

MEDIA RELEASE



The Hon Peter Dutton MP
Federal Member for Dickson
Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing

Senator Mathias Cormann
*Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for
Health Administration*

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Tax hand-back - outrageous

The Rudd Labor Government has made an outrageous decision to hand \$300 million back to the alcohol industry after its so-called "Alco pops tax" was rejected by the Senate.

Coalition and crossbench Senators have given the government every opportunity over the last two days to divert the money collected over the last year by the tax grab to real measures to curb teenage binge drinking.

But for its own political purposes it had rejected any compromise, Shadow Health Minister Peter Dutton said.

"The Coalition has said all along that the money **should not** go back to the alcohol industry, but should be used to on alcohol abuse awareness programs".

Senator Mathias Cormann said the Senate had voted down the government's tax grab because it was an irresponsible and ineffective way to deal with the real challenge of binge drinking.

"The Opposition bent over backwards giving the government every opportunity to validate the \$300 million collected so far and to invest all of it in genuine and effective measures to fight alcohol abuse in the community," Senator Cormann said.

Mr Dutton said the Coalition's offer to validate the tax was still on the table and the Rudd Government could introduce legislation in the next 24 hours which would be supported by the Coalition and prevent the money being returned to the alcohol industry.

"The ball's firmly in the Rudd Government's court," Mr Dutton said.

"This is a huge embarrassment for Nicola Roxon and Kevin Rudd."

"They tried to dress up their tax grab as a health measure to curb teenage binge drinking, but it's been exposed for what it was."

"It hasn't curbed binge drinking - the mums and dads around Australia know that - they know that young drinkers have simply shifted to other products," Mr Dutton said.

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