ALCOHOL BILL AN EXPENSIVE REVOLVING DOOR WITH NO OUTCOME

News that Territorians face up to 13 days in detention without being charged or committing a crime under the CLP’s plan to mandatorily detain problem drinkers is yet another disgraceful aspect of this ill-conceived and expensive policy, Opposition Leader Delia Lawrie said today.

“No wonder the CLP Government have hidden this legislation – it’s a disgrace. There is no support for this approach from any of the stakeholders or experts in the field,” Ms Lawrie said.

“To release the bill the day it is to be introduced doesn’t even attempt to pay lip service to consultation and it’s not hard to work out why. It’s more of the same arrogance we’ve since from the CLP over the last nine months.

“Any responsible government would be rightly ashamed of this bill. There is nothing in the legislation that will reduce access to alcohol for problem drinkers. Territorians can lose their liberty for up to 13 days and we now know that taxpayers will be slugged up to $90,000 per drinker in this failed approach to tackle alcohol abuse.”

Last year the Attorney General John Elferink criticised the former Labor Government* over the Banned Drinker Register highlighting an alleged cost to taxpayers of $50,000 for every problem drinker kept out of protective custody.

“Today’s CLP budget confirms taxpayers will fork over $90,000 per problem drinker in the coming year. The CLP have planned for $45 million to be wasted on at most 500 interventions – in a policy that won’t work, is ineffective, poorly planned with no input from stakeholders.

The incompetence and waste is truly breathtaking and so is the CLP’s hypocrisy. They have been blatantly caught out.”

Contact: Gino Luglietti 0401 119 794

* Press release – Attorney General 18 October 2012 – Figures fly in the face of Labor’s BDR claims
FIGURES FLY IN THE FACE OF LABOR’S BDR CLAIMS

18 October 2012

There is an enormous gulf between the former Labor Government’s rhetoric about the success of the Banned Drinker Register and reality.

Attorney General, John Elferink, said Protective Custody figures collated by the Department of Justice show the BDR failed to stop problem drinkers from obtaining alcohol.

The figures show 8035 people made up the 19,988 Protective Custodies in the Territory during the 2011-12 financial year.

Of those, 431 people had eight or more Protective Custody episodes over the 12 month period.

More alarmingly, four people had a total of 376 Protective Custodies.

Broken down, last financial year four individuals were placed in Protective Custody 74, 88, 97 and 117 times.

All four were on the Banned Drinker Register.

During the 2010-11 financial year – before the Banned Drinker Register was in place – there were 20,354 Protective Custodies in the Territory.

The previous Government’s alcohol reforms have cost $18 million to roll-out and has seen a Territory-wide reduction of just 366 Protective Custodies.

That works out at a cost to taxpayers of $50,000 for every drunk kept out of Protective Custody last year.

“This is further evidence that the previous Government’s approach to dealing with problem drinkers simply didn’t work,” Mr Elferink said.

“Without mandatory rehabilitation, there is simply no obligation on problem drinkers to break the cycle.

“The Country Liberals believe the Banned Drinker Register offered no protection to problem drinkers, their families and communities because it didn’t mandate rehabilitation.

“The Northern Territory has an enormous problem with alcohol and the Country Liberals Government is determined to turn around issues of public drunkenness, anti-social behaviour and alcohol related crime.”

Media Contact:
Camden Smith 0488 588 754

Related files:
Protective Custody Episodes.pdf (74.01 kb)