



MEDIA RELEASE

RBT SCORECARD - WA BLOWS, NSW PROGRAM MOST EFFECTIVE

19 March 2015: A new study examining the relationship between Random Breath Testing (RBT) and alcohol-related traffic crashes (ARTC) has found that New South Wales has the best performing RBT program in the country.

Western Australia was ranked last by the study, which determined that the most effective annual rate of RBT for larger jurisdictions (geographical or population size) is at least one test for every licensed driver.

Australia has long been considered a world leader in effective RBT programs, however, RBT programs across Australian jurisdictions are not implemented uniformly.

Aiming to provide all states and territories with an evidence base to better inform their RBT operations, the study funded by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) and conducted by the University of Queensland's Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) draws on RBT data, licensed driver data and alcohol-related car accident data between January 2000 and December 2012.

The study, *A national examination of random breath testing and alcohol-related traffic crash rates (2000-2012)* found that those jurisdictions with RBT to licensed driver ratios of 1:1 (New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria) typically reported stable to declining trends in ARTC as well as a lower percentage of self-reported drink driving.

However, the expected relationship between RBT and ARTC is not clear cut across all jurisdictions.

Three jurisdictions (Tasmania 1.4:1, South Australia 1:3 and the Australian Capital Territory 1:3) with lower RBT ratios still achieved a decrease in the ARTC rate over time. However, those jurisdictions also recorded a higher percentage of self-reported drink driving.

The findings suggest that RBT ratios and alcohol-related car accidents are also influenced by other factors such as drink driving education campaigns, RBT publicity, penalties and rehabilitation programs.

ISSR lead researcher, Dr Jason Ferris says it is important that RBT programs are also tailored to the population size and geography of the particular jurisdiction.

"The study into Random Breath Testing data and alcohol-related traffic crash rates reveals that there isn't one solution for every state and territory. In smaller jurisdictions, efforts to ensure RBT operations

are truly 'random' are important to ensure programs don't lose their deterrent effect, while in larger jurisdictions such as South Australia and Western Australia, RBT ratios greater than 1:1 may be required," Dr Ferris said.

States and territories were ranked by examining current RBT ratios, ARTC trends and the percentage of self-reported drink driving, with New South Wales judged as having the most effective RBT program.

With only one RBT for every three licensed drivers, a relatively high ARTC rate, and a high percentage of self-reported drink driving, Western Australia ranked last.

FARE Chief Executive, Michael Thorn says the success of RBT stands as a compelling example of the value and necessity of implementing evidence-based measures to tackle alcohol harms and says this latest research will help state and territory governments ensure that RBT remains an effective drink driving deterrent.

"Australia has a well-deserved reputation as a leader when it comes to Random Breath Testing, but we can't afford to be complacent. Each year 120 Australians are killed in alcohol-related car accidents and a further 2285 are hospitalised. To maximise the effectiveness of RBT and to ensure it acts as deterrent and continues to save lives on our roads, all state and territory RBT programs must be truly random, highly visible and have a high RBT to licensed driver testing ratio," Mr Thorn said.

Dr Ferris will present his findings at the [7th Australasian Drug and Alcohol Strategy Conference](#) in Brisbane on Thursday 19 March 2015.



Foundation for Alcohol
Research & Education

RBT Scorecard

Jurisdiction	Current RBT ratio	ARTC trend	Drink-driving (%)	Criterion score (max 21)	Rank
New South Wales	1:1	Decreasing after July 2007	8.38	20	1
Queensland	1:1	Stable	9.30	18.5	2
Victoria	1:1	Decreasing after October 2005	9.50	17.5	3
Tasmania	1.4:1	Decreasing after January 2009	12.49	16	4
Northern Territory	1:1	Decreasing after August 2009	14.95	14.5	5
South Australia	1:2	Decreasing after December 2007	13.00	13.5	6
Australian Capital Territory	1:3	Decreasing	14.56	9.5	7
Western Australia	1:3	Decreasing after November 2008	13.87	7	8

Mr Michael Thorn (@MichaelTThorn) and Dr Jason Ferris are available for interview.

Media Contact:

Jeremy Henderson **0425 559 710**

The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)** is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to stop the harm caused by alcohol. Alcohol harm in Australia is significant. Over 5,500 lives are lost every year and more than 157,000 people are hospitalised making alcohol one of our nation's greatest preventative health challenges.

For over a decade, FARE has been working with communities, governments, health professionals and police across the country to stop alcohol harms by supporting world-leading research, raising public awareness and advocating for changes to alcohol policy. In that time FARE has helped more than 750 communities and organisations, and backed over 1,400 projects around Australia.