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Statutory Review  
Policy & Strategy, NSW Office of Liquor Gaming and Racing  
GPO Box 7060  
Sydney NSW 2001  
[liquor.review@olgr.nsw.gov.au](mailto:liquor.review@olgr.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Mr Foggo

## **RESPONSE TO THE STATUTORY REVIEW OF THE LIQUOR ACT 2007 AND THE GAMING AND LIQUOR ADMINISTRATION ACT 2007**

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) thanks you for the opportunity to respond to the *Statutory Review of the Liquor Act 2007 and the Gaming And Liquor Administration Act 2007* (Explanatory Paper). This review provides the New South Wales (NSW) Government with an opportunity to reform liquor licensing and prioritise evidence-based policies that are proven to reduce alcohol-related harms.

FARE supports the submission prepared by the NSW ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance (NAAPA) to the Review process. NAAPA is a coalition of 41 organisations working to reduce alcohol-related harms by ensuring that evidence-based solutions inform alcohol policy discussions in NSW and the ACT.

Too many individuals and communities are affected by alcohol-related harms in NSW. Each year in NSW over 1,200 people die as a result of alcohol, almost 50,000 are hospitalised, almost 15,000 are affected by alcohol related domestic assaults and over 10,000 are affected by domestic assaults.<sup>1</sup> The recent Auditor General's report into the cost of alcohol to the NSW Government found that each year Government is spending \$1.029 billion on alcohol abuse, while the total social costs of alcohol are \$3.87 billion per year, or \$1,565 per household.<sup>2</sup>

This human and economic toll is unacceptable and meaningful reforms are needed to prevent further harms. These harms are preventable and could be reduced by government intervention but for the current regulatory and legislative frameworks in place that hinder effective action to minimise alcohol-related harms.

The NAAPA submission presents 21 evidence-based recommendations on improvements to the function of liquor legislation and regulations in serving the public interest and minimisation of alcohol-related harms.

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<sup>1</sup> Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, *10 years on: An analysis of the progress made in preventing alcohol-related harms since the 2003 NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse*, March 2013

<sup>2</sup> NSW Auditor-General. (2013). Cost of alcohol abuse to the NSW Government. Accessed at: <http://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/News/Counting-the-cost-of-alcohol-abuse>

Reforms to the regulation of alcohol must be comprehensive and must acknowledge that the current system of regulation is not adequately mitigating the harms that so frequently result from alcohol. These reforms must begin with:

- Removing the policy responsibility of liquor licensing regulation from the industry focused portfolio of the Department of Trade and Investment;
- Introducing annual risk-based liquor licence fees for liquor licensees to ensure that they are contributing to the substantial costs of regulating, policing and preventing alcohol-related harms in NSW;
- Abolishing 24 hour trading and extending the mandatory closing period for licensed venues to seven hours for all existing and new liquor licensees;
- Addressing the reckless discounting of alcohol by banning the sale of alcohol for less than one dollar per standard drink in on and off-premise venues;
- Elevating harm minimisation as the sole primary Object of the Act and ensuring consideration is given to the importance of reducing alcohol-related harm under all sections of the Act; and
- Enhancing the availability and accessibility of information for communities regarding all new liquor licence applications by implementing a revised notification system for new licence applications which requires them to the notify local schools, hospitals and the NSW Health Ministry and the Department of Community Services.

FARE would like to bring to the Chair's attention two NSW-specific alcohol policy analysis reports prepared by FARE over the course of the year. These are:

- *Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education 10 Point Plan to Reduce Alcohol Harms in NSW* (August 2012); and
- *10 years on: An analysis of the progress made in preventing alcohol-related harms since the 2003 NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse* (March 2013).

The reports are enclosed in this letter to further support of the submission prepared by NAAPA.

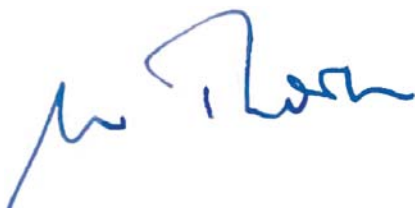
There are a number of ways that NAAPA can support you in your role as Chair of the Liquor Act Review. To inform your final report, NAAPA is able to arrange meetings between yourself and:

- Community members and groups in NSW who have had interactions the liquor licensing process and can provide you with first-hand accounts of the challenges that community members encounter when engaging with the system; and
- Experts and leading researchers in alcohol control policy who are able to provide you with up-to-date information on the efficacy of various alcohol control policies.

FARE strongly encourages you to take up these opportunities for testimony and clarification of problems and policy solutions from NAAPA's membership of community representatives and professional experts.

I welcome the opportunity to elaborate on any of the information provided in this response to the Explanatory Paper.

Yours sincerely



**MICHAEL THORN**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**