



NORTHERN TERRITORY 2016 ELECTION PLATFORM:

Calling time on too much grog in the NT

SUMMARY

Alcohol-related harm is one of the Territory's greatest health challenges. But thankfully, this is not a problem without solutions.

The Northern Territory needs a comprehensive approach to reducing alcohol-related harm that focuses on targeting alcohol's availability, supporting community initiatives, and supporting those who are affected by alcohol problems. Governments cannot on the one hand say they are concerned about alcohol consumption levels while continuing to approve liquor licences and relax regulation. This approach must be embraced by all sides of politics to ensure that it lasts beyond political cycles.

It is time to address excessive grog consumption in the Territory in an intelligent, properly planned, evidence-based way that looks beyond headlines and election cycles, towards a future without the devastation we've seen for so long. This change must be led by a government with a strong commitment to action. Future generations depend on this change.

The People's Alcohol Action Coalition (PAAC) and the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) have developed the following election plan to prevent and reduce harm from alcohol in the Northern Territory. PAAC and FARE call on all political parties to commit to the nine priority areas and 18 actions identified in this platform.

PAAC and FARE have identified nine priority areas for urgent action

1. Reintroduce a Banned Drinkers Register and associated measures, including identification (ID) scanning for all customers

- Reintroduce the Banned Drinkers' Register in conjunction with scanning of photo identification cards in all licensed venues (including those licensed to sell alcohol for consumption on the premises), the Alcohol and other Drug Tribunal and the collection of comprehensive criminal justice, hospital and health data.
- Retain point-of-sale interventions, including Temporary Beat Locations, as needed based on police operational decision making, once the Banned Drinkers' Register is reinstated.
- Reintroduce therapeutic specialist courts for problem drinkers who commit offences.
- Conduct independent evaluations of the Banned Drinkers' Register and the therapeutic specialist court upon implementation and report two years after the measures have been reintroduced.

2. Introduce a minimum price for alcohol

- Amend the Liquor Act to allow Licensing NT to set the price of alcohol.
- Introduce a minimum price for alcohol products equivalent to the existing minimum price of takeaway full-strength beer, currently at approximately \$1.30 per standard drink.

3. Increase the capacity of treatment services

- Review the Alcohol Mandatory Treatment Act in light of the current independent evaluation due to be completed in early 2017.
- Fund additional voluntary, evidence-based, culturally safe, alcohol treatment and rehabilitation services, including aftercare, across all regions in the Northern Territory.

4. Reduce the number of liquor outlets

- Introduce a moratorium on new, transferred, and reactivated liquor licences for all licensed premises, with no exemptions.
- Introduce a buy-back scheme for liquor licences in the Northern Territory.

5. Prevent, diagnose, and manage Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

- Respond to the Select Committee on Action to Prevent Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders' (FASD) final report and its 26 recommendations, which was tabled in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly in February 2015. The response must include funded action to prevent, diagnose, and manage FASD in the Northern Territory.

6. Introduce a risk-based licensing scheme

- Introduce a risk-based licensing scheme for liquor licensing in the NT which includes:
 - establishing three-yearly liquor licences
 - differentiated fees for all licence types commensurate with the risk of alcohol-related harm
 - annual indexation of all licence fees.

7. Review trading hours

- Introduce 12am last drinks and 1am close for late night trading venues across the Northern Territory.
- Introducing mandatory licence conditions for all venues in the Northern Territory. This needs to include placing restrictions on alcoholic drinks such as the sale of 'shots', ready-to-drink beverages with more than five per cent alcohol, time limitations on sales, and no drink stockpiling by patrons.
- Introduce a takeaway sales free day in locations where a need is identified.

8. Increase community involvement in liquor licence regulation

- Reinstate the Northern Territory Licensing Commission and its full functions and powers as it operated under the Northern Territory Licensing Commission Act. Major decisions and determinations must be made by the Commission, with hearings conducted by panels of members selected by the Chairperson of the Northern Territory Licensing Commission to ensure transparency.
- Provide \$4 million over four years to develop and fund a Northern Territory community defenders office based on the successful 'Alcohol Community Action Project' pilot.

9. Ban political donations from the alcohol industry

- Ban political donations from the alcohol industry and its representatives.

About PAAC and FARE

The People's Alcohol Action Coalition (PAAC) is an Alice Springs-based community organisation that aims to reduce the impact of alcohol-related harm. Members include social workers, lawyers, medical practitioners, Aboriginal organisations, trade unions, churches, social service organisations and individuals. PAAC collaborates with a range of Aboriginal, health and other bodies to achieve its goals. To find out more about PAAC, go to www.paac.org.au

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to stop the harm caused by alcohol. FARE works 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. To find out more about FARE, go to www.fare.org.au