MEDIA RELEASE

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Alcohol Policy

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PROTECTIVE CUSTODY FIGURES HIGHLIGHT POLICY FAILURE

The huge numbers of people taken into protective custody on the weekend in Alice Springs again highlight that supply-side alcohol restrictions have very little impact on problem drinkers.

“Banning takeaway alcohol sales until 2pm didn’t prevent hundreds of people in Alice Springs ending up in protective custody over the weekend,” says Matt Conlan, Shadow Minister for Central Australia.

“The restrictions that the Henderson Government has forced upon Alice Springs are meant to reduce the level of violence and anti-social behaviour in our town.

“The 50% increase in the rate of assault in Alice Springs since alcohol restrictions were introduced in 2006 and the massive number of people being taken into protective custody show the restrictions are not delivering on those stated aims.

“The recent attacks on a teenage football umpire and police at a junior football grand final and mob rampage on a number of taxis in the town are just further evidence of this policy failure.

“I firmly believe the failure of the alcohol restrictions is because changing the hours alcohol can be bought merely shifts the problem to later in the day.

“People who are addicted to alcohol will simply adjust their lifestyle around the changes to supply.

“Ban one type of drink and they will move to another, delay sales and they will drink later into the night.

“To reduce the damage being done by alcohol we need to tackle the demand for alcohol and in particular the hard core of problem drinkers.

“People who turn up in protective custody on a regular basis should be the focus of Government alcohol policy.

“Until the Henderson Government recognises the need for mandatory rehabilitation of the hard core of drinkers there will be little improvement in the situation in Alice Springs.”

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