

Drinkwise: Uniting an Industry

Ron Ainsbury & David Grayson, 2011

The case traces the growing realisation of John Pollaers - the CEO of drinks giant Diageo in Australia - that he and other industry leaders had to become far more proactive and creative in finding innovative solutions to the social problems caused by problem drinking. In the face of considerable industry opposition and substantial ngo scepticism about the genuine commitment of Diageo and other alcohol companies, Pollaers established a cross-industry and multi-stakeholder organisation: DrinkWise. The case covers a six year period from summer 2003. The case should trigger lively classroom debates about what responsibilities businesses have for the misuse of their products and services; and whether companies can ever be trusted to self-regulate. Whilst the specific case concerns Diageo and other drinks companies in Australia, the industry faces similar challenges in many different parts of the world - and the issues of collaborative or partnered governance, are relevant to many different business sectors. The case poses a series of questions designed to force students to think about competing stakeholder wants and needs; the risks and the opportunities for different stakeholders in deciding whether to participate in an initiative like DrinkWise; and the managerial skills needed in the creation and maintenance of such an initiative.