

Ad industry meets to discuss ad banning

More than 100 media owners, industry specialists, sport and event sponsors, members of the entertainment industry and the liquor trade, gathered at the Wanderers Club in Johannesburg late last week to debate the proposed alcohol advertising ban and in particular the negative impact it would have on the advertising and liquor trade industry.

The objective of the meeting was for participating members to sign a petition against the ban. The petition will be taken to all nine provinces over the next six weeks. The final petition and a detailed document noting the industry's objectives will be submitted to the parliamentary secretary, Zingile Dingane, in the Western Cape. An additional 400 online petitions have already been lodged.

Hitting small agencies

[Kena Media](#), an outdoor media company, is leading the countrywide campaign, arguing that a ban on alcohol advertising would have a significant impact on small-to-medium advertising agencies in particular.

"Alcohol advertising is what sustains businesses like ours and a ban would mean having to shed jobs, which would not be fair on the companies and the individuals who helped to build us and make us who we are," says Tshepo Matsepe, co-owner of Kena Media.

Kena Media drafted and published an open letter to minister of health, Aaron Motsoaledi, decrying the proposed ban on alcohol advertising. The company has since made a rallying call to others within the industry, encouraging them to voice their concerns and objections towards the proposed ban on alcohol advertising.

No link between ads and alcohol abuse

While participants in the debate agreed with government's objective to curb alcohol abuse in the country, they believe there is no conclusive evidence available that links alcohol advertising with alcohol abuse. The Out of Home Media Owner's Association ([OHMSA](#)) noted that banning alcohol advertising would not achieve the objective of government to tackle alcohol abuse.

Members of the entertainment industry and tavern owners raised their concerns of losing income because of a ban on alcohol advertising and pleaded for government to deal with the underlying problems attributed to alcohol abuse. "There has been no consultation by government with traders. We do agree that there are people abusing alcohol but the liquor trade industry is not to blame. Unemployment plays a big role in alcohol abuse and banning advertising won't solve the problem," one tavern owner argued.

Advertising, as a form of freedom of speech was highlighted, and that a partial or complete ban on alcohol advertising would be an infringement of a 'fundamental constitutional right'.

Matsepe advised that government use the advertising industry and in particular, billboards to support the fight against alcohol abuse rather than ban alcohol advertising. "It is important that the industry supports government's objectives to deal with alcohol abuse in South Africa. Outdoor media can be used for educational campaigns on responsible alcohol consumption."

Kena Media is confident that government will now take the time to consult with the industry once it makes its submission to parliament. For more, email pj@kenamedia.co.za.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>