



Foundation for Alcohol
Research & Education

Annual Report 2015-2016

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Our vision ‘stopping harm caused by alcohol’ brings into sharp focus, the determination and tireless efforts of this organisation.

OUR ORGANISATION

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to stop the harm caused by alcohol.

For more than a decade, FARE has been working with communities, governments, health professionals and police across the country to take action that works to reduce the toll, raising public awareness, building the case for alcohol policy reform and countering false alcohol industry claims.

OUR CHALLENGE

Alcohol harm in Australia is significant. More than 5,500 lives are lost every year and more than 150,000 people are hospitalised, making alcohol one of our nation’s greatest preventive health challenges.

But the devastation doesn’t stop there; the high personal and financial tolls extend well beyond the drinker. Each year nearly 400 people die and 70,000 Australians are victims of alcohol-related assaults, including 24,000 victims of alcohol-related domestic violence.

All these harms costs the nation an estimated \$36 billion annually.

Against this alarming backdrop of rising harms, alcohol has never been cheaper, more readily available nor more aggressively promoted.

OUR WORK

Since 2001 FARE has supported communities, contributed to building evidence and driven efforts to prevent alcohol harms. FARE has assisted more than 750 communities and organisations, and backed over 1,400 projects around Australia.

FARE works collaboratively, because we know that together, we can reverse the trend and see fewer children and families negatively affected by alcohol.

We raise funds to build the knowledge base about alcohol, to better understand what works to address the complex problems caused by alcohol, and to support Australian communities responding to alcohol misuse.

We are guided by the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol for tackling alcohol harms through population-based strategies, problem directed policies, and direct interventions.

OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS

- 1. Lead change**
- 2. Strategic policy and advocacy**
- 3. Defend the public interest**
- 4. World-leading research**
- 5. Invest in our future**



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND CEO Andrew Fairley and Michael Thorn

The undoubted highlight of the 2015-2016 financial year was the passage of the Tackling Alcohol-Fuelled Violence legislation through the Queensland Parliament last February. This reform package means Queensland now enjoys Australia's most progressive system of alcohol regulation. The Palaszczuk Government are to be applauded for bringing about these world-leading reforms.

Led by Attorney General, the Hon Yvette D'Ath MP, and championed by long-time alcohol reform advocate, Minister for State Development and for Natural Resources and former facial surgeon, the Hon Dr Anthony Lynham MP, the Government delivered on its 2015 election promise to introduce earlier closing times for all pubs and clubs. Queensland now leads the nation in taking strong action to prevent alcohol-related street violence, putting it ahead of New South Wales where the O'Farrell Government introduced Sydney's pioneering liquor laws in February 2014.

FARE pays tribute to Dr Lynham's dedication, over many years, to evidence-based efforts to stop alcohol-related violence.

We also acknowledge the efforts of the Queensland Coalition for Action on Alcohol, especially Chairman Professor Jake Najman and

Secretary Dennis Young. Working together in alliances has become the FARE way, and the accomplishments in Queensland show what can be achieved by partnering with those who share similar aspirations and values.

Sydney's last drinks and lockout laws are working. Even better than expected. A decrease of more than 40 per cent in night-time assaults in Kings Cross and more than 20 per cent in the CBD is a testament to rational evidence-based public policy.

But these achievements have to be defended. In February, a campaign was launched to roll back the measures. To relax the trading hour restrictions. This alcohol industry-led campaign was vigorously countered by medical, law enforcement, and public health figures. Interested only in protecting reforms that have saved lives and prevented hospitalisations, FARE played a leading role in critiquing and exposing the alcohol industry's self-serving analysis about the lockout laws.

Activity in other jurisdictions has been important too. FARE worked with the Alice Springs-based Peoples Alcohol Action Coalition (PAAC) in the lead up to the Northern Territory election in August 2016. Territorians experience

some of Australia's highest rates of alcohol harm and over four years, the Country Liberal Party Government had lent its support to the alcohol industry and dismantled effective alcohol policy.

Strong alcohol-policies will become the order of the day once again, after the Giles Government was trounced in the election. It will be important that the incoming Gunner Labor Government acts quickly on its promise to re-establish the Banned Drinker Register regime and act on the recommendations of the 2015 Parliamentary Inquiry into Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD).

Nationally, our Prevention 1st campaign has provided an opportunity work with colleagues from the Public Health Association of Australia, Alzheimer's Australia, and the Consumer Health Forum of Australia to get preventive health policy back on the political agenda. The campaign has enjoyed some success in influencing policy offerings made during the 2016 Federal Election campaign – particularly by The Greens and Labor.

At the local level, FARE has been supporting the Casula community in Sydney's south in its fight to stop the development of a large hotel near the local primary school. This has allowed the University of Newcastle

to arrange pro bono legal support to fight this development in the New South Wales Land and Environment Court. A successful outcome will be an important precedent for all communities across the state.

Our #BoozeFreeSport campaign called on the National Rugby League to protect our kids and take alcohol out of the game. The petition led by rugby league great and FARE Director Steve Ella, and his daughter Kristen, was signed by more than 3,200 Australians and received thousands of passionate and concerned comments. It's time our professional sporting codes demanded as much from themselves as they do from their players and responded to these high levels of community concern.

Much of this policy advocacy is underpinned by FARE's research investment, including the Centre for Alcohol Policy Research (CAPR) led by Professor Robin Room. This year, a new partnership was formed between FARE and La Trobe University, which secures the centre's future and will further enhance one of the world's leading specialist alcohol research centres.

Research was commissioned into Australia's shambolic system of alcohol taxation. These reports show how badly Australia has been served by successive governments.

Alcohol's burden is estimated to cost \$36 billion annually, with direct costs to governments nearing \$10 billion. Yet, the alcohol industry's tax contribution amounts to little more than \$6 billion a year. The research showed a rational system of taxing alcohol could easily raise an additional \$3 billion, contribute to 'budget repair', and cut alcohol harm by up to ten per cent.

Regrettably, the biggest impediment to realising change continues to be the influence of the alcohol industry - through its marketing activities, sale of cheap booze, and political activity that repeatedly discourages the nation's leaders from embracing policy change that will save lives, reduce injury, and prevent disease.

FARE has actively sought to combat this through our Alcohol Truth campaign, which highlights the inappropriate behaviour of the alcohol industry and the wide reach of its influence. Business models reliant on risky drinkers and misleading advertising and inappropriate marketing will continue to be exposed.

Pregnant Pause, which urges women not to consume alcohol during pregnancy, has been revamped into a consumer-facing public awareness campaign with funding from the Australian Capital Territory Government. The complementary

Women Want To Know campaign, which encourages health professionals to routinely discuss alcohol and pregnancy with their patients, continues with funding support from the Commonwealth Government. Concerted efforts will be made to promote these campaigns even more widely next year.

Ultimately, FARE's work is all about Australian families. Protecting them, ensuring young people are safe, and giving kids the best possible start in life. This is why alcohol policies that safeguard Australian families have been a recurrent theme in FARE's work throughout 2016 - and will continue to be in 2017.

None of this would be possible without the benefit of FARE's financial endowment and great care has been taken to preserve this legacy - no mean feat in challenging economic times. We recognise the enormous responsibility that we have to the people of Australia to safeguard this legacy and use it to stop harm caused by alcohol.

Together, the FARE team of directors and staff is bringing about change. We thank them for their dedication, energy, and commitment, and together pledge to strive even harder in 2017.

LEAD CHANGE



SUPPORTING HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

FARE's Women Want to Know project has proven effective in encouraging Australia's health professionals to routinely discuss alcohol and pregnancy with women.

The campaign was supported by the Australian Government Department of Health and includes a range of resources, videos, and accredited training programs, which were launched in mid-2014. In 2016, a rigorous independent evaluation judged Women Want to Know a success and delivered a detailed report, which makes a strong case for its continuation.

FARE's promotional activities were successful in prompting 60,000 requests for printed resources, driving more than 18,000 visitors to the campaign website, and had a positive impact on the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours of General Practitioners, midwives, obstetricians, and gynaecologists across Australia.



ENCOURAGING AUSSIES TO TAKE A BREAK FROM BOOZE

Pregnant Pause, the innovative health promotion campaign that asks participants to take a break from alcohol during their pregnancy or the pregnancy of a loved one, relaunched, bigger and brighter, in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) in 2016.

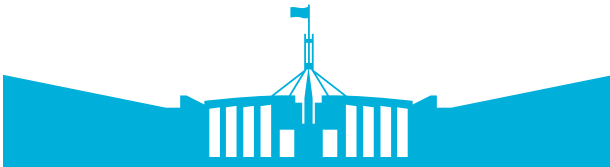
Pregnant Pause takes a novel approach to raising awareness of this important health message, building a strong support system that will help make it easier for mums-to-be.

Supported by the ACT Government under the ACT Health Promotion Grants Program, Pregnant Pause has joined with local partners to encourage Canberrans to give the gift that truly lasts a lifetime.

The three-year campaign features an extensive digital and social media component coupled with television and radio advertisements, community activities, and local events. Fittingly, our new Pregnant Pause website went live in May just in time for Mother's Day.

STRATEGIC POLICY AND ADVOCACY

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PROTECTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

More than a million Australian children are affected by the drinking of others and approximately half of all reported domestic violence incidents involve alcohol - making it vital that alcohol be considered in efforts to prevent and reduce family and domestic violence.

While alcohol's impact on families and communities is significant, this is not a problem without solutions. Much of the harm caused by alcohol is largely preventable and can no longer be overlooked.

FARE's 2016 election platform Hidden harm: Targeting alcohol's impact on children and families, highlighted Australia's concern about the devastating impact of alcohol and the strong support among Australians for meaningful action to address those harms.



SENATE RECOGNISES ALCOHOL'S ROLE IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In August 2015, the Senate Committee examining domestic violence in Australia acknowledged the role of alcohol in family violence and endorsed the framework developed by FARE to prevent and reduce it.

Among the 25 recommendations, the Committee called on the Commonwealth Government to, "consider the framework developed by FARE as part of the cross-jurisdictional work it is leading through COAG to ensure the development of an integrated and focused effort to reduce the role of alcohol as a contributing factor in cases of domestic violence".

DEFEND THE PUBLIC INTEREST



PUTTING PREVENTION 1ST

Prevention 1st is a campaign by FARE, the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA), Alzheimer's Australia and the Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF), calling on all Australian governments and political parties to commit to a strong preventive health agenda to tackle Australia's greatest health challenge.

The alliance will pursue every opportunity to express the need for action and evidence-based policies that address the four major risk factors: alcohol, tobacco, diet, and physical inactivity.



BOOZE FREE SPORT

FARE has long advocated for an end to alcohol sponsorship in sport. Our #BoozeFreeSport campaign was sparked by a State of Origin Blues promotion; a partnership between The Daily Telegraph, Carlton United Breweries, Woolworths (BWS) and the National Rugby League (NRL) in May 2016 that offered free beer.

Concerned about the impact the promotion would have on impressionable young people and sport fans of all ages, former New South Wales (NSW) Origin player and FARE Board Director Steve Ella, together with his daughter Kristen and FARE, publicly condemned the NRL for what was a dangerous and ill-conceived promotion.

Dismayed that the Blues would be complicit in the promotion of a product responsible for so much harm, Steve wrote to NRL Chief Executive Todd Greenberg to outline his concerns.

Steve, Kristen, and FARE are not alone in this thinking. There is strong and increasing community support for placing a ban on alcohol advertising on television before 8.30pm (70 per cent) and banning alcohol sponsorship at sporting events (60 per cent).

It's important that we continue to pressure the NRL and other sporting codes to end their alcohol sponsorships and close association with alcohol.



TRANSLATING RESEARCH

The Australian alcohol industry's heavy reliance on risky drinkers has been exposed in a report and video prepared by FARE, which found more than 3.8 million Aussies consume on average more than four standard drinks of alcohol a day, twice the recommended health guidelines.

Targeted by the alcohol industry and branded as 'super consumers', the industry's best customers represent just 20 per cent of Australians aged 14 and above. Yet they account for a staggering 74.2 per cent all the alcohol consumed as a nation each year.



BEER THE OBVIOUS TRUTH

A new digital campaign launched by FARE in January 2016 poked fun, and holes, in attempts by Australian brewers, to market beer as a healthy choice.

Brewers such as Lion and Carlton & United Breweries heavily promote low calorie, low carb, sugar-free, preservative-free beers, and this clever language can mislead consumers into thinking that alcohol products have positive health qualities when they don't.

Sorry Lion, but simply providing health claims doesn't make a product nutritious – beer still hasn't made it into the food pyramid!

As leading nutritionist Dr Rosemary Stanton OAM points out, "Health concerns about beer relate to its alcohol content, not its very modest carb content. Beer contains very little in the way of valuable nutrients. More importantly, the alcohol negatively affects your body's ability to metabolise kilojoules".

As part of FARE's ongoing Alcohol Truth campaign, Beer the obvious truth counters the brewer's deceptive and misleading marketing efforts, with Lion's Beer the beautiful truth campaign in its sights.

WORLD LEADING RESEARCH

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ANNUAL ALCOHOL POLL 2016



POLLING OUR COMMUNITY

There's a big difference between how Australians expect to feel when they drink and the reality of how they actually feel after their last drinking episode, with the nation's most comprehensive alcohol poll finding there's less upside and more downside than drinkers imagine.

FARE's Annual alcohol poll takes an in-depth look at our attitudes towards alcohol, drinking behaviours, and perspectives on alcohol policies – once again shedding light on what Australians drink and think about alcohol.

In 2016, our polling shows 78% of Australians believe our country has a problem with excess drinking or alcohol abuse, and that more should be done to reduce the harm caused by alcohol.

WORLD-LEADING ALCOHOL POLICY RESEARCH CENTRE

Our Centre for Alcohol Policy Research (CAPR) is an innovative, world-class research facility examining alcohol harm and the effectiveness of alcohol policies.

The Centre, which receives funding from FARE and La Trobe University and is led by Professor Robin Room, is unlike any other research facility in Australia placing CAPR at the forefront of informed alcohol policy development.

The highly successful CAPR research program began as a collaboration between four institutions and was located at Turning Point in Victoria for nearly a decade. In September 2015, the Centre moved to La Trobe University's Franklin Street campus in Melbourne.



A CASE FOR CHANGE

The lower the price of alcohol, the higher the levels of consumption. That's why alcohol taxation is one of the most cost-effective policy measures – with the ability to reduce consumption and harms, and provide a source of revenue.

Reports commissioned by FARE from The Australia Institute, ACIL Alen Consulting, and Marsden Jacob Associates make a strong case for alcohol tax reform in Australia.

Economic modelling in The goon show, exposed Australia's tax system as corporate welfare, with Australians paying a billion dollars a year to subsidise the wine industry.

Alcohol tax reform: Economic modelling assessed the impact of replacing the Wine Equalisation Tax with three different scenarios, highlighting the monetary and health benefits of a fairer tax regime.

And a cost-benefit analysis, Optimal rates of alcohol taxation, found Australians would be better off if the government taxed alcohol rationally at substantially higher excise rates.



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STOPPING HARM CAUSED BY ALCOHOL

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