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## **Access to Internal Alcohol Industry Documents: thank you Philip Morris**

### **Introduction**

The WA Tobacco Document Searching Program aims to uncover tobacco industry documents as they relate to Australia and more specifically Western Australia. Initial searches have led to the discovery of new and hitherto unpublished documents providing insights into the drinks industry. As a result of the Master Settlement Agreement in 1998, access to previously internal tobacco industry documents are available to the public. Unlike the tobacco industry, there are no such measures in place to locate this type of information for the drinks industry. Thanks to the Philip Morris Company's involvement with alcohol products, a number of confidential alcohol industry documents have been identified.

### **Methods**

A systematic search for alcohol documents was conducted by entering alcohol-related terms into search fields of tobacco document archive sites. All documents were assessed for relevance and further analysed for content. Information from tobacco industry documents, journals and organisation websites were combined to complement the results.

### **Results**

The document findings confirm similarities in approaches and strategies to those employed by the tobacco industry. They provide raw evidence, exposing a number of alcohol industry strategies including: counterproductive education programs, marketing to youth, targeting minority groups, downplaying evidence of harms, manipulating research data and implementing measures to slow down legislative and regulatory controls such as advertising restrictions and tax increases.

### **Conclusions**

This study confirms the similarity in approaches used by tobacco and alcohol companies and justifies the public health community's cynicism about the drinks industry. This new source of information will provide valuable assistance to those working to counter the impact of the drinks industry.