



ELECTION SCORECARD FAIL: CANBERRA KIDS FORGOTTEN

13 October 2016: ACT Labor and the Canberra Liberals have little interest in protecting Canberra's children and families from alcohol harm, according to a scorecard on alcohol policy released today.

With both the major parties receiving a failing grade, it was left to The Greens to demonstrate any appetite for key alcohol policies – committing \$500,000 for a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) clinic in the nation's capital from July 2018 and demonstrating some support for the remaining five priority areas.

Ahead of this weekend's Australian Capital Territory (ACT) 2016 Legislative Assembly election, the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) asked candidates to respond to six alcohol policy questions, based on the areas identified for urgent action in FARE's [ACT election platform](#).

"We called on the parties to commit to addressing the way alcohol is marketed and sold in our community. Disappointingly, we have been met with an extremely muted response. During this election, both major parties have said they would make health a priority, but beyond the rhetoric it appears they lack commitment, direction, or in some cases both," said FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn.

Together with the establishment of a FASD clinic, which would make it easier for families to access diagnostic and support services, the political parties were questioned about their positions on expanding the Liquor Advisory Board to include a parent representative, and banning alcohol advertising on ACT Government property such as bus stops.

The parties were also asked if they supported measures such as: restricting alcohol products and promotions in supermarkets to areas children can't access, increasing the annual liquor licence fees for bottle shops by 25 per cent, and giving police power to conduct controlled purchase operations to target underage drinking.

ACT Labor committed to increasing licence fees for large bottle shops only, and only up to 20 per cent.

The Canberra Liberals were not strongly supportive of any of the measures, and would only consider expanding the Liquor Advisory Board.

Every year more than one million Australian children are affected by the drinking of others, and more than 10,000 are in the child protection system because of a carers drinking.

Alcohol is responsible for the majority of substance-related deaths and hospitalisation for those aged between 15 and 34, and it contributes to the three leading causes of death among adolescents: unintentional injuries, homicide, and suicide.

Michael Thorn says ACT politicians would do well to acknowledge the harms to children and act decisively to prevent them.



Foundation for Alcohol
Research & Education

“It is clear that we have our work cut out educating members of the Legislative Assembly about the extent of alcohol harm in the ACT and reminding them that prevention is far better than cure,” Mr Thorn said.

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.