

GLOBAL RESPONSE TO ALCOHOL HARM EPIDEMIC JUDGED A FAILURE BY WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

21 September 2018: A new global report released today has warned the global burden of disease attributable to alcohol continues to be unacceptably high.

With worldwide alcohol consumption on the rise, the World Health Organization (WHO) also cautioned that the global target of a 10 per cent relative reduction in the harmful use of alcohol by 2025 would soon be out of reach.

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, Chief Executive, Michael Thorn says the [WHO Global status report on alcohol and health 2018](#), is a damning indictment of all governments across the globe that have comprehensively failed to implement effective policies to reduce the burden of alcohol harm.

“Governments are asleep at the wheel when it comes to preventing harm from alcohol. In the absence of effective alcohol policy, alcohol harm, currently accounting for three million deaths per year, will continue to worsen,” Mr Thorn said

“Ahead of the United Nations meeting on Non-communicable diseases in New York next week, it makes a mockery of government commitments to vital global efforts to reduce deaths from non-communicable diseases.”

Mr Thorn says the global report is also a stark reminder that relative to worldwide consumption, Australia’s per capita alcohol consumption remains dangerously high.

“Despite data revealing Australia’s per capita alcohol consumption had reduced slightly this year to 9.4 litres of pure alcohol per annum, it still stands in stark relief when examining the per capita consumption in the world’s population which stands at 6.4 litres of pure alcohol,” Mr Thorn said.

Mr Thorn says the WHO report is another timely reminder to Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments that the most effective alcohol policy measures are well understood, if not widely implemented.

“Action to address the price of alcohol, to regulate and restrict its physical availability, and to restrict its marketing are the most effective measures, ‘the best buys’ if you like, to reduce the harm from alcohol,” Mr Thorn said.

“Australia has now been without a National Alcohol Strategy since 2011, and development of a new plan has been delayed by industry interference. It is worth repeating that what is lacking is not the knowledge of what alcohol policy measures are most effective, but rather the political will, both in Australia and internationally, to implement the policies that will reduce harm and prioritise public health above corporate interest,” Mr Thorn said.

Mr Thorn is available for interview.

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