

29 June 2017

Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review  
c/o Department of Health  
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Dear Review Manager

**SUBMISSION TO THE ALCOHOL POLICIES AND LEGISLATION REVIEW**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Northern Territory (NT) Government's *Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review*. This review process provides the NT Government with an important opportunity to implement comprehensive reforms to strengthen the regulation of alcohol and reduce alcohol-related harms in the NT.

In the Northern Territory, 38.6 per cent of people aged 12 years and older consume alcohol at rates that place them at risk of short-term harm and 28.8 per cent over consume alcohol at levels that place them at risk of long-term harm, including chronic disease and illness.<sup>1</sup> This is significantly more than the proportion reporting such consumption nationally (25.7 per cent and 17.6 per cent respectively).<sup>2</sup> The NT also has some of the heaviest consumption rates in the world. The latest data shows that consumption in the NT is 11.9 litres per capita.<sup>3</sup> This means that if NT was a country it would be in the top ten counties with the heaviest consumption rates.<sup>4</sup>

I take a keen interest in evidence-based policy development and evaluation. I wish to submit my own work on the impact of public policy measures on alcohol harm. With Dr Tim Legrand, I have conducted research on the implementation of risk-based licensing in the Australian Capital Territory, an important regulation measure which our research shows has the potential to reduce alcohol related offences.

In December 2010, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) introduced risk-based licensing, a scheme which calculates and sets liquor licensing fees according to venue type, occupancy, and trading hours. In 2013, we conducted research investigating the impacts of risk-based licensing on alcohol-related offences in the ACT through the analysis of data from ACT Police Real-Time Offence Monitoring Information System (PROMIS).

We found that since the introduction of risk-based licensing, alcohol-related offences have declined substantially in the ACT. From May 2010 until December 2012, all offences declined in the ACT by 21% in absolute terms and alcohol-related offences specifically relevant to risk-based licensing declined by 25%. In the second year of risk-based licensing, from 2011 to 2012, alcohol-related offences declined by a larger magnitude than offences not involving alcohol. Specifically, the proportion of all offences involving alcohol decreased by 1.3% from 2011 to 2012, and those specifically relevant to risk-based licensing decreased by 0.6%. However the proportion of offences not involving alcohol increased by 1.3% during this time.

These positive findings were echoed in what we heard in interviews with key stakeholders, namely police, liquor licensees and liquor licensing regulators. Almost all interviewed felt that risk-based licensing had benefitted the ACT, particularly in providing more police resources for prevention of

alcohol-related offences. Many reported that since its introduction there were a greater number of more visible police who had earlier intelligence about alcohol-related violence and felt that police, licensees and regulators were working together more effectively in preventing alcohol-related harm. Furthermore, these positive results were achieved without any detrimental impacts on the liquor licensing market as at the time of our study, there was no evidence that the number of liquor licenses in the ACT has significantly changed since risk-based licensing's introduction.

As reference material, our research can be downloaded from:

<http://www.fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/research/Risk-based-licensing-and-alcohol-related-offences-in-the-ACT-Final.pdf>

This research has important implications for public policy, and may be used to guide strategies to reduce the harm caused by alcohol in our communities. For this reason, I urge you to consider this research in the context of the Northern Territory's *Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review*.

In my view, this research warrants consideration of risk based licensing as a measure to reduce alcohol related offences.

If you have any questions relating to my work, or would like to discuss the issue further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to raise these important issues with you.

Yours sincerely

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2014). *National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2013*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/alcohol-and-other-drugs/data-sources/ndshs-2013/>

<sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2014). *National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2013*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/alcohol-and-other-drugs/data-sources/ndshs-2013/>

<sup>3</sup> Department of the Attorney-General and Justice. (2016). NT wholesale alcohol supply for 2008-2015. *Northern Territory Government*. Retrieved from: <https://justice.nt.gov.au/attorney-general-and-justice/statistics-and-strategy/wholesale-alcohol-supply-data>

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization (2016). Global Health Observatory data repository. Recorded alcohol per capita consumption, from 2000 Last update: May 2016. Retrieved from: <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.A1026?lang=en?showonly=GISAH>