MEDIA RELEASE

BANS WON’T STOP PROBLEM DRINKERS

Peter Styles MLA

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The Henderson Government persists with the implementation of grog bans, even though their existing prohibitions continue to fail.

Shadow Alcohol Policy Minister, Peter Styles, said the Chief Minister continues to use rhetoric and slogans to justify Labor’s grog bans, while just a few kilometres away in the Alice Springs CBD public drunkenness and violent crime are on display.

Responding to a question about soaring levels of violent crime in Alice Springs during yesterday’s Question Time, the Chief Minister effectively admitted his grog bans aren’t working, when he said:

“What I can say is most of those assaults would have been driven by the abuse of alcohol; most of those assaults would have been driven and contributed to by the abuse of alcohol.”

“What the Chief Minister doesn’t acknowledge is that those assaults were committed under the grog restrictions already in place in Alice Springs,” Mr Styles said.

The Chief Minister says ‘more grog means crime’, but under the Government’s grog bans, violent assaults in Alice Springs increased by 25% over the past 2 years and 87% over the past 6 years.

And after an initial decline in alcohol consumption after the bans were introduced, between 2008 and 2009 there has been a 9% increase in wholesale alcohol consumption including a 44% increase in cider consumption, 12% increase in wine consumption, a 16% increase in spirits consumption and a 4.5% increase in beer consumption.

The latest round of grog restrictions is a cover-all solution to the problem of public drunkenness, anti-social behaviour and violence.

Instead of targeting problem drinkers, everybody who likes a wine or beer with their evening meal or when they socialise with friends will be punished.

With the proposed changes, the Government now intends to pry into the homes of parents who may want to teach their teenagers responsible consumption of alcohol at celebrations or family functions.

“The new package of restrictions fail to acknowledge that people who want to get alcohol will get alcohol, regardless of what bans are in place.

There is also the absurdity of rolling out the ID scanners at every licensed premises linking them to the banned drinkers register.

I’ve heard of at least one licensed premises attached to a sporting club that sells only a few six-packs of takeaway alcohol every week which will have to roll-out the scanning equipment.

“The Henderson Government continues to intrude into the lives of ordinary Territorians while failing to tackle the minority who are the problem.”

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