# Election Forum no show: Last minute snub sparks concern Alcohol Reforms no longer a priority for Baird government

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| **Date** | 2015-03-05 11:17:07 |
| **Categories** | Media releases  |

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Invited to attend the election forum three months ago, the Government gave an assurance as recently as Monday that it would take part in the public event.

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) says the Government’s late withdrawal is a sign the coalition may be divided on the issue of alcohol policy.

Tonight’s NSW ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance (NAAPA) election forum in Sydney was supposed to provide communities with an opportunity to see exactly where the parties stand on alcohol policy ahead of the State Election, however the Government’s no show will now leave voters in the dark regarding the Government’s real intentions.

FARE’s Director of Policy and Research, Caterina Giorgi says the Government’s unwillingness to nominate a single political representative from among their 80 members of parliament is extremely disappointing.

“The NSW Governments failure to attend tonight’s alcohol policy election forum and it’s unwillingness to find a single one of its 80 members of parliament to represent the Coalition at tonight’s event suggests alcohol policy is not a priority for the Government ahead of this month’s election,” Ms Giorgi said.

In sharp contrast, Ms Giorgi says it is a priority issue for the people of NSW, with polling by FARE finding that a vast majority of NSW residents (73%) want the major parties to outline their plans to address alcohol-related harms prior to the 2015 NSW State Election.

“New South Wales voters have a right to know what the major parties intend to do to address alcohol harms. 71% of NSW residents think more should be done to reduce the harm caused by alcohol, and tonight is an opportunity for NSW politicians to stand up and speak up on this issue,” Ms Giorgi said.

This follows the lukewarm response to a recent NAAPA campaign asking individual State MP’s to pledge support for the alcohol policy measures announced by the Government in January 2014 which to date has received support from only one National MP and one Liberal MP.

With 31% of NSW residents having been affected by alcohol-related violence, Caterina Giorgi says this is an issue that touches many people in NSW, and has appealed to Premier Baird to intervene to ensure that the Government is represented at the Forum.

“Tonight, we are asking State Politicians to stand before the people of NSW; the police, the nurses, the residents and the parents; to listen to their concerns about alcohol and to explain how these will be addressed. Those people deserve more than a deafening silence from the Government and I would implore the Premier to step in and ensure that the Coalition is represented,” Ms Giorgi said.

[view media release in pdf](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/ELECTION-FORUM-NO-SHOW-LAST-MINUTE-SNUB-SPARKS-CONCERNS-ALCOHOL-REFORMS-NO-LONGER-A-PRIORITY-FOR-BAIRD-GOVERNMENT-Final-05032015.pdf)

### Metadata