

26/06/2017

Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review
c/o Department of Health
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Dear Review Manager

SUBMISSION TO THE *ALCOHOL POLICIES AND LEGISLATION REVIEW*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Northern Territory (NT) Government's *Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review*. This review process provides the NT Government with an important opportunity to implement comprehensive reforms to strengthen the regulation of alcohol and reduce alcohol-related harms in the NT.

In the Northern Territory, 38.6 per cent of people aged 12 years and older consume alcohol at rates that place them at risk of short-term harm and 28.8 per cent over consume alcohol at levels that place them at risk of long-term harm, including chronic disease and illness.¹ This is significantly more than the proportion reporting such consumption nationally (25.7 per cent and 17.6 per cent respectively).² The NT also has some of the heaviest consumption rates in the world. The latest data shows that consumption in the NT is 11.9 litres per capita.³ This means that if NT was a country it would be in the top ten countries with the heaviest consumption rates.⁴

I take a keen interest in evidence-based policy development and evaluation. I wish to submit my own work on the impact of public policy measures on alcohol harm. Research that I have conducted suggests that liquor licensing practices are a key determinant of alcohol-related harm in the community. My work has shown that increasing the density of alcohol outlets within a community can contribute to increases in a range of harms^{5,6,7}. It is particularly worth noting that my longitudinal analyses demonstrate a strong relationship between the density of packaged liquor outlets and negative outcomes like chronic disease morbidity and domestic violence⁸. These findings are broadly supported by a growing international literature.

This research has important implications for public policy, and may be used to guide strategies to reduce the harm caused by alcohol in our communities. For this reason, I urge you to consider this research in the context of the Northern Territory's *Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review*.

In my view, this research warrants consideration of liquor licensing policies that provide adequate means by which communities can limit or reduce the number of alcohol outlets that operate within them. This may mean, for example, ensuring that the burden of proof on the impacts of new outlets rests with the applicant rather than with objectors.

If you have any questions relating to my work, or would like to discuss the issue further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to raise these important issues with you.

Yours sincerely

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¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2014). *National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2013*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/alcohol-and-other-drugs/data-sources/ndshs-2013/>

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2014). *National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2013*. Retrieved from: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/alcohol-and-other-drugs/data-sources/ndshs-2013/>

³ Department of the Attorney-General and Justice. (2016). NT wholesale alcohol supply for 2008-2015. *Northern Territory Government*. Retrieved from: <https://justice.nt.gov.au/attorney-general-and-justice/statistics-and-strategy/wholesale-alcohol-supply-data>

⁴ World Health Organization (2016). Global Health Observatory data repository. Recorded alcohol per capita consumption, from 2000 Last update: May 2016. Retrieved from: <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.A1026?lang=en?showonly=GISAH>

⁵ Livingston, M. (2011). A longitudinal analysis of alcohol outlet density and domestic violence. *Addiction*, 106(5):919-925.

⁶ Livingston, M. (2011). Alcohol outlet density and harm: comparing the impacts on violence and chronic harms. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 30(5): 515-523

⁷ Livingston, M. (2008). A longitudinal analysis of alcohol outlet density and assault. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*. 32:1074-1079.

⁸ Livingston, M. (2013). To reduce alcohol-related harm we need to look beyond pubs and nightclubs. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 32(2): 113-114.