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Michael Thorn
Chief Executive
Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)
PO Box 19
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via email: Caterina.Giorgi@fare.org.au

14 June 2015

Dear Mr Thorn,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education's (FARE) questions relating to your election platform.

Please see The Australian Greens' responses below.

Prevent alcohol-related family violence

The Australian Greens have significant concerns about the harms associated with risky consumption alcohol, in particular on children and young people. We know that the impacts of risky drinking are not only on the individual drinker but also on their families including children, and broader community. It is clear that action is required to address and prevent family violence, including alcohol-related violence. The Greens have made the biggest funding commitment of any party to address domestic violence. The Greens plan includes the development of a new \$5 billion National Partnership Agreement on Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women to specialist services such as crisis phone services, women's shelters, training for service providers, counselling, perpetrator interventions, and other specialist domestic violence services as well as roll out of more effective perpetrator interventions including men's behaviour change programs and early intervention programs worth \$128 million over 4 years. The Greens detailed policy is available at:

http://greens.org.au/sites/greens.org.au/files/20160526%20Confronting%20our%20DV%20crisis_final.pdf.

Protect children from alcohol advertising and sponsorship

The Greens recognise the harm caused to children and young people from alcohol promotion through advertising and sponsorship. Research shows that alcohol marketing strategies lead to underage drinkers starting to drink, regular young drinkers becoming prone to binge-drinking patterns, and established young drinkers drinking at riskier levels which can place them at risk of harms.

We have serious concerns about the current advertising regulations which mean that while there are current regulations in place, alcohol advertising is permitted at any time of the day – including at the peak times for child viewing – so long as live sports or any sports related program is being broadcast. The Greens will have more to say about this later in the campaign.



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Prevent, diagnose and manage Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)

The Greens are concerned about the rising rates of FASD in Australia. We support measures to ensure that women have access to the information they need about their alcohol consumption. This includes clear labelling of alcohol products to indicate that alcohol consumption can be harmful to unborn children. We also understand the necessity for women to be provided with clear information from health professionals about the harms of drinking when pregnant including brief interventions.

A nation-wide public education campaign on alcohol

As a former drug and alcohol clinician, I know more than many about the harms of alcohol on the individual and those around them. The statistics show that drinking at risky levels remains high in Australia and The Greens are supportive of measures to address the drinking culture in Australia. We would support a strong focus on prevention in alcohol policy including consideration of public education campaigns to highlight the serious impacts of drinking at risky levels on the drinker, their family and the broader community. The Greens have announced the establishment of a Harm Reduction Innovation Fund to trial new approaches to harm reduction and contribute to building an evidence base for effective interventions.

Reform alcohol tax and developing a funding base for preventing alcohol harms

The Australian Greens recognise that the current complex and illogical taxation system in Australia for alcohol creates perverse incentives. The Wine Equalisation Tax (WET) promotes the production of cheap wine, which we know is abused by those who drink at risky levels and young people. Abolishing the WET in favour of a universal volumetric taxation system for alcohol has long been a policy of the Australian Greens.

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to the FARE's election priorities.

Yours Sincerely,

Senator Richard Di Natale
Leader of the Australian Greens & Senator for Victoria



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ALCOHOL ADS ARE NOT CHILDS PLAY

Protecting children from alcohol ads

Closing the loophole that exposes our kids to harm

Young children are exposed to a barrage of ads for alcohol during programs that are broadcast in the time slots that are traditionally set aside for kids' viewing. The Greens have listened to community concerns and will restrict alcohol advertising to protect children from avoidable harms.

Alcohol advertising is harming children and young people. Research shows that alcohol marketing strategies lead to underage drinkers starting to drink, regular young drinkers becoming prone to binge-drinking patterns, and established young drinkers drinking at riskier levels which can place them at risk of harms.¹

While there are current regulations in place that provide some protections for children, alcohol advertising is permitted at any time of the day – including at the peak times for child viewing – so long as live sports or any sports related program is being broadcast.

Australian regulations are inadequate to protect adolescents and children despite the enormous community concern around alcohol advertising and promotion, and the Greens are the only party prepared to stand up to the alcohol lobby and put an end to them.

> ENDING THE BARRAGE

The Greens will tackle the issue of targeted advertising of alcohol to children by introducing legislation that will:

- **Set enforceable, national standard times** for child-friendly TV ads that would ban alcohol ads on commercial TV between 6am and 9am, and 4pm and 9pm on weekdays; and between 6am and 9pm on weekends and during school holidays.
- **Ban subscription television channels** dedicated to children's programming from showing alcohol advertisements.
- **Prevent companies from targeting underage customers** via email and smartphones with material promoting alcohol products.

¹ Impact of Alcohol Advertising and Media Exposure on Adolescent Alcohol Use: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies Peter Anderson, Avalon de Bruijn, Kathryn Angus, Ross Gordon, Gerard Hastings Alcohol and Alcoholism May 2009, 44 (3) 229-243; DOI: 10.1093/alcalc/agn115

> ALCOHOL ADS WORK

Experts agree that self-regulation in Australia has failed, allowing the bombardment of alcohol ads to continue.

Studies have shown that young people who are heavily exposed to alcohol advertising are 50 per cent more likely to start drinking in the following year than those lightly exposed.²

And 70 per cent of Australians believe alcohol advertising should be banned on TV before 8.30pm.³ Nevertheless, advertisers continue to target broadcasts during sporting and cultural events which appeal to younger audiences as major outlets for alcohol promotion.

> THE POWER OF TARGETED ADVERTISING

Research has demonstrated significant relationships between children's exposure to alcohol advertising, and drinking intentions and behaviours.⁴ Exposure to alcohol advertising has been found to shape young people's beliefs, attitudes and drinking behaviours with advertising messages concentrating on young people's goals of good times and social acceptance.

Children are exposed to a lot of alcohol ads. Recent research has shown that Australian children and adolescents are being exposed to as much alcohol advertising when viewing televised sport as young adults.⁵

² Rebecca L. Collins, Phyllis L. Ellickson, Daniel McCaffrey, and Katrin Hambarsoomians, M.S 'Early Adolescent Exposure to Alcohol Advertising and Its Relationship to Underage Drinking' J Adolesc Health. 2007 Jun; 40(6): 527-534

³ FARE, Annual alcohol poll 2016: Attitudes and behaviours, May 2016. <http://fare.org.au/2016/05/annual-alcohol-poll-2016-attitudes-and-behaviours/>

⁴ Academy of Medical Sciences. Calling time: the nation's drinking as a major health issue. A report from the Academy of Medical Sciences. London; 2004.

⁵ Carr S, O'Brien K, Ferris J, et al. Child and adolescent exposure to alcohol advertising in Australia's major televised sports. Drug and Alcohol Review 2015: DOI: 10.1111/dar.12326.

And despite the risks, codes governing advertising of alcohol to children contain loopholes allowing these ads to be screened at any time of the day during sports programs – the same shows that are amongst the most popular shows for children.

Australian children's exposure to television advertising is amongst the highest in the world, with children on average watching 15 hours or more of television per week.⁶ This must stop. There is no place for alcohol advertising at times traditionally set aside for kids.

The Greens will close the loophole, by taking decisive action to prohibit alcohol advertising when kids are traditionally watching TV.

> WHAT'S THE HOLD UP?

Parents are sick of the bombardment of harmful alcohol ads their children face and agree that something must be done to curb the influence of powerful alcohol industry promotion on Australia's children and young people. And doctors have called for Australian children to be protected from alcohol advertising.⁷

Tobacco control is the classic case where taxation, advertising bans and legislation served as the drivers for change with social marketing and education providing added value.

Given that alcohol causes 15 deaths and 430 hospitalisations each day in Australia, and when consumed irresponsibly, alcohol has devastating impacts on our community, including alcohol-related violence and foetal alcohol syndrome disorder, the Greens believe that this reform is both essential and overdue.⁸

As a community we already say it is unacceptable to advertise these products during kids' viewing times, but there is still this huge loophole through organised sports - so we have got to decide whether we want sport to be a vehicle through which we are sending kids positive messages about the value of exercise and team-work, or a vehicle for shoving messages about alcohol down our throats.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics: 4364.0.55.004 - Australian Health Survey: Physical Activity, 2011-12

⁷ RACP/RANZCP Alcohol Policy, 2016.

<https://www.racp.edu.au/advocacy/policy-and-advocacy-priorities/alcohol>

⁸ Alcohol Advertising Review Board, Annual Report 2014-2015.