In view of the evidence of the Australia-wide problem of binge drinking, especially among people under 25, we urge you to support measures that will help to reduce this problem. Such measures would include graphic health warning labels (including the danger of drinking while pregnant); bringing the rest of Australia into line with the NSW legislation that makes it illegal for anyone other than the young person's parents to give alcohol to someone under 18; banning or seriously dealing with the problem of "alcopops" by putting up their price through taxation and reducing the alcohol content to no more than 3%; a hard-hitting and continually changing educational advertisements about the dangers of drinking more than the new draft NHMRC guidelines specify; and even considering raising the drinking age to 21.

It is good to see the lead that is being taken by the Prime Minister regarding this problem. It will have serious health repercussions in coming years unless strong action is taken to change Australia's binge drinking culture now. We urge you, regardless of Party lines, to get behind any legislation and ensure it is as effective as possible.

I look forward to your response.

Anne Bergen  
National WCTU Secretary