

## **AUSTRALIANS WANT ACTION ON ALCOHOL – BUT THE POLITICIANS WON'T ACT**

**4 September 2013:** An independent survey conducted for the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth (MCAAY) and the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) shows very high levels of concern about alcohol problems and that only 17% think governments are doing enough.

The national survey of 1114 Australians carried out in June 2013 by AMR National Omnibus showed that:

- 94% of Australians are concerned about alcohol-related violence.
- 94% are concerned about alcohol use among young people.
- 17% think that governments are doing enough to prevent alcohol-related harm.
- 50% believe that reducing harm from alcohol should be a priority in the Federal election (30% disagree, 20% unsure).
- 72% support legal controls to reduce young people's exposure to alcohol advertising, with only 7% opposed.

The Director of the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth, Professor Mike Daube said, "Alcohol is a hidden issue in the current election – although almost all adult Australians are worried about alcohol problems and less than a fifth thinks that governments are doing enough."

"We know what needs to be done – and so do the parties. The lack of any commitment by either side in politics to acting on alcohol is appalling."

"We call for both sides of politics to tell the public before the election how much funding they receive from alcohol industry organisations, and what they plan to do to reduce Australia's toll of harm from alcohol."

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn says the Government and Opposition's lack of commitment to reducing alcohol harms stands in stark relief with the community's clear and constant demands for strong and effective action.

"Reducing alcohol harms should be a priority, but alcohol policy hasn't been sighted during the election campaign. Despite originally flagging it as a priority four years ago, the Rudd Government failed to make any headway in reducing alcohol harms, and now both parties are all but silent on the issue," Mr Thorn said.

On 4 July 2013, FARE wrote to the leaders of the major parties seeking a formal response to questions relating to FARE's *2013 Election Platform: 10 ways to reduce alcohol harms*, seeking to gauge the parties support for alcohol policy reforms.

In their formal response to FARE, neither the Labor or Liberal parties supported policies that would phase out alcohol industry sponsorship of sporting and cultural events, close the loophole that allows alcohol advertising to be broadcast during sporting broadcasts before 8.30pm, and introduce mandatory pregnancy warning labels for alcohol.

"The major parties are negligent in failing to make the health and welfare of Australians a priority. We need a summit to put alcohol harm reduction back on the agenda and our leaders need to demonstrate to the community that they understand that the level of alcohol harms we are seeing in our communities across Australia are not acceptable," Mr Thorn said.

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**Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)** is an independent, charitable organisation working to prevent the harmful use of alcohol in Australia. Since 2001, FARE has invested over \$115 million in research and community projects to minimise the impact of alcohol misuse on Australians. Through its national grants program and commissioned research, FARE has established itself as a leading voice on alcohol and other drugs issues. FARE works with community groups, all levels of government, police, emergency workers, research institutions and the private sector to address alcohol-related problems. For further information visit FARE's website: [www.fare.org.au](http://www.fare.org.au)

**McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth (MCAAY)** was established in September 2010. MCAAY aims to reduce harmful drinking and harms from alcohol among young people. [www.mcaay.org.au/](http://www.mcaay.org.au/)