

MEDIA RELEASE

HEALTH EXPERTS WELCOME FIRST STEP TOWARDS APPROPRIATE ALCOHOL LABELLING

9 December 2011: The Australian and New Zealand Ministerial Council on Food Regulation today acknowledged the need to regulate warning labels on alcohol products.

At the meeting in Melbourne to consider a response to the recommendations of the Blewett Review, a decision was made to introduce “appropriate labelling” about the risks of drinking alcohol during pregnancy, which will be regulated in two years’ time.

Michael Thorn, Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education’s (FARE) Chief Executive said, “In light of the Ministers’ announcement today, we are looking forward to working with the Government and public health experts on the development of an appropriate, evidence-based pregnancy warning label.

“It’s very clear that the industry’s current voluntary labelling efforts do not sufficiently warn women of the potential harms caused by drinking during pregnancy, and are therefore anything but adequate.

“With the Inquiry into Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in 2012 and the Government’s increased focus in this area, we hope that an evidence-based pregnancy warning label will be part of a comprehensive approach to the prevention of FASD.

Professor Mike Daube, alcohol spokesperson of the Public Health Association of Australia said, “It is encouraging that, despite enormous pressure, Ministers have not endorsed the alcohol industry’s attempts to introduce feeble, ineffective warnings.

“We need to ensure that the Ministers’ support for “appropriate” warnings is translated into clear, research-based warnings, not the weak approach taken by the alcohol industry.

“We look forward to supporting Ministers as they honour their commitment to legislate within two years.”

FARE has been working with a range of experts throughout the year to develop a comprehensive alcohol warning label position.

Mr Thorn said, “We look forward to hearing about the process to develop an effective pregnancy warning label so that we are ready for regulation within two years.

“As part of this process, we hope to see further action taken by Government to develop warning labels outlining the many other harms that come from excessive alcohol consumption.”



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Mr Michael Thorn and Professor Mike Daube are available for interview.

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Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education (FARE): FARE is an independent, charitable organisation working to prevent the harmful use of alcohol in Australia. Since 2001, FARE has invested over \$115 million in research and community projects to minimise the impact of alcohol misuse on Australians. Through our national grants program and commissioned research, the FARE has established itself as a leading voice on alcohol and other drugs issues. We work with community groups, all levels of government, police, emergency workers, research institutions and the private sector to address alcohol-related problems. For further information visit our website: www.fare.org.au

Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) – PHAA provides a forum for the exchange of ideas, knowledge and information on public health. The Association is also involved in advocacy for public health policy, development, research and training. PHAA has [Branches](#) in every state and territory. Membership of around 1500 individuals spans the health spectrum and over 40 public health related occupations are represented. PHAA has thirteen [Special Interest Groups](#) for members to meet with those who have similar interests and passions, to exchange information and to develop policy positions and papers.