

SEP 28, 1978

EXHIBIT
CSR-129

The Budget beer is here at last, but anot.

By RICHARD MACAY

It may have taken a week or four, but the price of beer has finally come down.

When the Federal Treasurer, Mr Keating, surprised everyone with a Budget that cut the price of beer, he predicted that cartons of the low alcohol amber would drop by \$5.50 and cartons of the full strength product by \$2.70.

However, for many, it was to be a long wait for a cheap drink.

The morning after the Budget, pubicans were already pointing out that Mr Keating had forgotten to mention that he also added a 20 per cent sales tax to beer.

What's more, they noted, it would be several weeks before their old supplies, bought at the old prices, would be exhausted.

A random check with Sydney hotels yesterday found that prices have indeed come down, although it still pays to shop around.

The cheapest carton of Toobays 2.2 the Herald found was at the Rooky Hill Namatjira which was charging \$15.99 — a cut of \$5.

The highest price, on the other hand, was \$19.70, being charged by Maaly's Hotel Steyne.

Staff there said that small hotels, which relied on their bar trade, could not afford the big cuts

provided by large bottle shops.

While some hotels waited two weeks for the old supplies to be sold, several, including the Sportsman at Blacktown, dropped their prices the morning after the Budget to capitalise on the good news.

But while Mr Keating will be recorded in the history books as the first Treasurer to slash the price of beer, it seems that drinkers have somehow managed to restrain themselves from rushing down to the local to celebrate.

Mr Tom Robertson, the managing director of the Aussie pub chain, which includes the Carlingbah Inn, said that the price cuts

had made no difference to sales.

"Sales last weekend were up 10 per cent but it's got nothing to do with politics," he said.

"Sales are up because the weather is getting warmer."

An employee at the Menzies Hotel said many of his clients had not even been aware of the cuts.

Mr Jim Gialouris, of the Maroubra Junction Hotel, cut his Toobays 2.2 cartons by \$4 to \$17.99. And what impact did the price bonanza have on sales?

"Absolutely none," Mr Gialouris said yesterday.

Mr John Franks, the owner of the Woolloomooloo Bay Hotel,

had no doubt who should accept some of the blame if anyone had been confused by the price cuts.

He said that while the newspapers had published screaming headlines on page one announcing the beer cuts, they had buried the details of the sales tax increases on the inside pages.

A spokesman for the Consumer Affairs Department said yesterday that his department had received a "handful" of complaints about pubicans not cutting their prices.

The chairman of the Federal Government's Prices Surveillance Authority, Ms Hylda Rolfe, said she was generally satisfied with

the way hotels on to the public.

Bottle shops to cut prices, as in areas where walk to a shop to be a trifle slow.

However, it was much longer.

Thanks to meat policy, it up twice a year automatic price.

And the ma pool Hotel, warned that in February.

CSR takes liability in asbestos deaths

By JANET FIFE-YEOMANS

Australia's largest giant CSR yesterday finally accepted liability for the tragedy that was the Wittenoom blue asbestos mine in the north of Western Australia.

After 11 years of legal wrangling, CSR's managing director, Mr Burgess, announced that the company had set aside \$20 million to settle out of court the 200 claims from miners who worked there before 1979, or their families.

"I am not proud of this company being involved in this whole issue," said Mr Burgess, who recommended in an internal memo in 1977 that CSR had a "moral obligation outside the scope of the law" to these men and women.

But it was a bitter-sweet victory for the 100 former Wittenoom miners who worked there after 1979 and have claims lodged in the courts, and the hundreds who, doctors predict, may yet develop the fatal asbestos-linked lung cancer, mesothelioma.

They have become the pawns in a new fight between CSR and the State Government Insurance Commission of WA.

The CSR subsidiary, Midaloo Pty Ltd, which operated the Wittenoom mine in the Pilbara between 1943 and 1966, had only full insurance coverage with the SGIC covering common law claims after January 1979.

Last week the SGIC declared the insurance policy "inoperative" after a landmark decision in the Victorian Supreme Court which upheld a damages award to Mr Klaus Rabenah, a former Wittenoom miner now dying of cancer.

Mr Rabenah, 52, was awarded \$250,000 in punitive and \$425,000 in compensatory damages.

CSR intends to take the SGIC to court to force it to pay up. The case will start next week in Perth.

There are currently 283 claims against CSR in the Australian courts, about 100 of them involving men and women who worked in the Wittenoom mine and mill or lived in the town between 1979 and the mine's closure in 1966.

It is estimated the SGIC would be liable for compensation of about \$30 million for those 100.

Mr Burgess said he believed it was up to the SGIC and not CSR

'Death with dignity now'

Since 1979, a dedicated and unpaid miners have been chipping at CSR's defence from their office in a suburban house in Perth.

They call themselves the Asbestos Diseases Society and yesterday their president, Mr Robert Vojakovic, was celebrating a victory.

"CSR's decision to settle means peace of mind," he said. "It means death with dignity and not despair at how your family will cope when you're gone."

Earlier this year, Mr Peter Hey, 58, who worked at Wittenoom for just two months in 1953, died of mesothelioma after giving evidence against Wittenoom. His estate was awarded \$150,000 damages.

"If CSR had made this decision a few months ago, Peter may have been here now to hear the good news," said his widow Nina yesterday.

By JANET FIFE-YEOMANS

to honour its obligations, settle the outstanding claims and then try to recover the money from CSR.

"We are not going to allow the SGIC to turn away from an insurance policy we have had with it since 1943. That is ridiculous," he said.

CSR has set up its own insurance company which will insure it for the first \$20 million.

Mr Burgess admitted that the mine should have been closed in the late 1940s.

It was 1948 when Professor Eric Saint, then a medical officer with the WA Health Department, predicted that Wittenoom would produce the world's "worst crop of asbestos-related diseases."

A spokesman for the SGIC said yesterday it stuck by its opinion the insurance policy was inoperative because it had become apparent in court decisions that "Midaloo had been aware of the dangers associated with asbestos dust, that it had failed to take reasonable precautions to protect employees and had failed to fully disclose the dangerous nature of the Wittenoom mine operation to the Insurance Commission."

Development, leadership... a



Cadets from NSW at Singleton Army camp for a week of training. "We aren't training lit



Cadet Under Officer Kyle Preston, 18, with Cadet Under Officer Shane Parker.

Skase to make his stage debut wi

By BUE LECKY
and the Financial Times

Mr Skase... the theatres will continue to operate.

Coming soon to London's West End: Mr Christopher Skase. The media and resort tycoon confirmed yesterday that he is the latest in a line-up of Australian entrepreneurs to dominate ownership of London's theatre district.

Mr Skase and several unnamed associates have paid more than \$40 million for a dozen of London's most famous theatres — the "Joff-Moss" chain — sold by Mr Alan Bond. Mr. Bond had

acquired the group from Mr Robert Holmes & Court, who had earlier allowed Lord Lew Grade off-stage.

The theatres bought by Mr Skase include the Palladium and the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, as well as Berman's and Nathan's, the theatrical costermongers.

Mr Skase — known to have a taste for the high life which embraces the lavish Mirage resorts in Queensland, Lear jets, luxury yachts and extravagant Christmas parties — confirmed the purchase yesterday.

The theatres have been bought

by a Brisbane pany, Charm, which is a venture, and in his Quince grow. He said it intention that time to operate same manner many years.

Mr Bond in chair as a takeover of Mr Bell Group. Lord Grade, in British show the theatres be