# NT: Too much grog, too much harm

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| **Date** | 2016-08-10 00:30:02 |
| **Categories** | Media releases |

### Alcohol is responsible for two deaths, 52 hospitalisations and 69 assaults every week in the Northern Territory (NT). Territorians who want a government that’s willing to embrace real action to stop the harm have asked candidates, including Chief Minister Adam Giles, to present their policies at a public forum in Alice Springs today.

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The People’s Alcohol Action Coalition (PAAC), based in Alice Springs, and the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) have released an election platform highlighting the extent of alcohol-related harm in the Northern Territory and have put forward a comprehensive plan of action.

The Northern Territory has the highest proportion of people in Australia who drink daily and the lowest proportion of non-drinkers.

PAAC spokesperson Dr John Boffa says those consumption patterns are reflected in the high level of preventable alcohol-related illness, injury, and death.

“Unfortunately the Northern Territory is the booziest jurisdiction in Australia and, as a direct result, we have the highest proportion of alcohol-attributable deaths and hospitalisations,” Dr Boffa said.

“These statistics are damning. Our drivers are 20 times more likely to return a breath test above the legal limit; alcohol’s a factor in at least 42 per cent of road deaths. It’s a factor in 53 per cent of all assaults, and in up to 65 per cent of all family violence reported to police.”

The reintroduction of the Banned Drinkers Register and a minimum price for alcohol are among nine priority areas identified in the *Northern Territory 2016 election platform: Calling time on too much grog in the NT*.

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn says alcohol-related harm is a big problem but not one without a solution and called on all sides of politics to support a comprehensive and long-term approach that prioritises community health and safety above commercial interests.

“Governments need to do more than show concern about the damage caused by too much alcohol, while in the same breath approving more liquor outlets and relaxing regulation. What’s needed is a comprehensive approach to ensure that workable solutions remain in place beyond the next election,” Mr Thorn said.

“We know what works, and armed with that evidence we now need the political will to introduce measures that will be effective in saving lives and reducing the damage wrought by alcohol across the Territory.”

The PAAC and FARE *Northern Territory 2016 election platform* also calls for greater investment in treatment services, a reduction in the number of liquor outlets, increased community involvement in liquor licence regulation, and a greater investment in the prevention, diagnosis, and management of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

Dr Boffa says that importantly, the nine priority items and actions contained within the election platform have a deliberate focus on supply reduction measures guided by the uncontested and widely accepted evidence of what is known to be the most effective.

“This is a problem that affects all Territorians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples suffer disproportionately but it touches all who live here. Ahead of the election, we have an opportunity to put excessive grog consumption and its dire consequences, on the agenda, and to demand that our political representatives acknowledge the scale of the problem and embrace those measures proven to be successful,” Dr Boffa said.

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### Metadata