



QLD STATE ELECTION: ALCOHOL INDUSTRY DONATIONS FLOW TO LIBERAL NATIONAL PARTY

23 January 2015: The alcohol industry has donated over \$408,000 to Queensland political parties over the last three years, with 92 per cent of those funds being channelled to the Liberal National Party (LNP).

The Queensland hotel sector had the deepest pockets (\$156,826) with the sector accounting for over 38 per cent of total alcohol industry donations.

The study, published by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), examined Queensland Electoral Commission (QEC) data of declared donations from the alcohol industry to major Queensland political parties between July 2011 and June 2014.

The study showed that the LNP attracted the lion's share of alcohol industry donations (\$374,146) while the Queensland division of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) received \$19,502.08, the Katter Australian Party (KAP) \$15,000, and the Queensland Greens and the Palmer United Party received no alcohol industry donations.

The report also details recent controversial changes to the electoral laws.

In May 2014 the Newman Government raised the disclosure threshold from \$1,000 to \$12,400, and changed disclosure reporting timeframes from 6 months to 12 months; in effect decreasing public scrutiny of donations and making QEC data less transparent.

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education Chief Executive Michael Thorn says the study raises a number of very important questions.

"The alcohol industry has paid over \$374,000 to the LNP in the last three years and we need to be asking, what exactly is that money buying and what does industry expect for its largesse, because, clearly, anyone who gives way that kind of money expects something in return?" Mr Thorn said.

Since the Newman Government gained power decisions on alcohol regulation have been very favourable to alcohol industry interests, with both the *Red Tape Reduction Proposals for Liquor and Gaming* and the *Safe Night Out Strategy* resulting in a greater focus on individual responsibility and increased deregulation for the industry.



Foundation for Alcohol
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While other Australian jurisdictions have introduced measures to reduce trading hours in an effort to reduce alcohol harms, the Queensland Government instead saw fit to lift the moratorium on late trading for on licence venues.

Only days out from the 2015 State Election, Mr Thorn was critical of the Newman Government's failure to tackle alcohol harms in Queensland.

"We have a huge evidence-base at our disposal and we know what measures are most effective at reducing alcohol harms, and yet the Newman Government seems determined to avoid implementing any policies which would be viewed unfavourably by the industry. Politicians need to maintain their independence from alcohol industry influences and the only way to achieve that is to ban donations to Queensland political parties from the alcohol industry and their representatives," Mr Thorn said.

Mr Thorn (@MichaelTThorn) is available for interview.

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The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)** is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to stop the harm caused by alcohol. Alcohol harm in Australia is significant. Over 5,500 lives are lost every year and more than 157,000 people are hospitalised making alcohol one of our nation's greatest preventative health challenges.

For over a decade, FARE has been working with communities, governments, health professionals and police across the country to stop alcohol harms by supporting world-leading research, raising public awareness and advocating for changes to alcohol policy. In that time FARE has helped more than 750 communities and organisations, and backed over 1,400 projects around Australia.