



MEDIA RELEASE

NSW ELECTION POLL: MAJORITY SUPPORT FOR ALCOHOL MEASURES

1 March, 2015: Two thirds of New South Wales (NSW) residents support the measures introduced last summer to curb alcohol-fuelled violence and, just weeks out from the 2015 State Election, voters are now calling on party leaders to outline their plans to address alcohol harms.

It is the first such polling to be undertaken since 21 January 2014, when the O'Farrell Government announced the reforms in response to the tragic deaths of Daniel Christie and Thomas Kelly.

The poll reveals 66 per cent of NSW residents are in favour of the new measures, which include 3am last drinks and 1:30am lockouts in the Sydney CBD and a 10pm closing time for bottle shops across the State.

The polling conducted by Galaxy Research, on behalf of the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), found that in the last twelve months there has been a decrease in NSW voters who think we have a problem with alcohol (74%, down 6% from 2014), and a nine per cent decline in those who think more needs to be done to address alcohol-related harms (71%).

The polling also suggests the measures have had a positive impact on perceptions of community safety, with a significant decline in the number of people who feel their city is unsafe on a Saturday night (58%), largely because of people affected by alcohol. This is a reduction of nine per cent on this time last year (down from 67%), indicating that the decisive action by the NSW Government is slowly restoring community confidence.

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn says the polling contains valuable insights for political parties, sending a clear message that while NSW communities remain concerned about alcohol, the government is on the right track when it comes to the prevention and reduction of the State's heavy alcohol toll.

"One year after the tragic events of last summer, our polling tells us there is strong community support for the NSW Government's alcohol harm prevention measures. We've seen an increase in perceptions of safety among voters, and a decline in those who think more urgently needs to be done by our politicians. The people of NSW are experiencing welcome reductions in alcohol harms, and before heading to the voting booths they want an assurance that this progress will not be undone," Mr Thorn said.

Three in every four NSW voters surveyed believed that alcohol was an important issue which should be on the agenda this election – with 73% of residents wanting the leaders of the major parties, Premier Mike Baird and Luke Foley, to outline their plans to address alcohol-related harms before 28 March.

Mr Thorn noted that political parties would have an ideal opportunity to do so at the upcoming NSW ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance (NAAPA) public [election forum](#) in Sydney this Thursday.

“This poll data tells us what NSW voters want to see from their political leaders. We’re only 27 days out from the NSW State Election, so now is the time for politicians to commit to an evidence-based state-wide plan of action and to continue the job that was started last January,” said Mr Thorn.

Key poll findings

- 66% of NSW residents are in favour of the NSW Government’s measures to reduce alcohol-related violence introduced in January 2014.
- 73% of NSW residents would like the leaders of the major parties, Premier Mike Baird and Luke Foley, to outline their plans to address alcohol-related harms prior to the 2015 State Election.
- 74% of NSW residents believe that Australia has a problem with excess drinking or alcohol abuse. This is a significant decline from 80% in 2014.
- 71% of NSW residents believe more needs to be done to reduce the harm caused by alcohol-related illness, injury and related issues (down from 80% in 2014).
- 58% of NSW residents consider the city or centre of town unsafe on a Saturday night. This represents a decline from the 67% of NSW residents who felt it was unsafe in 2014.
- 91% of those who considered the city or centre of town unsafe on a Saturday night indicated that it was because of people affected by alcohol.
- NSW residents supported a range of policies to reduce alcohol-related harms, including increasing penalties for people involved in alcohol-related violence (85%); introducing a closing time for pubs, clubs and bars of no later than 3am (82%); and banning political donations from the alcohol industry (70%).

Mr Thorn (@MichaelTThorn) is available for interview.

Media Contact:

Jeremy Henderson **0425 559 710**

The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)** is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to stop the harm caused by alcohol. Alcohol harm in Australia is significant. Over 5,500 lives are lost every year and more than 157,000 people are hospitalised making alcohol one of our nation’s greatest preventative health challenges.

For over a decade, FARE has been working with communities, governments, health professionals and police across the country to stop alcohol harms by supporting world-leading research, raising public awareness and advocating for changes to alcohol policy. In that time FARE has helped more than 750 communities and organisations, and backed over 1,400 projects around Australia.