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Premier Campbell Newman
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Dear Premier

SUPPORT FOR QCAA SUBMISSION ON THE DRAFT SAFE NIGHT OUT STRATEGY

On behalf of the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA), we are writing to provide a submission to the *Safe Night Out Strategy*.

The NAAA is a national coalition of more than 75 health and community organisations from across Australia that has formed with the goal of preventing and reducing harms caused by alcohol. The NAAA's members cover a diverse range of interests, including public health, law enforcement, local government, Indigenous health, child and adolescent health and family and community services. This broad coalition of interests highlights the widespread concern in Australia about alcohol-related harm, and also emphasises the importance of cross-sector community partnerships. A number of our members are Queensland-based organisations, including:

- Australian Dental Association – Queensland Branch.
- Lives Lived Well.
- Centre for Youth Substance Abuse Research.
- Drug Arm/Healthy Options Australia.
- Independent Order of Rechabites Queensland District No. 87 Inc.
- Queensland Alcohol and Drug Research and Education Centre.
- Queensland Network of Alcohol and Drug Agencies.
- Russell Family Fetal Alcohol Disorders Association.

The NAAA's 5-point plan

Nationally, the NAAA is calling for bi-partisan support for our 5-point plan as a starting point for tackling the country's alcohol problems. The NAAA's 5-point plan to reduce alcohol-related harm in Australia is based on scientific evidence on what works, and what is practical and achievable for governments in the short to medium term. While some of the actions we recommend are chiefly the responsibility of the Commonwealth, there is a considerable amount of action that falls with the responsibilities of State and Territory governments and/or requires a Federal-State partnership, which we have starred for your noting.

Action 1: Reduce harmful drinking through changes to alcohol taxation -

- Abolish the Wine Equalisation Tax (WET) and replace it with a volumetric tax on wine.
- Establish a minimum (floor) price for all alcohol.
- Use some of the revenue from alcohol taxation to fund prevention and support programs.

Action 2: Protect children from alcohol marketing and promotions -

- Close the regulatory loophole that allows alcohol advertising during live sport.
- Ban point-of-sale alcohol promotions that target young people such as gift with purchase deals.*
- Establish an alcohol advertising regulatory process independent of the alcohol and advertising industries
- Develop and apply new alcohol advertising restrictions for social media and other emerging forms of online marketing and promotions.

Action 3: Improve safety and cut the costs to communities caused by alcohol -

- Task the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs (IGCD) to develop national guidelines regarding restrictions on the availability of alcohol that could be applied to state and territory laws.*
- Provide resources, guidance and the necessary legal and regulatory frameworks for local communities to develop, implement and sustain Alcohol Management Plans.*
- Empower local communities and health and law enforcement agencies to have a greater say in liquor licensing decisions (social impact, density, opening hours, license conditions).*
- Strengthen the enforcement of liquor laws with a focus on those who sell and supply alcohol rather than just the individuals who consume alcohol.*
- Ensure a continuing focus on measures that will protect minors from the harms of alcohol.*

Action 4: Give individuals information to make healthier and safer choices -

- Introduce mandatory pregnancy warning labels by 2015 as recommended by the House of Representatives Social Justice Committee's FASD Inquiry.
- Adopt the Australian Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Action Plan, with a focus on prevention, diagnosis and support for people with FASD and their carers.*
- Raise public awareness of the NHMRC Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from alcohol through research-based alcohol information labels and complementary point of sale information developed independently of the alcohol industry and its organisation.*
- Invest in a long-term national approach to public education campaigns on alcohol that is well-planned, adequately funded and evaluated, and completely independent of the alcohol industry.

Action 5: Provide national leadership and motivation for action -

- Set meaningful and measurable targets that will lead to reductions in alcohol related harm, starting with reducing annual adult per capita alcohol consumption by 10% within 15 years.
- Make Commonwealth health funding to states and territories conditional on the achievement of measurable targets in the reduction of alcohol related injuries, diseases and deaths.*
- Develop a new National Alcohol Strategy and commit to a program of action based on the above 5-point plan.

With regards to the *Safe Night Out Strategy*, we offer the NAAA's support for the submission prepared by the Queensland Coalition for Action on Alcohol (QCAA). QCAA is a coalition of Healthy Options Australia, the Australian Medical Association (AMAQ), Queensland Alcohol and Drug Research and Education Centre (QADREC), the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) and Lives Lived Well. The QCAA aims to identify and prioritise what needs to be done to achieve a change that will reduce alcohol harms and improve the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders.

The extent of alcohol-related harms in Queensland cannot be ignored. In 2012, there were 91,783 alcohol-related emergency presentations in Queensland, representing an increase of 31 per cent from 70,170 in 2007.¹ These figures do not include people affected by alcohol-related violence. The harms from alcohol not only affect the drinker, but also impact on people in the broader community. The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education's (FARE) 2014 Annual Alcohol Poll found that the majority of Queenslanders (66%) have had at least one negative experience (e.g. property damage, having something stolen) attributable to someone else's drinking and over one-third (35%) have been affected by alcohol-related violence, whether directly or through a family member or friend.²

QCAA has a *Five point plan to reduce alcohol-related harms in Queensland*, which the NAAA fully supports and commends to you. This Plan is based on the evidence of what works to reduce and prevent alcohol-related harms. The Plan's five points are:

1. Wind back late night trading hours and continue the moratorium on late night trading;
2. Control the density of licensed premises;
3. Prevent the harmful discounting and promotion of alcohol;
4. Enforce responsible service of alcohol requirements; and
5. Collect data on alcohol sales, consumption and harms.

We note that your government's *Safe Night Out Strategy* includes some measures to address the harmful discounting and promotion of alcohol and enforcement of responsible service of alcohol. However, the Strategy does not include any measures that target the availability of alcohol through the density and trading hours of licensed premises. In fact, the Strategy proposes that the moratorium of late night trading hours be removed from 31 August 2014, which we predict will result in more late night trading premises in Queensland and an accompanying increase in alcohol related harm. Furthermore, in our view, the absence from the Strategy of specific measures that target alcohol's availability is a glaring omission. On this matter, we urge you to consider the submission made by QCAA and the QCAA Five Point Plan in finalising the Safe Night Out Strategy. We also urge you to consult with members of QCAA in both finalising the Strategy and developing the detailed actions within the Strategy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this input for the Committee's consideration. If you have any questions regarding our submission or require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact Brian Vandenberg, Executive Officer for the NAAA (naaa@cancervic.org.au).

Yours sincerely



Professor Mike Daube

Director, McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth
Co-Chair, National Alliance for Action on Alcohol



Mr Todd Harper

Chief Executive Officer, Cancer Council Victoria
Co-Chair, National Alliance for Action on Alcohol

¹ Queensland Hospital Admitted Patient Data Collection, Department of Health, Queensland.

² Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education. (2014). Annual Alcohol Poll: Attitudes and Behaviours. Canberra: Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education