

FARE welcomes measures announced in Alice Springs

25 January 2023

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) welcomes measures announced in Alice Springs to improve community health and safety by engaging with communities, increasing investment in community and health services, restricting the sale of alcohol, and improving collaboration between the Australian Government and Northern Territory (NT) Government.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and NT Chief Minister Natasha Fyles announced the introduction of a range of policies and investments to improve community health and safety in Central Australia including:

- the establishment of a Central Australian Regional Controller to lead consultation and improve coordination between the Northern Territory and Australian Governments
- increased and ongoing investment to community and women's services including emergency accommodation
- immediate alcohol restrictions in Alice Springs with no take-away alcohol sales on Mondays and Tuesdays, and restricted sales between 3pm and 7pm during the rest of the week
- a process of community engagement on alcohol restrictions, including the option to move to an 'opt-out' system and ongoing consultation about an Alcohol Management Plan for Central Australia.

FARE CEO, Caterina Giorgi, said "Communities were not consulted when restrictions on alcohol were introduced 15 years ago, and they were not properly consulted when these measures were abruptly lifted six months ago. When communities are not involved in decision making – and when health, education, community, housing and family violence services are poorly funded – alcohol harm increases."

In July 2022, restrictions on alcohol were lifted overnight against the wishes of many health and community organisations, including Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC) and the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT), who warned of the increased risk of harm and need for greater engagement and consultation, along with increased investment in community and health services.

"We support the local community and health organisations who have been calling for action to address the increasing rates of harm. We see the actions taken by the Australian and Northern Territory Governments as important first steps," Ms Giorgi said.

"We support the Northern Territory and Australian Government measures announced yesterday to improve community health and safety, including immediately and temporarily restricting the sale of alcohol in Alice Springs and undertaking proper community consultation on ongoing alcohol management in communities."

"Any alcohol restrictions should also be accompanied by an increased long-term investment in health, community, education and youth programs, and it is pleasing to see a commitment to this as well."

“Importantly, the development and implementation of any measures must be done in genuine partnership with Aboriginal organisations and communities in line with the Governments’ commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.”

“It is also important that common sense measures are in place to stop alcohol companies and retailers from relentlessly marketing their products, and aggressively pursuing more and more outlets even when communities oppose these because of the harm they will cause. Companies profit significantly from the harm from alcohol and their role in this should not be ignored.”

“The most important thing is the health and well-being of our families and communities. Everyone should be safe in their home, in their community and in their neighbourhoods. We welcome the announcements by the Prime Minister and Chief Minister which contribute to improving health and safety now and into the future,” Ms Giorgi said.

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The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education** (FARE) is the leading not-for-profit organisation working towards an Australia free from alcohol harms. We do this through developing evidence-informed policy, enabling people-powered advocacy and delivering health promotion campaigns.

FARE has been working with communities across the country to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians for 20 years. To learn more about us and our work visit www.fare.org.au.