



Media Release

## NOT ONE MORE: NSW MP'S URGED TO BACK NEW PLAN ON ALCOHOL

**25 November 2014:** The State's leading coalition of health professionals, emergency and law enforcement services, community members and researchers will today unveil a roadmap to reduce alcohol harms across New South Wales (NSW).

With the State again bracing for an increase in harms over the summer, and the NSW election only months away, the Government and Opposition are being urged to complete the job started at the beginning of the year to reduce alcohol harms.

The NSW and ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance (NAAPA) will launch its 2015 NSW Election Platform *Not one more* at Parliament House, Sydney, this morning.

The platform is focused on five key priority areas: protecting children and families, putting communities first, reducing disability and disease, preventing street violence and building a robust alcohol harm prevention framework.

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education Chief Executive, Michael Thorn says the State's staggering tally of alcohol harms can only be fully addressed by a comprehensive plan of action.

"Each day in NSW there are 3 deaths, 66 assaults, 28 emergency department presentations and 142 hospitalisations. That the State is enduring such a high level of preventable harms is simply unacceptable, and NAAPA says, 'not one more'. Last January the Government took tentative steps to address the harms from alcohol but it's now time to take more comprehensive action,' Mr Thorn said.

With a strong community focus, the comprehensive election platform puts the interests of the people of NSW first.

Vice President of the Police Association of NSW, Inspector Pat Gooley says everyone in NSW deserves a safe and healthy community, free of alcohol harms, regardless of postcode.

"We know that alcohol harms exist far beyond the confines of Kings Cross. Our political representatives need to acknowledge that this is a State-wide problem, and embrace measures such as the 3am last drinks in other areas across NSW so as to better protect all communities and not just Sydney CBD residents," Inspector Gooley said.

The election platform identifies a total of 19 policy solutions including the creation of a Community Defenders Office, a service that would support and assist communities throughout NSW have a say in how alcohol is made available in their neighbourhoods, as well as funding to allow the continued presence of a dedicated Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) clinic in Westmead, one of only two such facilities in Australia.

The FASD clinic is one of four solutions identified to reduce the often overlooked high levels of alcohol-related disability and disease.

The Australian Medical Association's National Vice President, Dr Stephen Parnis, says alcohol contributes to more than 200 health conditions, including heart disease cancers and liver cirrhosis, and it exacts a heavy human and financial toll on the people of NSW.

"As an emergency physician I am all too familiar with the harms and the devastation caused by alcohol and the impacts on our hospitals. Emergency departments are flooded by people who have consumed too much alcohol, as well as those on the receiving end of their violent behaviour, and as clinicians we are verbally and physically abused by drunken patients too," Dr Parnis said. "There's a dollar term for this burden as well, a high price that is shouldered by all NSW taxpayers, with over \$575 million spent annually on alcohol-related hospitalisations, ambulance attendances and aged care services."

While the impacts of alcohol are far reaching and significant, Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education Chief Executive Michael Thorn says that these are not problems without solutions, and that NAAPA's Election Platform provides a clear roadmap to prevent and reduce alcohol harms across New South Wales.

"One preventable injury or death from alcohol is one too many. In the lead up to the election, State MP's and future political candidates from all parties have the opportunity to declare exactly where they stand on this issue," Mr Thorn said.

For more information, download the full [NAAPA 2015 NSW Election Platform](#) or visit <http://naapa.org.au/get-involved>.

**Dr Parnis, Inspector Gooley and Mr Thorn (@MichaelTThorn) are available for interview.**

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The NSW and ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance (NAAPA) is an alliance of health and community organisations active across NSW and the ACT that has been formed with the objective of promoting action to reduce alcohol-related harms. The Coalition of NSW and ACT organisations has been formed to lobby and campaign for alcohol policy reform to reduce alcohol-related harms across the two jurisdictions. [www.naapa.org.au](http://www.naapa.org.au)

