# Alcohol harms to hit NSW hard this summer

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Alcohol-related harms will again hit New South Wales hard this summer with new statistics pointing to more than 300 alcohol-related deaths, and more than 12,000 hospitalisations attributable to alcohol over the next three months. A newly formed coalition of health, community, law enforcement, emergency services and research organisations says NSW residents should brace for the approaching summer alcohol storm and has called on the NSW Premier to introduce effective alcohol policy reform to address the heavy toll. Seasonally-adjusted statistics including newly released data from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics point to the extent of the summer alcohol harms throughout the State forecasting more than 7,800 alcohol-related assaults and over $12 million in police time spent dealing with alcohol-related crime. Launched at Parliament House in Sydney today, the NSW ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance (NAAPA), has been formed to promote evidence-based actions to prevent and reduce acute and chronic alcoholrelated harms in NSW and the ACT. NAAPA includes among its members the Australian Medical Association (NSW), Police Association of New South Wales, and the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE). Associate Professor Brian Owler, Australian Medical Association (NSW) says people in NSW are becoming increasingly concerned about the level of alcohol harms they witness in their communities and understandably frustrated by the lack of meaningful action from the NSW Government. “We believe it is critical that the NSW Government understands the extent and devastating impact of alcohol harms across the State, and adopts effective measures that could go a long way to reducing it. In NAAPA, NSW now has a formidable alliance, advocating for proven alcohol policy reform and determined to be heard,” Associate Professor Owler said. According to Associate Professor Owler, NSW hospitals are under immense pressure in both emergency departments and elective surgery. “If we managed to make a dent in the number of alcohol-related cases it would be a great outcome for every patient in the state,” Associate Professor Owler said. Dr Peter Aquilina will again see the harms from alcohol use up close this summer. An oral and maxillofacial surgeon at Westmead Hospital, Dr Aquilina is left quite literally putting the pieces back together again. “Beyond the alarming statistics, lie real people, families, friends, and colleagues; lives devastated as a result. This is more than a number on a page. It’s the young man arriving at hospital by ambulance, his face so bloody and beaten that now his own partner can’t recognise him. Imagine those scenes repeated in hospital emergency departments around the State, and in such frequency, that those on the front line no longer find it shocking,” Dr Aquilina said. At today’s launch NAAPA unveiled an online campaign aimed at further highlighting the summer alcohol harms. Echoing the campaign’s message, FARE Chief Executive, Michael Thorn says NSW can count on a heavy summer alcohol toll, but stresses there is a solution. “We can count on a heavy summer alcohol toll, however the greater tragedy would be for the NSW Government to continue to ignore effective measures that we know would reduce alcohol harms. A reduction in trading hours is an important first step to address alcohol availability, but NAAPA will also lobby for tighter controls on pricing and promotion as well as greater community engagement so that members of the public may play a greater role in the assessment of liquor licences that impact their towns and suburbs,” Mr Thorn said.

### Metadata