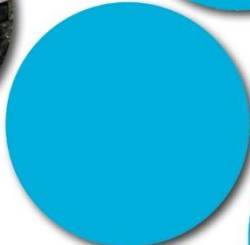


# Preventing alcohol harms: The problem, the environment, the evidence and the policy responses



STOPPING  
HARM  
CAUSED BY  
ALCOHOL



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Director, Policy and Research  
@catgiorgi

**fare**  
Foundation for Alcohol  
Research & Education

# 1. The problem

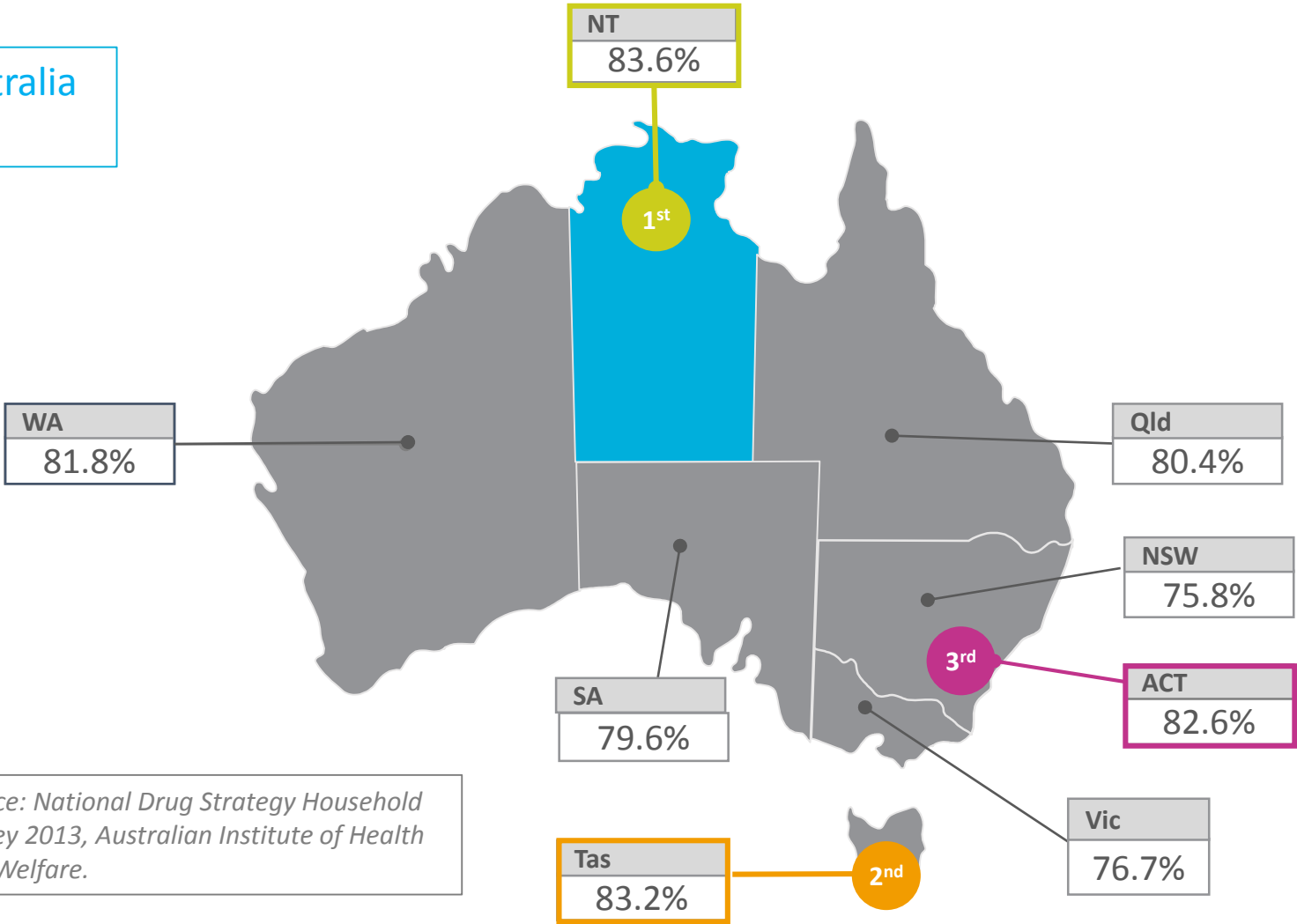


# Alcohol contributes to a range of health, social and economic harms to the drinker and the people around them.

	Harms to self	Harms to others
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Injury/accident</li> <li>• Chronic diseases, e.g. cancer</li> <li>• Addiction</li> <li>• Alcohol poisoning</li> <li>• Suicide</li> <li>• Death</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Injury/accident, e.g. from traffic accidents</li> <li>• Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders</li> <li>• Poor mental health/anxiety</li> </ul>
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of friendships</li> <li>• Family breakdowns</li> <li>• Engage in activities that may regret, e.g. social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence</li> <li>• Intimate partner violence</li> <li>• Sexual assault</li> </ul>
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of employment/pay</li> <li>• Cost to society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee absenteeism</li> <li>• Cost to society</li> </ul>

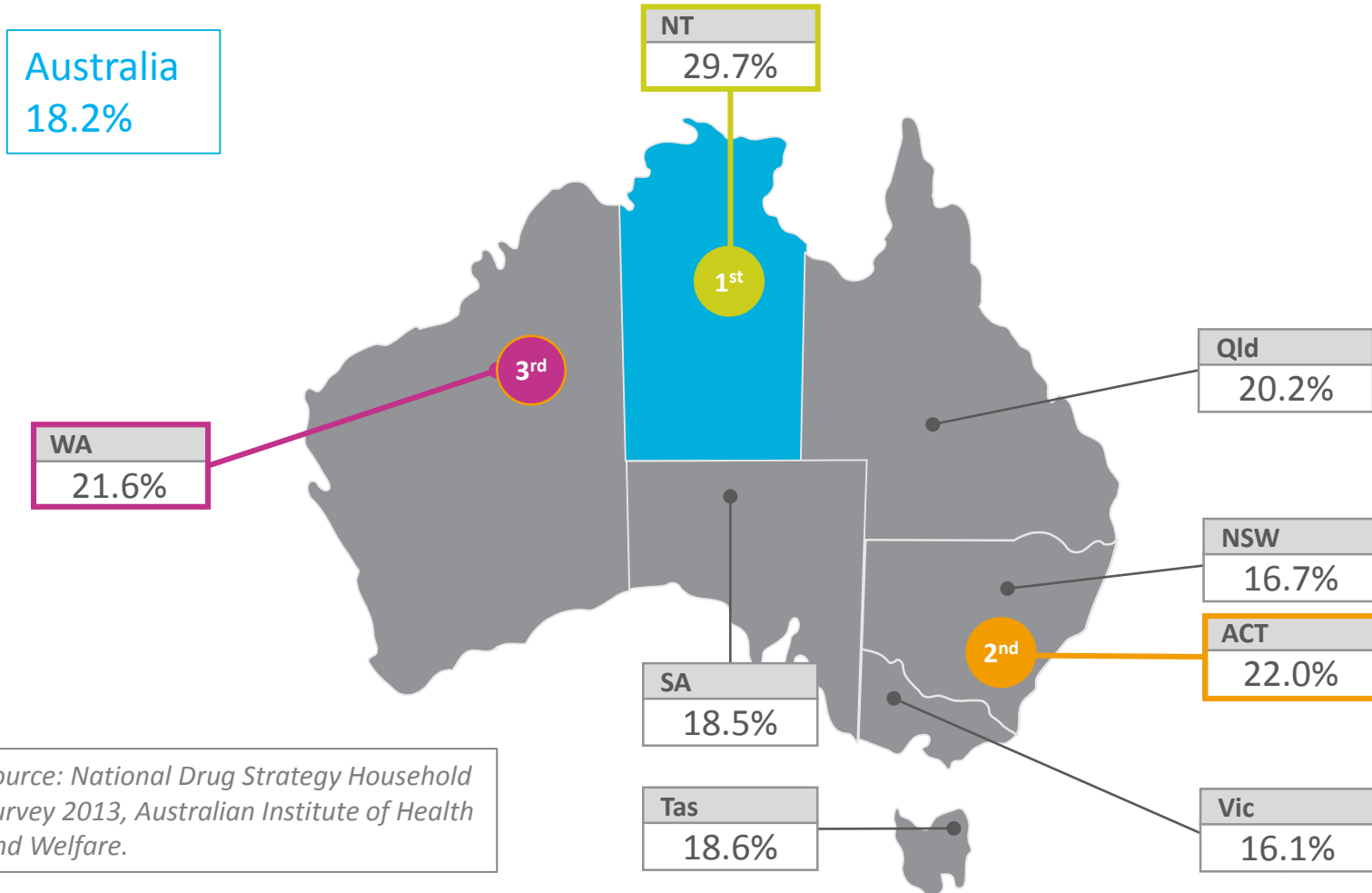
# 8 out of 10 people in the NT consume alcohol

Australia  
78%



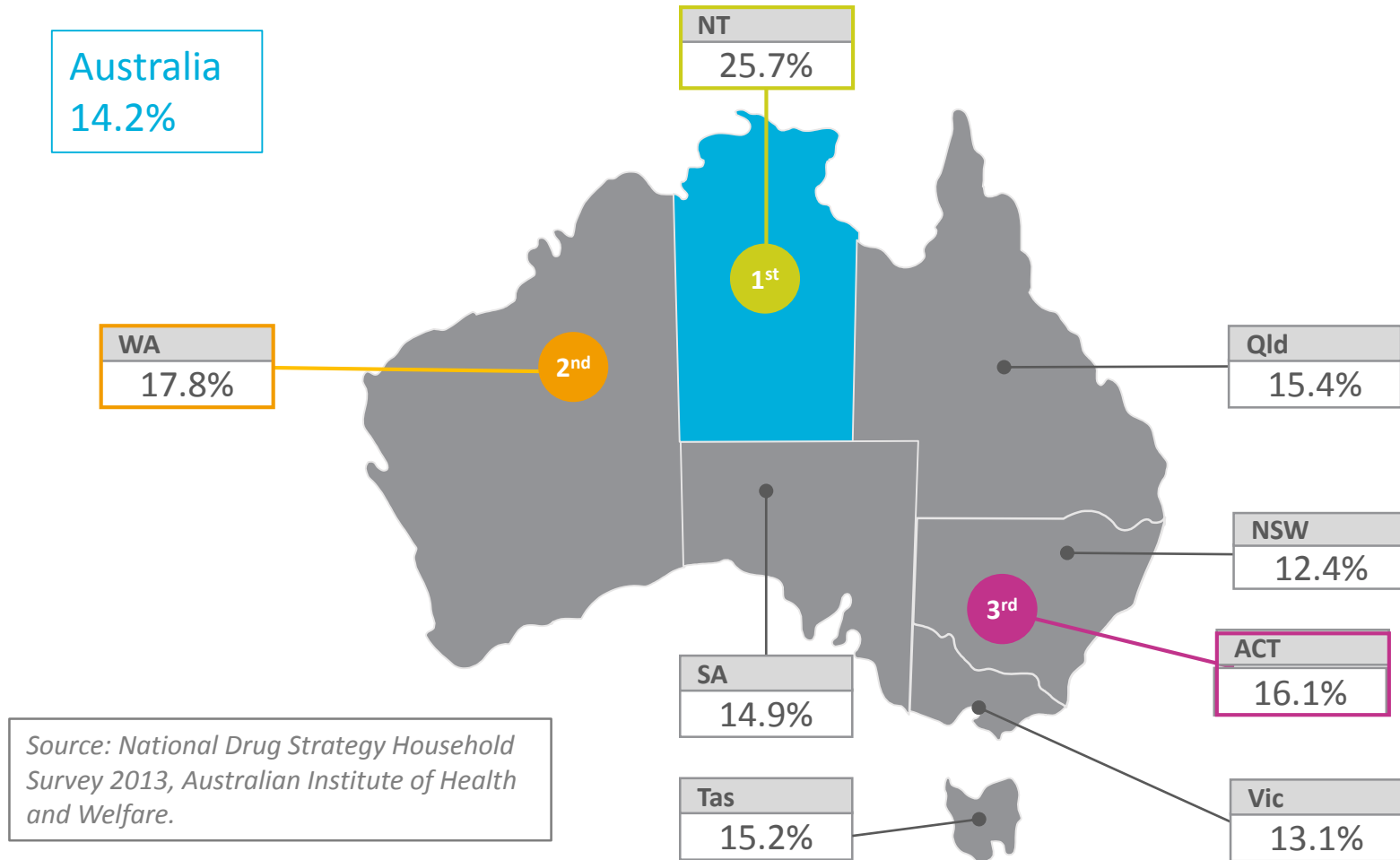
Source: National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2013, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

# Almost 1 in 3 people in the NT consume alcohol in a way that puts them at risk of long term harms

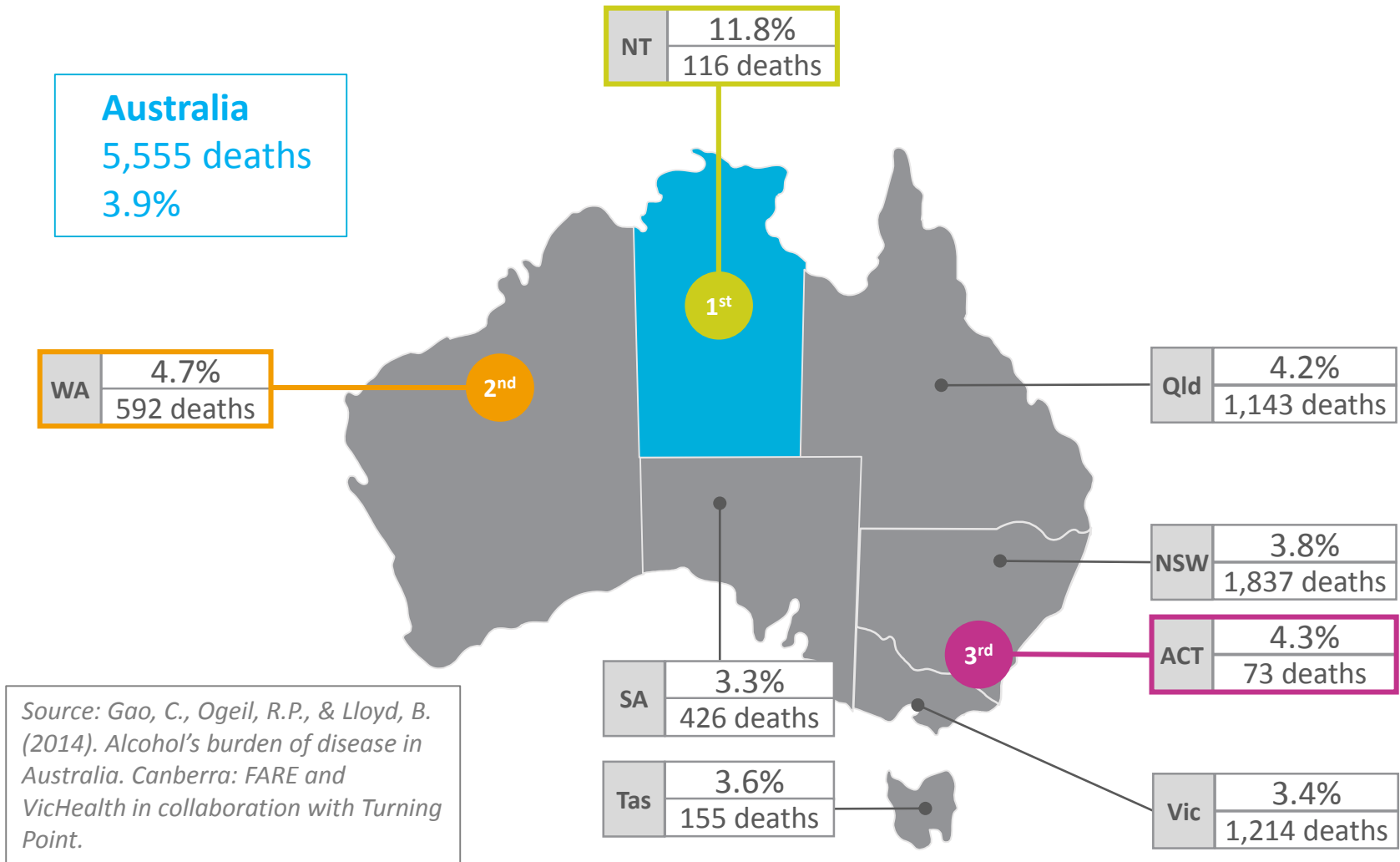


Source: National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2013, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

# A quarter of people in the NT consume alcohol in a way that puts them at risk of short term harms at least weekly



# More than 1 in 10 deaths in the NT are alcohol related





# 1 in 40 hospitalisations in the NT are alcohol related

**Australia**  
157,132 hospitalisations  
1.8%

WA	1.9%
	17,448

NT	2.7%
	2,708

Qld	1.9%
	33,974

NSW	1.9%
	48,152

ACT	2.5%
	2,273

SA	1.6%
	10,560

Vic	1.7%
	39,381

Tas	2.6%
	2,636

Source: Gao, C., Ogeil, R.P., & Lloyd, B. (2014). *Alcohol's burden of disease in Australia*. Canberra: FARE and VicHealth in collaboration with Turning Point.

## More than 3,000 people in the NT are victims of alcohol-related violence

Population	Number of alcohol-related assaults (year ending March 2015)
Domestic Violence	2,502
Other Assaults	1,428
Total	3,930 (55.6% of all assaults)

Source: NT Department of the Attorney-general and Justice. (2015). Northern Territory Yearly Assault Statistics: Data through March 2015.

## Alcohol harms in the NT are significant

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- 116 deaths
- 2,708 hospitalisations
- 3,930 alcohol-related assaults

Put differently...

- More than half of assaults involve alcohol.
- More than one in ten deaths involve alcohol.

*Sources: NT Department of the Attorney-general and Justice. (2015). Northern Territory Yearly Assault Statistics: Data through March 2015, Gao, C., Ogeil, R.P., & Lloyd, B. (2014). Alcohol's burden of disease in Australia. Canberra: FARE and VicHealth in collaboration with Turning Point.*

## 2. The environment

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## The greater the density of liquor licenses – the more alcohol harms we see

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- 10% increase in general licence premises is associated with an a 0.6% increase in assaults
- 10% increase in off-licence premises is associated with a 1% increase in assaults, a 3.3% increase in family violence and a 1.9% increase in hospitalisations due to chronic disease.
- A single additional off-licence premise on average increases the number of young people drinking 11 or more drinks on one occasion by six.
- Every additional liquor chain outlet is associated with a 35.3% increase in intentional injuries and a 22% increase in unintentional injuries.

*Sources: Livingston, M. (2008). A Longitudinal Analysis of Alcohol Outlet Density and Assault. Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, 32(6), 1074-1079, Livingston, M., Laslett, A-M., & Dietze, P. (2008). Individual and community correlates of young people's high-risk drinking in Victoria, Australia. Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 98:241-248, Morrison, C., & Smith, K. (2015). Disaggregating relationships between off-premise alcohol outlets and trauma. Canberra: Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education.*

# Currently in Australia, alcohol is more available than it ever has been

	Population > 18 years per licensed premises	Number of licenses
South Australia (2009)	224	5,752
Victoria (2010)	229	18,872
Northern Territory (2010)	268	622
Tasmania (2010)	271	1,433
Australia	317	53,533
New South Wales (2009)	369	15,193
Western Australia (2009)	414	4,241
Australian Capital Territory (2010)	430	650
Queensland (2009)	506	6,770

Source: Trinoff et al. (2011). *Liquor Licensing Legislation in Australia: Part 1: An Overview*

## Darwin has more than 400 licensed venues

Location	Number of licences (as at 17/6/2015)	% of total
Darwin SD & Environment	403	60%
Central Region	139	21%
Katherine region	67	10%
Barkly	26	4%
Darwin Region (Daly, Tiwi Islands, West Arnhem Land)	25	4%
East Arnhem Land region	12	2%
NT Total	672	100%

Source: Northern Territory Government, Department of Business



# The longer the trading hours for alcohol – the more alcohol harms we see

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- Relaxation in licensing laws to allow 24 hours trading in the UK in 2005 was associated with a 25% increase in serious violent offences committed in the early hours of the morning.
- For each one hour extension in on-premise alcohol sales in Norway, there was an additional 4.8 assaults per 100,000 residents per quarter.
- Limitations on earliest time alcohol can be sold by is associated with decreases in alcohol-related assaults, ambulance call-outs and ED presentations.

*Sources: Australian Medical Association (NSW), NSW Nurses' Association, Health Services Union & Police Association of NSW. (2010). Last drinks: A coalition of concerned emergency services workers, Rossow, I. & Norstrom, T. (2011). The impact of small changes in bar closing hours on violence. The Norwegian experience from 18 cities. Addiction 107(3), 530-537, Jones, C. Kypri, K., Moffatt, S., Borzycki, C., and Price, B. (2009). 'The impact of restricted alcohol availability on alcohol-related violence in Newcastle, NSW'. Crime and Justice Bulletin, No. 137.*

# The more alcohol is promoted and the lower the price – the more alcohol harms we see

- 112 studies found that higher taxes and prices led to reduced consumption of alcohol.
- Alcohol can be purchased in Australia for as little as 30 cents per standard drink.
- Off-licence premises in Sydney host an average of 30.2 point of sale promotions per outlet.
- There is a significant relationship between exposure to alcohol advertising, and drinking intentions and behaviours among young people. 43% of drinkers purchase more alcohol when it is on special or its price is reduced, with 59% of heavier drinkers doing this.

*Sources: Wagenaar AC, Salois MJ, Komro KA. Effects of beverage alcohol price and tax levels on drinking: a meta-analysis of 1003 estimates from 112 studies. Addiction 2009; 104: 179-190, Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority (ILGA). (2013). Unpublished data. 22 August 2013. Sydney: ILGA. Anderson, P., De Bruijn, A., Angus, K., Gordon, R., & Hastings, G. (2009). Impact of alcohol advertising and media exposure on adolescent alcohol use: A systematic review of longitudinal studies. Alcohol and Alcoholism, 44, 229-43, Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education. (2013). Annual Alcohol Poll: Attitudes and Behaviours. Canberra: FARE.*

## 3. The evidence

## There are a number of policy measures with substantial evidence to support their effectiveness

Strategy or intervention	Effectiveness score	Research breadth score	Cross national testing score	Comments
<b>Alcohol taxes</b>	3	3	3	Price changes affect population-level alcohol consumption, alcohol-related problems and beverage preferences.
<b>Lowered BAC limits</b>	3	3	3	The lower the BAC limit, the more effective the policy. Very low limits are effective for young people.
<b>Brief intervention with at risk drinkers</b>	3	3	3	Most health care practitioners state lack of time and training as barriers to screening and brief interventions.
<b>Random breath testing</b>	3	2	2	Effectiveness depends on number of drivers directly affected and the extent of consistent and high profile enforcement.

*Source: Babor et al (2010) Alcohol No Ordinary Commodity Research and Public Policy, Second Edition*

## And there are several other measures with very strong support for their implementation

Strategy or intervention	Effectiveness score	Research breadth score	Cross national testing score	Comments
Hours and days of sale restrictions	2	2	3	Effective when changes in trading hours must meaningfully reduce availability or where problems such as late night violence are related to hours of sale.
Restrictions on density of outlets	2	3	2	Evidence for both consumption and harms.
Different availability by different strengths	2	2	2	Mostly tested for different strengths of beer and broadened availability of wine.
Enhanced enforcement of RSA	2	2	2	Sustained effects depend on making enhanced enforcement part of ongoing police practices.

*Source: Babor et al (2010) Alcohol No Ordinary Commodity Research and Public Policy, Second Edition*

## There are also a number of alcohol policies with little or no evidence of their effectiveness

Strategy or intervention	Effectiveness score	Research breadth score	Cross national testing score	Comments
Mass media campaigns	0	3	2	No evidence on impacts of limiting drinking. Some evidence of increased effectiveness of RBT when publicised by media.
Classroom education	0	3	2	May increase knowledge and change attitudes – but no evidence of impact on behaviours.
Alcohol industry's voluntary self-regulation codes (promotions)	0	2	2	Industry voluntary self regulation codes of practice are ineffective in limiting exposure to young people and preventing objectionable content.
Voluntary codes of bar service	0	1	1	Ineffective when strictly voluntary but may contribute to effects when part of community action projects.

Source: Babor et al (2010) *Alcohol No Ordinary Commodity Research and Public Policy, Second Edition*

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‘Governments tend to respond in ways that don’t interfere with the market and that don’t upset people who have vested interests at stake and the result is that they do symbolic things rather than things that are actually effective’

Professor Robin Room, Director Centre for Alcohol Policy  
Research and advisor to WHO on alcohol and drugs.

A review of the adoption of evidence-based policy in NSW found an inverse relationship between the action taken and the evidence to support it.

Policy area	Recommendations acted on/completed	Effectiveness
Awareness raising	18	0
Liquor accords	11	0
Enforcement	7	2
RSA	8	0/1/2
Education	4	0
Brief intervention	2	3
Availability	3	2
Drink driving countermeasures	3	2/3
Promotion and marketing	0	1/2
Price	1	3/?
Early intervention	6	N/A
Other	9	N/A

Source: FARE. (2013). *10 years on: An Analysis of the Progress made in Preventing Alcohol-related Harms Since the 2003 NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse*



## 4. Policy responses

# Policies need to target the price, promotion and availability of alcohol

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## Price

- Alcohol taxation
- Minimum pricing
- Bans on discounts and reckless promotions

## Availability

- Limiting trading hours
- Limiting the density of outlets
- Introducing time limited licenses and risk based licensing schemes
- Introducing saturation zones

## Promotion

- Limiting/phasing out alcohol advertising and sponsorship
- Limiting point of sale promotions
- Removing reckless promotions that encourage excessive consumption

# Trading hour restrictions

## Reducing trading hours reduces harms – Just look at Newcastle and Sydney

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**In Newcastle the trading hours for on-licence venues was wound back to 3:30am, with a 1:30am lockout.**

- 5 years on an evaluation found:
  - The reduction in trading hours to a 3.30am in Newcastle has resulted in a sustained reduction after 5 years of 28 assaults per quarter.
  - A 20% reduction in alcohol-related assaults for every hour that trading hours were wound back.

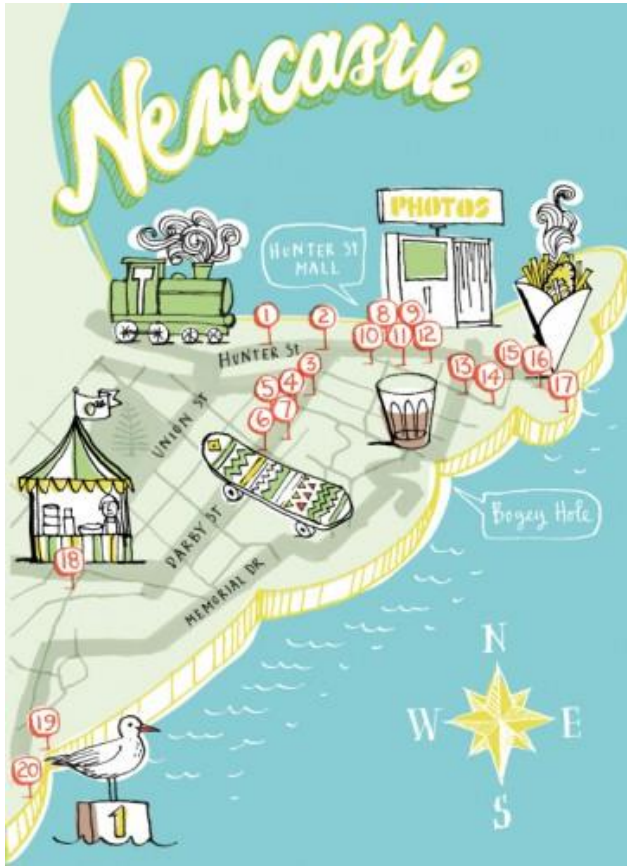
**In Sydney a 3am last drinks and 1:30am lockout were introduced to the CBD and Kings Cross areas.**

- An initial evaluation 9 months on has found:
  - A 26% reduction in alcohol-related assaults in Sydney;
  - A 32% reduction in alcohol-related assaults in Kings Cross.

*Sources: Kypri, K., McElduff, P. & Miller, P. (2014). Restrictions in pub closing times and lockouts in Newcastle, Australia five years on. Drug and Alcohol Review, 33, 323–326, Menéndez, P., Weatherburn, D., Kypri, K. and Fitzgerald, J. (2015). Lockouts and last drinks: The impact of the January 2014 liquor licence reforms on assaults in NSW, Australia. Crime and Justice Bulletin, 183.*

# Alcohol Plans of Management

# Newcastle liquor licensing restrictions



When • 21 March 2008

What

- 3.30am close
- 1.30am lockouts
- Plan of management for each licensee
- Dedicated RSA officer from 11pm until closing
- No shots after 10pm
- Stop selling alcohol 30 minutes prior to closing
- No stockpiling of drinks

How

- Liquor Administration Board imposed these restrictions using their power under the Liquor Act 1982

# Plan of Management - Kings Cross



When • Implemented in two stages:

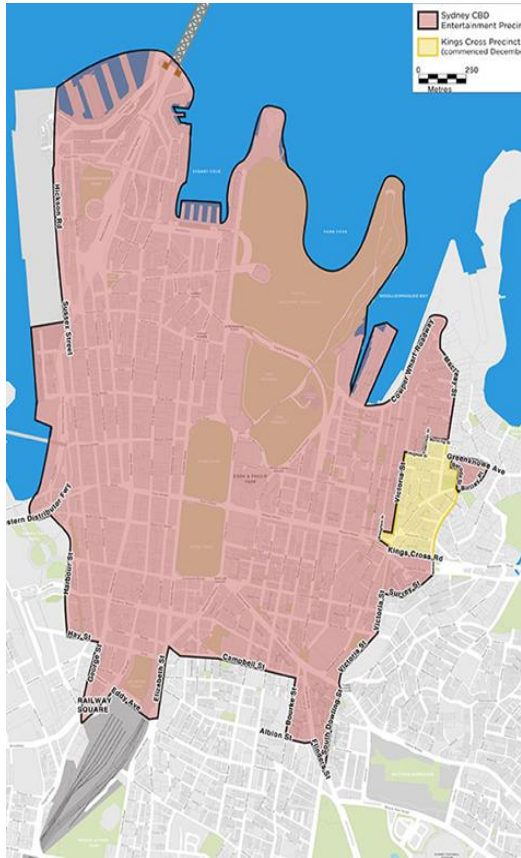
- December 2012
- December 2013

What • Ban on certain drinks and other types of alcohol sales after midnight (e.g. shots and RTDs containing more than 5% alcohol)

- No more than 2 drinks after 2am
- No glass after midnight on any day
- Ban on promotions that encourage rapid consumption (e.g. shots and shooters)
- RSA marshals after midnight on weekends
- CCTV systems to be maintained on premises
- Round the clock incident registers
- Sales data collection
- ID scanners

How • Minister can declare an area a precinct that has prescribed conditions

# Plan of Management - Sydney CBD



When

- Implemented in July 2014

What

- Ban on certain drinks and other types of alcohol sales after midnight (e.g. shots and RTDs containing more than 5% alcohol)
- No glass after midnight on any day
- No more than 4 drinks or one bottle of wine sold between midnight and 2am
- No more than 2 drinks after 2am
- Ban on promotions that encourage rapid consumption (e.g. shots and shooters)
- RSA marshals after midnight on weekends
- Round the clock incident registers

How

- Minister can declare an area a precinct that has prescribed conditions





## Risk based licensing

## Risk based licensing

	Victoria (Introduced August 2009)	Queensland (Introduced January 2009)	ACT (Introduced December 2010)	NSW (Introduced January 2015)
Trading hours	✓	✓	✓	✓
Occupancy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Past conduct/ compliance	✓	✓		✓
Licence type			✓	✓
Volume sold (off-trade)		✓	✓	
Provision of meals		✓		
Location				✓

Source: Mathews, R. & Legrand, T. (2013). *Risk-based licensing and alcohol-related offences in the Australian Capital Territory*. Canberra: FARE & ARC CEPS

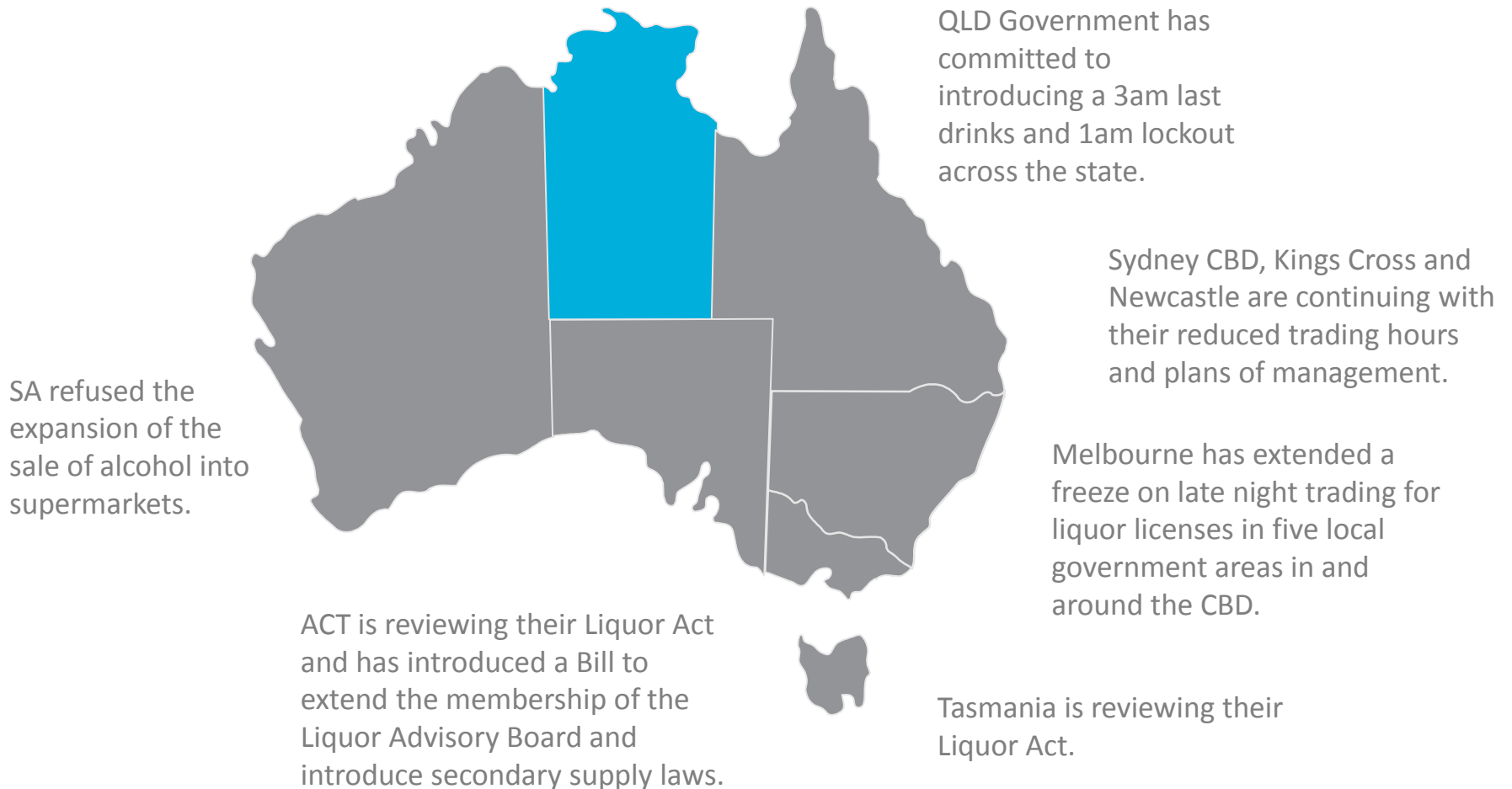
## Risk based licensing in the ACT

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- Since December 2010, the ACT has calculated and set liquor licensing fees according to venue type, occupancy, and trading hours, a practice known as risk-based licensing (RBL).
- RBL aims to recover some of the policing and regulatory costs of alcohol-related offences with higher risk licensees required to contribute proportionally more to these costs by paying higher licensing fees.
- The study found that from May 2010 until December 2012, all offences declined in the ACT by 21% in absolute terms and alcohol-related offences specifically relevant to RBL declined by 25%.

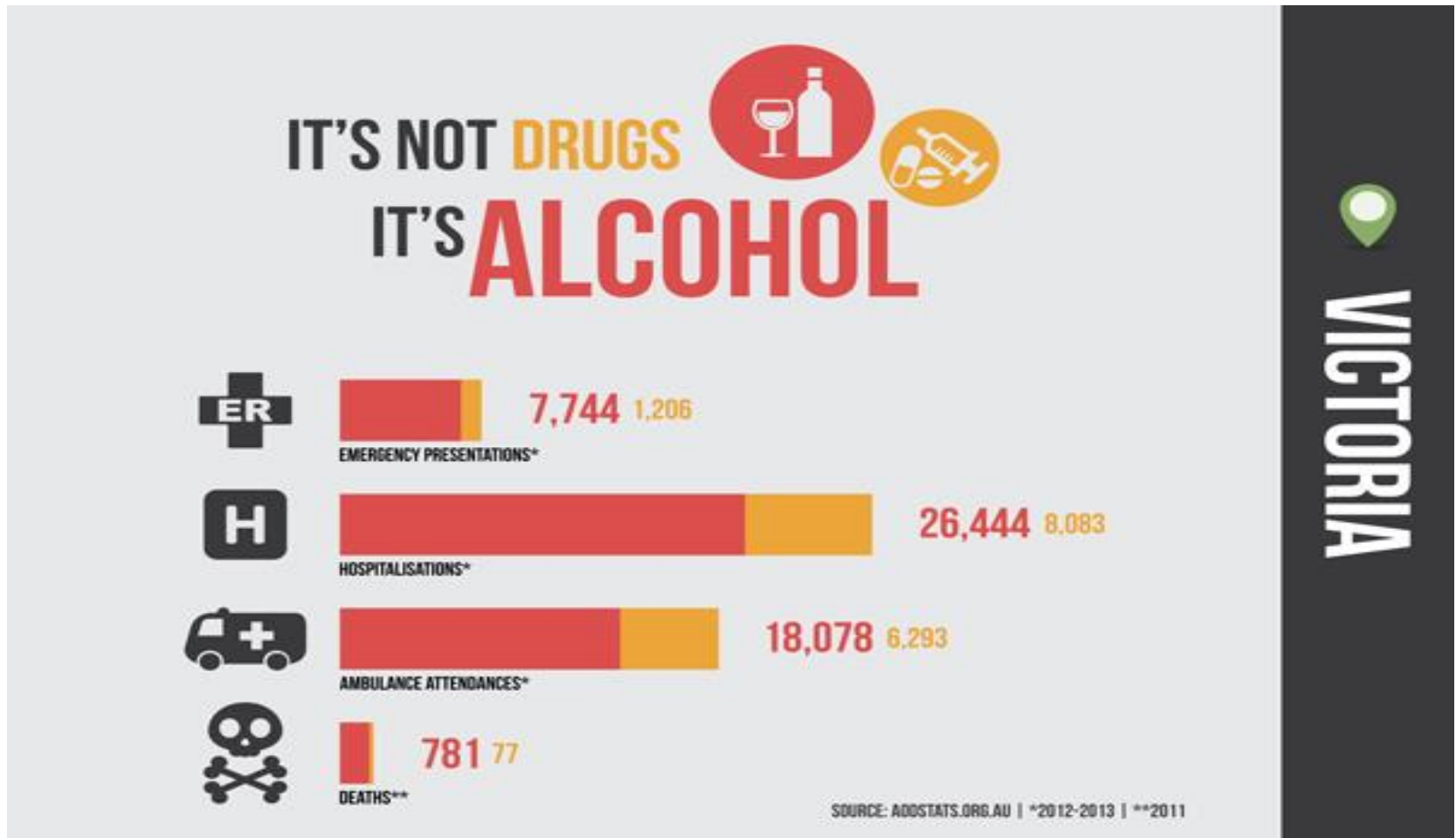
*Source: Mathews, R. & Legrand, T. (2013). Risk-based licensing and alcohol-related offences in the Australian Capital Territory. Canberra: FARE & ARC CEPS*

# Policy developments around the country



## 4. The myths

# MYTH - The problem isn't alcohol – it's drugs



**MYTH** – It's all about individual responsibility – targeting individuals will be more effective



## MYTH – Winding back trading hours will kill business.

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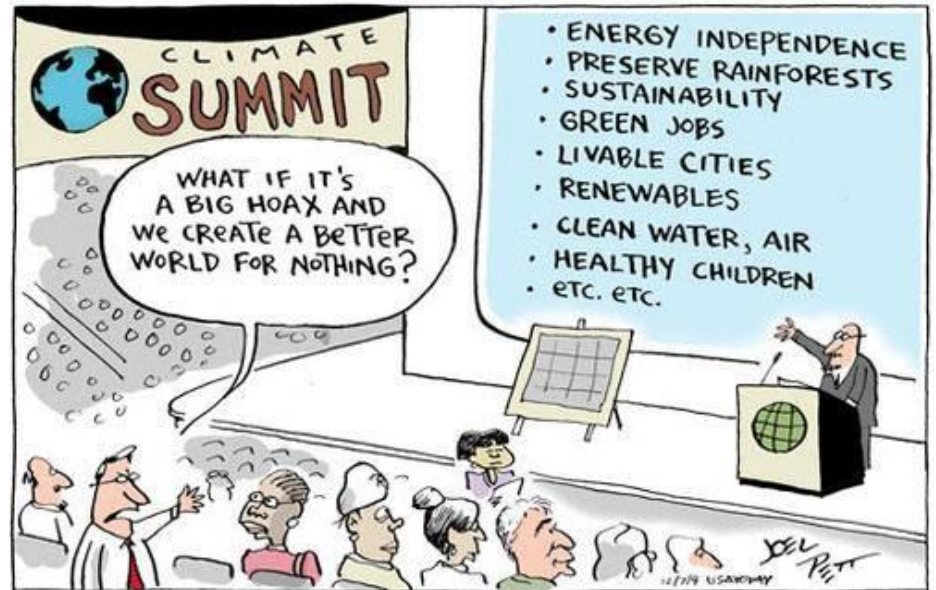
- The 'Night time economy' is made up of more than alcohol.
- In Darwin the 'drink' sector makes up 0.4% of the economy and food makes up 2.1%.
- In Darwin in 2013 there were 21 'drink' venues and 121 'food' venues.
- The Newcastle experience shows that trading hours regulations result in diversification of the night time economy.
- Of 15 local government areas, Newcastle showed the fourth strongest overall growth, led by food businesses.
- Between 2009 and 2013, the 'drink' sector declined by nine firms and the 'food' sector increased by 12.
- Newcastle also showed an 11.9% increase in revenue in the 'night time economy' from 2009 to 2013, with a 4% increase in the 'drink' sector and 35.9% increase in the 'food' sector.

*Source: Bevan, T. (2015). The Australian Night Time Economy and the NTE Economic Performance of Key LGAs 2009 to 2013. National Local Government Drug and Alcohol Committee.*



# Australians want action and we know what needs to be done

- 75% of people think that Australia has a problem with excess drinking or alcohol abuse.
- 73% believe that more needs to be done to reduce the harm caused by alcohol.



Source: Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education. (2015). Annual Alcohol Poll 2015: Attitudes and Behaviours. Canberra: FARE.

# Thanks!

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