Natasha Fyles
Minister for Health

RESPONSIBLE ALCOHOL POLICY = A SAFER COMMUNITY

10 March 2017

The Health Minister Natasha Fyles today released draft terms of reference for a comprehensive review of alcohol policy in the Northern Territory.

Minister Fyles said the Government was determined to tackle the cost of alcohol abuse on our community and the review will give all Territorians an opportunity to have their voices heard.

“We recognise that, while everyone has the right to enjoy a drink responsibly, alcohol abuse is a significant cause of violence and crime in our community,” Ms Fyles said.

“All Territorians have the right to feel safe, to have their property, homes and businesses secure from damage and theft.

“They also have the right to access health, police and justice services, without having critical resources diverted by the crippling effects of alcohol abuse.

“That’s why Territory Labor has consistently advocated, and implemented, a range of policies to reduce the harm caused by alcohol abuse.

“When last in Government we implemented the Banned Drinker Register (BDR), described by Police as the best tool they had to fight violent crime.

“In Opposition we were clear we would reinstate the BDR and impose a moratorium on new takeaway licences.

“Since coming to Government we have:

- worked efficiently across agencies to bring back the BDR by September 1
- imposed a moratorium on new takeaway liquor licences (except in exceptional circumstances) - October 2016
- strengthened legislation to ensure Sunday trade remains limited - November 2016
- limited the floor space for take away alcohol stores - December 2016
introduced new Guidelines for liquor licensing to allow for public hearings - 2 February 2017

“While some of these policies aren’t popular, their effectiveness is backed by evidence.

“This review is an important chance for the community to have their say and to ensure that all facets of alcohol policy complement our determination to make the Territory safer.

“An expert panel will be commissioned to look at alcohol policies and alcohol legislation, reporting to government on:

- evidence based policy initiatives required to reduce alcohol fuelled crime
- ensuring safe and vibrant entertainment precincts
- the provision of alcohol service and management in remote communities
- decision-making under the Liquor Act
- the density of liquor licences (concentration, type, number and location of liquor licences) and the size of liquor outlets

“Broad public consultation will be undertaken as part of the review, with multiple avenues for interested people, groups and communities to put forward their views.

“I look forward to hearing from not only the loudest and most powerful voices in our community, but also the many women, children, families and communities who all too often bear the cost of alcohol abuse in the Northern Territory."

The review will start in April with a report and recommendations delivered to government in late September 2017.

The government will then develop a response to the recommendations for the development of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and legislative reform agenda.

These will be released publicly along with the Expert Advisory Panel’s final report.

To view the draft terms of references go to: https://health.nt.gov.au/professionals/alcohol-and-other-drugs-health-professionals/alcohol-policies-and-legislation-review

Submissions are now being accepted at: AODD.DOH@nt.gov.au

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