



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

ALCOHOL INDUSTRY REPORT DENIES VIOLENCE LINK

14 January 2016: An alcohol industry funded report that claims alcohol is not a cause of violence has been debunked by Australian and New Zealand researchers.

Despite the extensive scientific evidence in alcohol addiction research, one of Australasia's largest alcohol producers, Lion Pty Ltd, commissioned a report from British anthropologist Dr Anne Fox on the causes of violence in night-time entertainment areas.

Dr Fox claimed that alcohol consumption was not a cause of violence, but instead, that beliefs regarding acceptable behaviour when drinking were to blame.

She recommended that children were educated regarding proper behaviour when drinking, parents were taught how to talk to their children about alcohol, and the public educated about acceptable drinking behaviour through media campaigns.

Researchers Nicki Jackson from the University of Auckland in New Zealand and Professor Kypros Kypri from the University of Newcastle in Australia, were appalled at the report's recommendations.

They have published a critique in the latest issue of the international peer-reviewed journal *Addiction*, addressing the key claims with reference to the scientific evidence.

Ms Jackson says that "these types of recommended approaches may modify a person's knowledge or attitude, but rarely their behaviour. Dr Fox has overstated the effectiveness of social marketing and alcohol education, and underplayed the causal role of alcohol in violence."

"The report is highly selective in the research used to support its recommendations. It fails to acknowledge the huge body of evidence concerning effective strategies for reducing violence, such as earlier cessation of sales in licensed premises," she says.

The paper cautions that Dr Fox's recommendations to direct attention away from alcohol, instead placing responsibility for anti-social behaviours on the cultural determinants of violence, deserve careful critique.

"Despite failing to meet even basic standards of research the report cannot be ignored, because the findings are being used by the alcohol industry to overturn licensing decisions and in submissions on public policy," says Professor Kypri.



Foundation for Alcohol
Research & Education

“We believe this was simply an effort by the alcohol industry to raise doubts about the existing evidence, which is strong. Employing ‘merchants of doubt’ is a strategy used by the fossil fuel industry to subvert science on global warming. Before that it was the tobacco industry funding research to focus attention on individuals rather than its products. This report should be viewed in the same way, as evidence that the alcohol industry will do whatever it takes to resist sensible regulation,” said Professor Kypri.

Public health organisations, including the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), have welcomed the analysis, which summarises concerns about the integrity of research commissioned by vested interests.

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn agrees with the researchers that the scientific evidence on alcohol-related violence far outweighs the arguments made in partisan studies such as Dr Fox’s.

“The recommendations in Dr Fox’s alcohol industry funded report are weak, imprecise, not supported by evidence and, critically, would at best take many generations to see any effect. It runs counter to the substantial body of persuasive global research, which meets the highest of academic standards and illustrates that addressing alcohol’s price, availability and promotion has an immediate impact on reducing alcohol-fuelled violence, anti-social behaviours, and patterns of risky drinking,” says Mr Thorn.

“Policymakers in Australia and New Zealand can make a meaningful difference by taking these simple proven steps. Any attempts by vested industry interests to cast doubt over such sensible evidence-based interventions are clearly placing profits before the health of the community,” Mr Thorn said.

ENDS

The full article, *A critique of Fox’s industry-funded report into the drivers of anti-social behaviour in the night-time economies of Australia and New Zealand*, will be available [online](#) from Thursday morning (as published in the UK on Wednesday night). A PDF copy of the embargoed article is available.

Media contacts:

Mr Michael Thorn	Amy Smith	0422 385 240
Professor Kypros Kypri		0448 898 814
Ms Nicki Jackson	Suzi Phillips	0421 416 396

Alcohol Truth is a Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education campaign that puts the facts at the forefront of discussion on alcohol. Alcohol Truth explores alcohol industry efforts to counter evidence-based strategies to tackle alcohol harm in Australia.

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. 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.