

Media Release

NSW GOVERNMENT WASHES HANDS OF ALCOHOL EDUCATION - DIRECTS CHILD NEGLECT CASES OFFSHORE

14 February 2013: Australia's leading alcohol research and education body has accused the New South Wales Government of washing its hands of alcohol education by placing responsibility in the hands of the alcohol industry and the UK Government.

The claim comes after the Minister for Hospitality, George Souris today launched an education resource for senior NSW high school children, which directs students concerned about neglect to their nearest UK Council.

The website *Out tonight? Party Right* [directs](#) students concerned about child neglect as a result of alcohol use to [Action for Children](#), a UK charity which 'supports and speaks out for the UK's most vulnerable and neglected children and young people.'

The UK charity directs its readers to contact the relevant UK authorities.

The page in question states, *"If you think it is and you have an immediate concern about a child, you should contact the Social Care department provided by the Council in your area who are available 24 hours a day. You can find your [council's contact details online](#) or in the phonebook."*

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) Chief Executive Michael Thorn says the embarrassing and potentially damaging Government gaffe comes on the heels of the Government's decision to abolish the Department of Education's *Expert Drug and Alcohol Policy Development Unit*.

"It's appalling enough that the Government seems determined to abrogate its responsibility for alcohol education to the alcohol industry. Now it seems content to send its child protection responsibilities offshore," Mr Thorn said.

The on-line resource was developed by a working group which included the Australian Hotels Association, Clubs NSW and the Liquor Stores Association of NSW.

Mr Thorn says it is not acceptable that the very alcohol industry that is contributing to the high levels of alcohol use in our community is charged with formulating 'safe partying messages'.

"It is not acceptable that the Government sees fit to ignore the advice and input of independent research organisations, and allows this educational resource to be developed by the alcohol industry, an industry with an undeniable and obvious conflict of interest," Mr Thorn said.

Michael Thorn is available for interview.

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Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) FARE is an independent, charitable organisation working to prevent the harmful use of alcohol in Australia. Since 2001, FARE has invested over \$115 million in research and community projects to minimise the impact of alcohol misuse on Australians. Through its national grants program and commissioned research, FARE has established itself as a leading voice on alcohol and other drugs issues. FARE works with community groups, all levels of government, police, emergency workers, research institutions and the private sector to address alcohol-related problems. For further information visit FARE's website: www.fare.org.au