

16 October 2024

Hon. Lia Finocchiaro

Chief Minister

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chief.minister@nt.gov.au

Dear Chief Minister,

PUTTING THE HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SAFETY OF TERRITORIANS FIRST

We are writing to urge you to put the health, wellbeing and safety of Territorians first, by keeping in place measures that work to reduce harms from alcohol.

Alcohol causes a great deal of harm to far too many Territorians. Measures that control the availability and accessibility of alcohol, like the Minimum Unit Price and reduced trading hours for alcohol outlets have proven to reduce harm, which has been proven to save lives.

As leaders of health, community, Aboriginal and research organisations, we see the impact of effective alcohol policies in keeping our communities safe, and we strongly oppose any moves to remove these policies.

If these policies are removed or relaxed, we know we will see increases in violence against women and children, more people hospitalised because of chronic diseases and more deaths.

Please engage with us, listen to us and consult with communities who experience firsthand the impact of alcohol on our families.

We know all too well what happens when decisions are quickly made without community engagement and consideration of the evidence.

As you know from July 2022 to early 2023, restricted area legislative provisions were allowed to lapse across the Northern Territory despite warnings from community leaders of the increased harm that this would cause, and the result was a very significant increase in violence and other harm, especially to women.

At the recent National Cabinet meeting, alongside the Prime Minister and all First Ministers you acknowledged the role of alcohol in exacerbating violence against women and children and committed to reviewing alcohol laws and their impact on victim-survivors of family violence.

Your government's consideration of the removal of Minimum Unit Pricing will not make women and children in the Northern Territory safer. It will increase violence and harm. Any increase in trading hours will have a similar effect.

We urge you to abandon any plans to remove or relax these policies, and to prioritise the health, wellbeing and safety of families and communities

Signed,

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