

## **STOPPING ALCOHOL HARM RECEIVES VITAL POLITICAL TRACTION**

**2 May 2019:** The Labor Party is to be congratulated for putting alcohol-harm on the national policy agenda ahead of the federal election.

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn says [Labor's policy announcement today](#) is a welcome pledge and a modest down payment towards stemming the tide of alcohol harm in Australia.

"One in 22 Australians die from alcohol-related causes. That's nearly 6,000 people who lose their lives to alcohol each year. Yet the community remains in the dark about the more than 200 injury conditions and life-threatening diseases that alcohol causes," Mr Thorn said.

"Australia faces a \$36 billion a year alcohol burden – approximately a third is due to alcohol dependence, a third is caused by injuries, and the final third is due to chronic diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular diseases," he said.

As the nation's leading organisation on evidence-based policy to reduce alcohol harm, FARE, has welcomed Labor's undertaking to finalise a new National Alcohol Strategy (NAS) to address this unacceptable cost to the community.

"Australia has not had an alcohol strategy since 2011, which is an intolerable situation," Mr Thorn said.

Mr Thorn says under a NAS, the Commonwealth, states and territories would work constructively to reduce Australia's health burden and protect families from alcohol harm.

"Labor's announcement today would serve to revive much needed preventive health programs that have been largely dismantled by the current Government," Mr Thorn said.

"It's encouraging to see political support for crucial areas that FARE has identified for attention, including targeted awareness campaigns about the risks of alcohol, putting pregnancy warning labels on alcohol products and protecting young people from alcohol advertising," he said.

Mr Thorn says these measures would set Australia in the right direction.

"The bottom line is that the majority of Australians want to know the truth about alcohol and its health risks," Mr Thorn said.

"This is why public awareness campaigns are so critical, and Labor's \$10 million investment is a modest, but positive start," he said.

**Mr Thorn is available for interview. Media contact: Clare Ross 02 6122 8616 or 0429 291120**