

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Lambley to the Minister for Health:

Banned Drinkers Register

- 1. What community consultation have you done in preparation for the implementation of the Banned Drinkers Register in 2017?**

Key stakeholders have been consulted and provided input into the development of the Banned Drinkers Register.

A community awareness campaign is being undertaken and will continue through to 1 September 2017 and beyond. The objective of this campaign is to raise public awareness of the requirements for approved photo ID to purchase takeaway alcohol.

- 2. What evidence do you have that the Banned Drinkers Register will be more effective than other strategies that have been used in the Northern Territory to reduce the supply and demand for alcohol?**

The previous Government removed the Banned Drinker Register before a formal evaluation could be conducted. Based on the anecdotal evidence from Police, health practitioners, takeaway outlets and members of the community, the Banned Drinker Register is considered to be an effective supply reduction measure.

Within the first 12 months of operation, 2,500 people were on the Banned Drinker Register and there had been 16,490 declined alcohol sales to problem drinkers.

The Australian Government's Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, conducted an inquiry into the harmful use of alcohol in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Committee was chaired by the Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP, Liberal Member for Murray. The Inquiry's report in June 2015 titled "*Alcohol, hurting people and harming communities*", found:

- 'that when the BDR was abolished, alcohol-related harms in the Northern Territory increased.'
- '...alcohol related hospital emergency admissions rose by 80 per cent in the 14 months following the abolition of the BDR in the NT'.
- '...substantial analysis by the NDRI has shown that there was a reduction in alcohol-related harms in Alice Springs as a result of the BDR'.

Recommendation 8 of the report states 'That the Northern Territory Government reintroduce the Banned Drinker's Register and set up a

comprehensive data collection and evaluation program which monitors criminal justice, hospital and health data.'

3. Please provide detailed references of research and evidence that supports the reintroduction of the Banned Drinkers Register?

Refer to the Australian Government's Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs, Inquiry into the harmful use of alcohol in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities report "*Alcohol, hurting people and harming communities*" June 2015.

There is a significant body of evidence that supports supply reduction measures such as the Banned Drinker Register.

A 2015 study on patron banning in Geelong found there were benefits including increased venue safety, general risk management, and deterrence of antisocial behaviour.

Patron Banning in the Nightlife Entertainment Districts: A Key Informant Perspective. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 77(4), 606–611 (2016).
Robin Room. Individualised control of drinkers: back to the future? *Contemporary Drug Problems* 39(2):311-343, 2012.
Calladine, Kayla --- "Liquor Restrictions in Western Australia" [2009] *Indigenous Law Bulletin* 15; (2009) 7(11) *Indigenous Law Bulletin* 23
From community crisis to community control in the Fitzroy Valley, *Social Justice Report* 2010

There is a considerable body of research that shows a strong correlation between alcohol availability and crime, anti-social behaviour, family violence. Reducing access has demonstrated corresponding reductions in these areas.

Australia: the healthiest country by 2020. Technical Report No 3
Preventing alcohol-related harm in Australia: a window of opportunity
National Drug Research Institute (2007). *Restrictions on the Sale and Supply of Alcohol: Evidence and Outcomes*.
Donald A. Brand, Michaela Saisana, Lisa A. Rynn, Fulvia Pennoni, Albert B. Lowenfels. *Comparative Analysis of Alcohol Control Policies in 30 Countries*. *PLoS Med* 4(4): e151
Alcohol and Crime. Commissioned by the South Australia Police. Updated July 2010.

4. What evidence is informing your decision to scrap Alcohol Mandatory Treatment in the Northern Territory?

The formal evaluation of Alcohol Mandatory Treatment report indicated many flaws in the program including:

- no evidence base to support the model
- failed to address the needs of the client group
- no data about client groups' needs or risk factors that would support long term improvement
- failed to reach significant proportion of the target population who would benefit from assessment and treatment.
- significant investment was narrowly focused and less cost effective.

5. **In the 2017 review into Northern Territory Alcohol Mandatory Treatment there was no mention that this program was a waste of time or a waste of money. On the contrary the review highlighted problems with the program, and providing recommendations of how to address these problems.**

Design of the therapeutic pathways to support the Banned Drinker Register has taken into account the findings and recommendations of the evaluation of Alcohol Mandatory Treatment.

6. **On what exact information provided in this Review report did you base your decision to scrap Alcohol Mandatory Treatment?**

The evaluation indicated that Alcohol Mandatory Treatment was not an effective way to treat people with an alcohol misuse issue. While a small number of people did benefit, receiving attention for underlying chronic conditions and reconnecting with family, the program overall was resource intensive and ineffective at the population level.

7. **Will you be doing community consultation on whether or not to scrap Alcohol Mandatory Treatment?**

The scrapping of Alcohol Mandatory Treatment was an election commitment and a topic of extensive discussion leading up to and throughout the election campaign.

8. **It was decided in Parliament in May 2017 that all legislation would be referred to Parliamentary Portfolio Committees for scrutiny prior to returning Parliament for formal debate.**

- a) **Why have you decided not to have this important legislation paving the way for the Banned Drinkers Register, scrutinised in this way?**

The Parliamentary Portfolio Committees are in the process of being established. The Alcohol Harm Reduction Bill will be scrutinised. The Bill was introduced in the May Sittings and will be debated in the August Sittings.

- b) **Why are you avoiding scrutiny of this very important legislation?**

See above response.
