

LABELLING DECISION SHOWS HEALTH MINISTERS PUT BOOZE BEFORE BABIES

27 June 2014: Australia's leading alcohol research and education body has condemned Australia's health ministers for kowtowing to the alcohol industry and putting booze before babies with its decision to not mandate pregnancy warnings on alcohol products.

The Chief Executive of the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), Michael Thorn, said the decision is disgraceful.

"This decision reflects poorly on all of Australia's health ministers," Mr Thorn said.

"They have put alcohol industry interests ahead of public health and the evidence that effective health warning labels will raise awareness about the risks of consuming alcohol during pregnancy.

"The alcohol industry will be celebrating that they have been able to successfully avoid introducing a warning label on their products for almost two decades, since the first application was made to Food Standards Australia New Zealand about introducing a pregnancy warning label."

Mr Thorn said that Governments have clear advice before them that effective labelling on alcohol products is a cost-effective measure that can prevent babies being born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

FARE will now seek meetings with health ministers to seek to have the decision overturned.

Michael Thorn is available for interview (@MichaelTThorn)

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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. More than 3,500 lives are lost every year and more than 100,000 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.

For further information visit FARE's website: www.fare.org.au.