Making Our Community Safer: BDR Evaluation

26 August 2017

The Territory Labor Government has announced plans for the monitoring and evaluation of its Banned Drinker Register (BDR), which returns in less than a week.

The Minister for Health said the BDR’s return will make our community safer by blocking the flow of takeaway alcohol to problem drinkers.

“Many Territorians enjoy a drink and they’re entitled to do that responsibly, but we have to address the unacceptable rates of alcohol related crime in the Northern Territory,” Ms Fyles said.

“The CLP delivered two of the most violent years in the Territory’s history after scrapping the BDR in 2012 without anything to replace it.

“The Territory Labor Government promised to bring back the BDR across the Territory and, in one week’s time, we will do just that.”

Minister Fyles said that monitoring activities will commence from the start of the BDR on September 1.

Data will be collected and a monthly monitoring report will be published from October 2017 to include:

- Scans and refusals for purchase of alcohol;
- Numbers of Individuals on the BDR and why they are on it;
- Breaches of alcohol bans;
- Number of Individuals assessed for and undertaking therapeutic support;
- Ban appeals;
- Reductions in ban length requested/granted

The inter-agency steering committee established to oversee a series of evaluations, is comprised of the Department of Health (DoH); Department of the Attorney-General and Justice (AGD); NT Police; Territory Families; Department of Housing and Department of Trade, Business and Innovation.

INITIAL EVALUATION

The initial evaluation will assess the question of whether the BDR has been implemented and is working as expected.

The scanning system rollout and logistics, data on scans and sales refusals, number of people on the BDR by reason and pathway and the availability of assessment and treatment programs will all be considered in this evaluation.
This initial evaluation will examine the first six months of operation and will be reported publicly in June 2018 to check the BDR system is working as expected.

SECOND LEVEL EVALUATION

The second level of evaluation will assess the short to medium term impact of the BDR after the first and second years of operation and will address the following issues:

- Improvements for banned drinkers in terms of reduced contact with the justice system (such as fewer drink-driving infringements, less frequent use of protective custody or sobering up shelters, fewer alcohol-related offences and reduced time spent in custody);
- Improved health outcomes for banned drinkers (such as fewer alcohol-related emergency department presentations and alcohol-related injuries);
- Suitability and availability of therapeutic support programs, particularly for Aboriginal clients (including the delivery of culturally competent training for AOD staff; development of best practice protocols; reduced waiting times for support; and delivery of a comprehensive therapeutic support model, including aftercare); and
- Improved amenity of areas around licensed premises (such as improved feelings of safety and cleanliness of areas around licensed premises).

LONG TERM EVALUATION

The Territory Labor Government is also proposing a long-term evaluation of the impact of the BDR through a longitudinal research study of the BDR, with an independent research grant application to the Australian Research Council.

This would engage eminent researchers from a range of leading universities to evaluate the full range of alcohol-related data and key stakeholder and community interviews to examine the impact of the BDR over four years.

The study will consider data from health, law enforcement, child protection, domestic violence, alcohol consumption, liquor licensing as well as the effect of the policy on different segments of the community, differential impact on urban, remote and rural communities, displacement of drinkers to other states and areas for improvement.

The BDR returns September 1.

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