

# Media Release

Public Health Association of Australia

23 October 2017

## Northern Territory paves the way for national alcohol reforms

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) together with the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA) commends the Northern Territory Government for undertaking its recently completed [Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review](#) aimed at preventing and minimising alcohol related harm in its communities.

The wide public consultation on the NT's current alcohol policies and legislation initiated by the Review has enabled the gathering of important local data and recommendations. The NT Government has used the information to assess its current alcohol laws and identify key areas for reform.

David Templeman, President of the PHAA praised the Review, saying "The Review shows real courage in making recommendations based on the scientific evidence rather than in favour of the usual vested interests. The recommendation for a floor price on dangerously 'cheap' alcohol is absolutely in line with the scientific evidence on what works to reduce harm, and would be a first for Australia. A similar policy is currently being considered in WA."

"The Northern Territory is now in a stronger position to analyse exactly where it can perform better in its regulation of alcohol. The Review is also significant in that better alcohol policy in the NT will have far-reaching effects beyond reducing the incidence of alcohol-related disease and death."

Mr Templeman continued, "Through limiting alcohol misuse in these communities we will also see lowered health costs and increased productivity. We would also see lower incarceration rates, with reduced human and economic costs associated with imprisoning people."

"Addressing the rivers of alcohol flowing into the Northern Territory is a step toward closing the gap in Indigenous health. For too long, Indigenous health has been disproportionately affected by ineffective alcohol policy," Mr Templeman said.

"A whole-of-government approach to alcohol abuse is also likely to benefit the Territory in relation to the ongoing issue of child protection, since alcohol is closely linked to child welfare issues and high rates of domestic violence," Mr Templeman said.

Julia Stafford, Executive Committee Member for the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol also supported the recommendations of the Review, saying "We applaud the Northern Territory for taking clear action to address alcohol harms. Given that the Territory's population is so disproportionately affected by this issue compared to other jurisdictions, it's appropriate that they are showing national leadership and are seriously looking at how to create better policy solutions."

“We are highly supportive of the reforms suggested by the Review which will assist with developing an integrated Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy. While some aspects to the reforms may not be welcomed by vested interests and a minority of the community, it’s important the Government persists and keeps the longer-term outcomes of improved health and wellbeing in mind,” Ms Stafford said.

**For further information/comment:**

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