



MEDIA RELEASE

ACT ELECTION: BOLD PLAN TO PROTECT KIDS FROM FURTHER ALCOHOL HARM

22 September 2016: Alcohol advertising would be banned from ACT sporting grounds and on all ACT Government property, and the Liquor Advisory Board expanded to include parent representatives, under a bold plan designed to protect Canberra children from alcohol harm.

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) says alcohol's impact on children in the Territory is significant and has called on political parties and candidates in the upcoming ACT election to commit to its 2016 election platform, *Protecting Canberra kids from alcohol harm*.

In Australia more than one in five children are adversely affected by the drinking of others, with more than 10,000 children in the child protection system because of a carer's drinking, while alcohol is responsible for between 15 and 47 per cent of reported child abuse cases.

Alcohol is responsible for the majority of drug-related hospitalisations and deaths for people aged 15 to 34 and alcohol contributes to the three leading causes of deaths among adolescents – unintentional injuries, homicide and suicide.

FARE's platform highlights the need to better protect children and address environmental factors in the ACT that are contributing to alcohol harm.

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn says while attention is often focussed on violence in and around pubs, clubs and bars, alcohol's impact on children cannot be ignored.

"Alcohol use can affect the unborn child, can result in physical abuse, domestic violence and teenage death, and we know that it's the environment we live in that contributes to these harms. That's the bad news. The good news is we know there are very achievable ways of addressing these environmental factors and reducing these harms," Mr Thorn said.

The FARE election platform calls for action across four areas that would empower individuals, give communities a greater voice in liquor licensing decisions, create a healthy environment and enforce greater industry accountability.

Recognising that the harm from alcohol can impact children throughout their life, FARE has called for \$1 million over four years to establish the ACT's first Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) clinic, \$200,000 over two years to expand the Game Changer+ program to all 19 government high schools in the ACT, and for the current \$2.2 million annual funding for the ACT Health Promotion Grants program to be maintained.

Acknowledging the community has an important role to play in protecting children from alcohol harm, FARE has called for changes that would make it easier for the public to participate and engage in liquor licensing decisions, and for the Liquor Advisory Board to be expanded to include a parent representative.

FARE has called for better regulation of on- and off-licence promotions, and a crackdown on bulk purchase promotions that see alcohol being sold for less than one dollar for a standard drink.



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In addition, the introduction of Controlled Purchase Operations would ensure licensees are fulfilling their responsibilities in not supplying alcohol to minors, while tougher sanctions would be introduced for those who break the law.

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn says the in-coming Government will have a responsibility to ensure we are giving our kids the best start in life.

“This election, we are calling on political parties and candidates to commit to sensible measures that would address the way alcohol is marketed and sold in our community, and modest investments that would empower and support communities, help reduce alcohol harm and better protect the children of Canberra,” Mr Thorn said.

2016 election platform, Protecting Canberra kids from alcohol harm – Four areas for action

1. Empower and support individuals

- Provide \$1 million over four years to establish a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) clinic in the ACT.
- Provide \$200,000 over two years to roll out the Game Changer+ program to all 19 government high schools in the ACT.
- Maintain annual funding of \$2.2 million for the ACT Health Promotion Grants Program.

2. Give communities a greater voice

- Strengthen community engagement in liquor licensing matters.
- Expand the Liquor Advisory Board to include a parent representative.

3. Create a healthy environment

- Ban alcohol advertising on all ACT Government property.
- Ban alcohol advertising from ACT sporting grounds.
- Isolate alcohol products in supermarkets to areas children cannot access and restrict alcohol promotions to inside this area.
- Regulate on- and off-licence promotions equally, and ban bulk purchase promotions that result in alcohol being sold for less than one dollar per standard drink.
- Amend planning and liquor licensing legislation to require outlet density to be considered when granting new liquor licences.
- Enforce “special control zones” where community protection from alcohol harm is required.
- Increase annual licence fees for all bottle shops by a minimum of 25 per cent.



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4. Enforce industry accountability

- Introduce Controlled Purchase Operations to enforce supply to minor legal provisions and grant ACT Policing power to impose tough sanctions on those who breach the law.
- Ban alcohol promotions that associate alcohol with sporting or cultural events.
- Actively monitor alcohol promotions and impose tough and timely sanctions on those who undertake banned promotional activities.

ENDS

Media notes:

Mr Thorn is available for interview.

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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. Over 5,500 lives are lost every year and more than 157,000 people are hospitalised making alcohol one of our nation's greatest preventive health challenges. To find out more visit www.fare.org.au.