

HIGGINS

Natasha Fyles
Minister for Health

ORIGINAL PAPER

No. 369

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Media Statement

No Time for False Health Messaging

16 August 2017

The Territory Labor Government has slammed the Opposition for misleading Territorians on treatment for the Banned Drinker Register (BDR).

The Minister for Health Natasha Fyles said Departments have worked solidly to reintroduce the BDR in line with best practice.

"The CLP Opposition Leader today misled Territorians, with false claims on treatment options for the BDR," she said.

"It was disappointing to hear the Opposition Leader talk on local radio this morning telling Mix FM host Katie Woolf that 'banning chronic alcohol drinkers does not equate to treatment'."

Minister Fyles said Territorians want and deserve a safe community.

"Alcohol abuse is an entrenched issue in the Northern Territory that costs Territorians upwards of \$640 million a year (2009)," she said.

"It will take all levels of government to address this extensive harm.

"Creating false health messages that misrepresent the treatments available to Territory families is irresponsible and counterproductive.

"As the Minister for Health I can assure Territorians that a range therapeutic support options will be available to allow people who are placed on the Banned Drinker Register to get the help they need.

"For people with a ban of six months or more an assessment will be offered and a specialist clinician can recommend the best form of therapeutic support.

"Assessments will also be available for people who are on shorter bans."

Minister Fyles said the CLP scrapped the BDR without any measures to replace it and the consequences were immediate.

"When alcohol related crime and violence increased they rushed in a costly and ineffective Alcohol Mandatory Treatment," she said.

"The Territory Labor Government promised Territorians it would bring back the BDR and this week we are hitting a significant milestone with legislation expected to pass parliament.

"We've taken a health based approach, providing voluntary treatment options for people suffering from alcohol addiction. This is in line with best practice and the Department of Health has been allocated more than \$15.5 million to achieve this," she said.

The BDR is expected to pass parliament this sittings.

The BDR will return across the Northern Territory from September 1.

Media Contact: Laetitia Lemke 0418 973 602

Gary Higgins audio
Mix-FM 36- - 16 August, 2017

“Every measure will make a difference and I know there was a whole stack of issues raised yesterday around AMT but one of the clear figures that came out of the AMT was that repeat offenders only made up about 18 per cent, right, hang-on, sorry, the people that didn’t reoffend were 18 per cent. Now people might think that’s a low percentage but AA work on a five to 10 per cent success rate so when you compare it that way you sort of go well look that did have an effect but the thing is that 18 per cent of people with chronic alcohol problems ... and the thing is while you might ban someone from drinking , how do you actually treat them? – it is not good enough to just have a voluntary scheme”