Shadow Minister for Alcohol Policy today said there are signs the CLP Government is about to bring back the Banned Drinker Register and the Government needs to come clean.

“Public drinking and alcohol-related anti-social behaviour is out of control in Darwin, in our parks and public spaces.

“In recent days, a local bottle-shop has been told by the NT Police and the Department of Business that the Government will be “bringing back the BDR in the near future”.

“After two years of CLP failure on alcohol policy, after being told by the experts the BDR was the best tool to fight alcohol misuse, the CLP are finally coming to their senses.

After the CLP scrapped the BDR, crime reached record levels with 2013 being the most violent year in Territory history.

The BDR was a cost-effective tool to identify banned drinkers and refuse alcohol sales, turning off the tap.

In the absence of the BDR, the CLP has expected bottleshop staff to identify people on alcohol protection orders from mug shots, an unworkable and 1970’s solution.

“The BDR applied consistency across the Territory to ensure bans on drinking and take-away alcohol could be effective anywhere in the Territory.

“Without it we’ve seen people relocate to follow the grog and problem drinkers more readily access alcohol.

“There has been a spike in hot spots of public drinking and anti-social behaviour around Darwin and Palmerston without the BDR to turn off the tap to problem drinkers.

“The CLP’s failed alcohol policy also wasted police resources by standing police outside bottleshops in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, and Katherine, instead of working the beat, and has encouraged problem drinkers to move to Darwin.

“This is despite police publicly stating the BDR was the best tool to fight alcohol related crime,’ Ms Fyles said.
Background on the Banned Drinkers Register:

The Banned Drinker’s register was rolled out progressively across the Territory from 1 July 2011. After 12 months of operation there were 2,500 Territorians on the Banned Drinkers Register and Police statistics showed drops in alcohol-related assaults and 10,000 less antisocial incidents were recorded, supporting anecdotal evidence our streets and parks were quieter.

Under the BDR a person buying take-away alcohol had their photo identification (ID) scanned and if the system identified the person was on the Banned Drinker’s Register, the retailer was obliged under law to refuse the sale. Persons not on the register purchased alcohol as normal. The BDR applied to take-away alcohol sales, which made up 70% of all alcohol consumption in the Territory.

The BDR was publicly supported by the health and alcohol sector, including the AHA, Responsible Drinkers Lobby, NT Council of Social Services, Aboriginal Medical Services, Amity, FORWAARD, People’s Alcohol Action Coalition, and NT Police.

Prior to the BDR, alcohol-related crime accounted for 59 per cent of all police work in 2008-09.

Police public statements about the Banned Drinker Register in October 2011:

“Police did see it as one of the most powerful tools if not the most powerful tool available to police to actually deal with the source problem of antisocial behaviour and the violence that was occurring in the community. I think these early indicators prove that the initiative is working.

“From a policing point of view we see some tremendous results from this initiative.”
Assistant Commissioner of Police, Mark Payne

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