



Watchdog warns Aldi over cheap alcohol

■ **Kim Macdonald**

One of the State's foremost public health authorities will oppose Aldi if it seeks to sell discount liquor in WA amid fears it could spark a price war and encourage problem drinking.

McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth director Mike Daube said he would officially object to the Liquor Commission if Aldi applied for permits to sell alcohol at some of the 60 supermarkets it plans to roll out in WA within a few years.

At Aldi's east coast discount liquor stores, which are connected to its supermarkets, bottles of wine start at \$2.50, a four-pack of vodka mixer drinks start from \$9 and a six-pack of bottled beer starts at \$10.

Professor Daube said cheap alcohol encouraged excessive drinking, especially among those with alcohol problems and young people who "drink to get

drunk". He will this month voice his general opposition in a submission to a review of the Liquor Control Act, but said he would consider any individual licence applications from Aldi on merit. Community objections are considered in licence applications.

Dr Lisa Wood, from the University of WA, said some of Aldi's alcoholic drinks were "cheaper than an icy pole", which could send a dangerous message to young people.

She said the alcohol shop market in WA was arguably saturated already.

Aldi said in a written response to questions from *The West Australian* on Tuesday that it wanted to discuss opportunities to sell discount liquor in WA with the State and local governments.

It said it would seek licences.

But when asked for a response to criticism yesterday it said it would not speculate on whether it would pursue such licences.