



MEDIA RELEASE

QLD ELECTION: MORE TO BE DONE TO REDUCE ALCOHOL HARM

3 November 2017: Queensland politicians and election hopefuls are being reminded there is still more work to be done to reduce the State's heavy alcohol toll.

While commending the life-saving measures introduced by the Government to reduce alcohol harms, experts say politicians must stay the course and remain vigilant and responsive to the alcohol harms that continue to impose a heavy toll on the people of Queensland.

Alcohol is not only associated with 1,300 deaths and 37,000 hospitalisations, on average, per year, but is linked to an annual average of 53 road deaths and 562 hospitalisations due to drink driving, costing the Queensland community \$770 million per year.

In response to that toll, the Queensland Coalition for Action on Alcohol (QCAA) has today unveiled its 2017 Election Platform to ensure QLD politicians continue to support decisions in the best interests of the community and adopt the most effective measures to reduce alcohol harm.

Queensland political parties have been asked to state their position on each of the policy proposals in the Platform.

The QCAA Election Platform contains 20 evidence-based policy asks that aim to create environments that increase community safety, encourage healthy decisions, support good health and wellbeing, and enable evidence-based alcohol policy.

If implemented, some of the measures would see the Government ban alcohol advertising and promotions on Queensland Government property to protect children and young people; establish a state-wide plan to reduce the impact of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD); maintain and evaluate the *Tackling alcohol-fuelled violence* measures across Queensland; and ban political donations from the alcohol industry to prioritise community health and wellbeing.

Queensland Coalition for Action on Alcohol Chairman, Emeritus Professor Jake Najman says Queensland needs to do more to address the drivers of consumption, acknowledge the evidence and continue to look for ways to ensure Queenslanders can enjoy good health and wellbeing.

"The evidence is clear. The most effective measures to reduce alcohol harm are the ones that address the price, availability and promotion of alcohol. Now we need to see these measures through and give them the opportunity to take effect," Emeritus Professor Najman said.

Emeritus Professor Najman believes Queensland politicians would also do well to remember that voters want to know that the decisions made by the in-coming government will not be compromised by the alcohol industry.

“Parliamentarians should not be misled by the alcohol industry. Queenslanders certainly aren’t. Sixty per cent believe that the alcohol industry has too much influence with governments and make political donations to influence policy,” Emeritus Professor Najman said.

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) Chief Executive, Michael Thorn says all of the parties contesting the 2017 QLD election should remember that the measures are not only necessary, but also hugely popular.

“With 47 per cent of Queenslanders affected by alcohol-related violence in last 12 months either directly or indirectly, through a family member or friend, there is wide consensus about what needs to be done to reduce alcohol harms. A large majority of Queenslanders are supportive of the measures aimed at reducing the harm caused by alcohol and eager to see the in-coming government continue those efforts,” Mr Thorn said.

The QCAA will hold an election forum with Queensland political leaders on 17 November at the United Services Club in Brisbane to outline the QCAA Election Platform policy asks, and to provide an opportunity for the parties to confirm their continued support for life saving evidence-based alcohol policy measures.

Emeritus Professor Najman and Mr Thorn are available for interview.

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The Queensland Coalition for Action on Alcohol (QCAA) is a coalition of Queensland health and community organisations committed to reducing alcohol-related harm. QCAA identifies and prioritises actions needed to reduce alcohol harms and improve the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders and ensures that these actions are raised with decision makers. www.qcaa.org.au