

ALMR Press Notice

Wednesday 22 April 2009.

Release time: immediate

BUDGET 2009 – A SLAP IN THE FACE FOR HARD WORKING LICENSEES

The Chancellor has been slammed by the Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers for continuing to ignore the plight of Britain's pubs and bars in this year's Budget. Not only did the Budget confirm 2% increases in alcohol excise duties – this despite pubs and bars closing in record numbers over the past year - but it failed to offer any form of help and support to beleaguered licensees struggling to stay afloat.

ALMR Chief Executive, Nick Bish, commented:

“The Budget proves that the Chancellor does not give a XXXX for Britain's local pubs. What we needed was a tonic from the Chancellor, instead we have a double whammy of tax increases – with a penny a pint from midnight tonight and another toxic shock when the VAT cut is reversed at the end of the year.”

The trade body for pubs and bars also condemned the continued favouritism being shown to other industries – at the expense of pubs and bars.

Nick Bish continued:

“The Chancellor has already spent 3.5% of GDP on bailing out the banks, £2bn to save the car industry, but he appears to balk at investing in pubs and bars. Now we have investment in ‘green collar’ jobs and ‘low carbon’ technologies. The Chancellor must beware – all the glitters is not gold and it is questionable whether these new, sexy industries will deliver lasting growth.

We know that investment in pubs and bars is a solid and reliable one. We know that we can generate sustainable growth as well as real jobs when the economy finally takes off. The Great British Pub is a national asset. Pubs bring local communities together and create thousands of jobs. They also pay a great deal of tax. It is about time that Mr Darling recognised a pub taxed into closure soon pays no tax at all.”

<ENDS>

Notes for editors

- *ALMR* is the only national trade body solely dedicated to representing the interests of pub and bar operators, and to providing them with business support and advice. It has almost 100 member companies, operating over 10,000 outlets.
- *ALMR* research suggests that the average community pub generates £87,000 per annum in taxes – equivalent to two thirds of profits before tax. This is more than the lessee and landlord combined receive in income.
- Last year, pubs and bars closed in record numbers – 39 a week and over 17,000 jobs lost to the economy.
- The *ALMR's* Budget submission also calls for:

1. Abolition of the alcohol duty escalator and a freeze in duty rates
2. A ban on below cost selling by supermarkets
3. A lower VAT rate for pub meals (recently agreed in Europe)
4. A freeze on NMW rates and cancellation of the proposed 0.5% increases in employee and employer National Insurance Contributions
5. Abandonment of the proposed code of practice on alcohol retailing – which will cost **all** pubs a minimum of £900 in the first year alone

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