



Media Release

NEW ACT ALLIANCE TO TACKLE ALCOHOL HARMS

1 August 2013: A new coalition of health, community, and frontline organisations working to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) was launched in Canberra today.

The launch coincided with the release of the paper, *Alcohol consumption and harms in the ACT*, which found that just under half (44.5%) of ACT residents aged over 14 consume alcohol at levels that place them at risk of an alcohol-related injury from a single occasion of drinking, while one in five (19.5 per cent) consume at levels that place them at risk of lifetime harm.

Alcohol-related hospital admissions have risen 53 per cent for men and 35 per cent for women between 2000-01 and 2009-10 and treatment episodes where alcohol was the principal drug of concern were also up 43.5 per cent between 2001-02 and 2010-11.

Ted Noffs ACT Senior Training Manager, Mr Ronan O'Connor, says alcohol use and misuse presents the greatest public health challenge faced by any government in Australia today.

"The consumption and harms data released today for the ACT shows us that that no jurisdiction in Australia escapes unscathed. Every day I witness firsthand the impacts that alcohol has on the people of the Canberra and the message for Government is clear. We must do more to reduce these harms," Mr O'Connor said.

NAAPA today called on the government to wind back trading hours to 3am for those venues currently trading beyond that time, improve the collection of data on alcohol-related consumption and harms and toughen the regulation of harmful discounting and promotions of alcohol.

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) Chief Executive, Michael Thorn praised the ACT Government for its past alcohol policy successes but urged the Government to use the upcoming Liquor Act review as an opportunity to further strengthen the legislation.

"We know that lower prices, higher availability and reckless promotions contribute to alcohol-related harms. There is still work to be done when we see supermarkets selling six bottles of wine for under \$12. The ACT members of NAAPA look forward to working with the Government and highlighting the effective evidence-based measures the Government has at its disposal" Mr Thorn said.

Speaking at the launch, Attorney General, Mr Simon Corbell, MLA said the ACT Government had a proud record on alcohol policy reform, including the introduction of risk-based licencing in 2010, and said he looked forward to working closely with NAAPA to further reduce alcohol harms in the ACT.

"The government is undertaking a two year review of the Liquor Act 2010. In keeping with our successful record working with not-for-profits in the Territory, I welcome NAAPA's involvement in the review process," Mr Corbell said.

Eleven of NAAPA's 39 organisations are based or work in the ACT and surrounding area and include Karralika Programs Inc, Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Association ACT (ATODA), Ted Noffs Foundation, Salvation Army, ACT Branch, Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA), and Cancer Council, ACT.

Michael Thorn and Ronan O'Connor are available for interview.

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The NSW and ACT Alcohol Policy Coalition (NAAPA) is an alliance of health and community organisations active across NSW and the ACT that has been formed with the objective of promoting action to reduce alcohol-related harms. The Coalition of NSW and ACT organisations has been formed to lobby and campaign for alcohol policy reform to reduce alcohol-related harms across the two jurisdictions. www.naapa.org.au

