



Foundation for Alcohol  
Research & Education



**Political party responses to FARE's  
*2013 Election Platform: 10 ways to  
reduce alcohol harms***

SEPTEMBER 2013

## About the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is an independent charitable organisation working to prevent the harmful use of alcohol in Australia. Our mission is to help Australia change the way it drinks by:

- helping communities to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms;
- building the case for alcohol policy reform; and
- engaging Australians in conversations about our drinking culture.

Over the last ten years FARE has have invested more than \$115 million, helped 750 organisations and funded over 1,400 projects addressing the harms caused by alcohol misuse.

FARE is guided by the [World Health Organisation's Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol](#) for addressing alcohol-related harms through population-based strategies, problem-directed policies, and direct interventions.

If you would like to contribute to FARE's important work, call us on (02) 6122 8600 or email [fare@fare.org.au](mailto:fare@fare.org.au). All donations to FARE over \$2 are tax deductible.

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<sup>[1]</sup> World Health Organisation (2010). *Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

## Overview

On 4 July 2013 the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) wrote to the leaders of six political parties fielding candidates in the 2013 Federal Election, requesting responses to nine policy questions relating to FARE's *2013 Election Platform: 10 ways to reduce alcohol harms*. The following six parties were contact by FARE:

- the Australian Labor Party (the 'ALP'),
- the Liberal Party,
- the Australian Greens Party (the 'Greens'),
- the National Party of Australia (the 'Nationals'),
- the Democratic Labour Party, and
- Katter's Australia Party.

The nine policy questions posed to the parties were:

1. Does your party support the development of a National Alcohol Strategy with clear actions and targets?
2. Does your party support a volumetric tax on wine and abolishing the taxpayer funded WET rebate?
3. Does your party support the adoption of a mandatory pregnancy warning label for alcohol?
4. Does your party support the development of a social marketing campaign to raise awareness of the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol*?
5. Does your party support fully implementing the *Australian Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Action Plan*?
6. Does your party support closing the loophole in the Commercial Television Code of Practice that allows alcohol advertising to be broadcast on television before 8.30pm as an accompaniment to live sporting events?
7. Does your party support phasing out alcohol industry sponsorship of sporting and cultural events?
8. Does your party support the provision of funding to improve the uptake of structured screening and brief interventions for alcohol among General Practitioners and primary healthcare professionals?
9. Does your party support the development a Code of Conduct on Government engagement with the alcohol industry which removes the alcohol industry from processes on the development of preventive health policy?

FARE received responses from the ALP, the Liberal Party, the Greens and the Nationals. The responses received from the Liberal Party came from the Coalition Campaign Headquarters. At the time of publication the Democratic Labour Party and Katter's Australia Party had not provided FARE with responses.

Responses to the questions were then classified by FARE as a 'yes', 'no' or 'unclear' response.

## Summary of responses

The table below is an overview of the political parties' responses to the nine questions on alcohol policy posed by FARE.

✓ - yes

✗ - no

? - unclear

				
1. Development of a National Alcohol Strategy with clear actions and targets.	✗	?	✓	✓
2. A volumetric tax on wine and abolishing the taxpayer funded WET rebate.	?	✗	✓	✗
3. Adoption of a mandatory pregnancy warning label for alcohol.	?	?	✓	✓
4. Development of a social marketing campaign to raise awareness of the National Health and Medical Research Council's <i>Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol</i> .	?	✓	✓	✓
5. Fully implementing the <i>Australian Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Action Plan</i> .	✓	?	✓	?
6. Closing the loophole in the Commercial Television Code of Practice that allows alcohol advertising to be broadcast on television before 8.30pm as an accompaniment to live sporting events.	?	✗	✓	✗
7. Phasing out alcohol industry sponsorship of sporting and cultural events.	?	✗	✓	✗
8. Provision of funding to improve the uptake of structured screening and brief interventions for alcohol among General Practitioners and primary healthcare professionals.	?	✓	✓	✓
9. Development a Code of Conduct on Government engagement with the alcohol industry which removes the alcohol industry from processes on the development of preventive health policy.	?	✗	✓	✗

The table below summarises the number of 'yes', 'unclear' and 'no' responses to each of the nine alcohol policy questions relating to FARE's 2013 Election Platform.

	Yes	Unclear	No
	1	7	1
	2	3	4
	9	0	0
	4	1	4

## Party responses to FARE's 2013 Election Platform

The table below presents each party's responses *verbatim* to each of the nine alcohol policy questions relating to FARE's 2013 Election Platform.

				
<b>1. Does your party support the development of a National Alcohol Strategy with clear actions and targets?</b>	<p><b>No</b></p> <p>"The Labor Government's National Drug Strategy (2010-2015) provides the national framework for action to minimise the harms to individuals, families and communities from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. The Strategy takes a harm minimisation approach through supply, demand and harm reduction focused actions. It also recognises the importance of action at a national, state and local level to achieve change. Additionally, the Labor Government has specifically committed \$103.5 million towards the National Binge Drinking Strategy, and recently announced \$20 million towards an action plan to address Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders."</p>	<p><b>Unclear</b></p> <p>"The Coalition continues to support a national approach to high risk alcohol consumption. It was the previous Coalition government that implemented National Alcohol Strategies in 2001-2004 and again in 2006-2009 which the Federal Labor Government extended until 2011, and then let expire."</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p> <p>"The Australian Greens support the development of a National Alcohol Strategy with clear actions and targets."</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p> <p>"Yes, providing it is done in full consultation with all levels of government, industry, community organisations, and health service providers such as clinics and hospitals."</p>



	Unclear	No	Yes	No
<p><b>2. Does your party support a volumetric tax on wine and abolishing the taxpayer funded WET rebate?</b></p>	<p>"The Labor Government requested the Australian National Preventive Health Agency to investigate the public interest for a minimum floor price of alcohol. This process is underway through community consultation and Federal Labor will consider the advice once received."</p>	<p>"The Coalition has no plans to change the current arrangements for the taxation of alcohol. Unlike Labor, we will not make decisions from left field. We would not make changes whether introducing a volumetric tax on wine or abolishing the wine equalisation tax rebate, without taking the proposal to the Australian people at an election. The Coalition has indicated that if elected we will consult widely with the community about all aspects of the taxation system. Any proposed changes from the consultation process would be put to the nation for a mandate at the next election."</p>	<p>"The Greens support reform of alcohol taxation and a move to volumetric pricing as recommended by public health experts and the Henry Tax Review. In government the Greens would refer the issue to the Productivity Commission to assess the benefits of different models."</p>	<p>"The Nationals do not support a volumetric tax on wine or any changes to the Wine Equalisation Tax that disadvantage the Australian wine industry which is a major employer and exporter."</p>
<p><b>3. Does your party support the adoption of a mandatory pregnancy warning label for alcohol?</b></p>	<p><b>Unclear</b> "The Rudd Labor Government is working with non-government organisations, health providers and industry to support women to make healthy lifestyle choices during pregnancy, and to promote awareness of the health risks of consuming alcohol during</p>	<p><b>Unclear</b> "The Coalition continues to favour working with industry to implement voluntary labelling initiatives in the first instance. There is currently an independent evaluation into the success of voluntary pregnancy warning labels on alcoholic beverages being</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> "The Greens do not believe self-regulation in labelling has resulted in labels that could be supported from a public health standpoint. We support mandatory warning labels on alcoholic beverages, starting with a pregnancy label."</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> "Yes, provided it is not overstated and based on sound medical advice."</p>



**3. (Continued).**

pregnancy.

In 2011, the Federal Labor Government, together with states and territories, committed to providing industry with two years to adopt labels voluntarily before mandating for this change. The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing recently approved funding for an independent evaluation of the Industry's voluntary initiative. This will help to inform future actions of Government and by industry. Warning labels on alcohol products are only one part of the equation. Evidence suggests that point of sale information is vital to improve awareness and the impact of messages on labels. The Labor Government has provided funding for the development and promotion of point of sale information to supplement and explain the messages and risks on alcohol labels."

undertaken and we await the findings of this report to further inform any future decision making."



	Unclear	Yes	Yes	Yes
<p><b>4. Does your party support the development of a social marketing campaign to raise awareness of the National Health and Medical Research Council's <i>Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol</i>?</b></p>	<p>"The Labor Government is committed to changing Australia's drinking culture reducing the harm from alcohol. Work is already underway to promote the NHMRC Guidelines among health professionals. Specifically, the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education is funded to perform this activity. There is also a commitment to offer a competitive funding round to Medicare Locals, which will provide further support to promote guidelines on alcohol consumption including alcohol and pregnancy. We are working to raise awareness around the harms of risky drinking and have invested over \$103 million to the National Binge Drinking Strategy. As part of the Strategy, the <i>Be the Influence - Tackling Binge Drinking</i> social marketing campaign is about connecting with young people to bring about a cultural shift that encourages a more</p>	<p>"While the original guidelines of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMCR) regarding the safe consumption of alcohol were known by many due to concerted and long standing social marketing campaigns, the revised guidelines issued in 2009 have not been widely promoted and remain relatively unknown. The Coalition supports raising the awareness of the NHMRC's Guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol, including the use of social marketing campaigns as one method of doing so."</p>	<p>"The Australian Greens note FARE's research that shows awareness of the NHMRC guidelines is low, and support a social marketing campaign to raise awareness amongst the public of safe drinking behavior."</p>	<p>"Yes."</p>



4. (Continued).

responsible attitude towards alcohol consumption and to give them the tools to challenge the acceptability of binge drinking in their peer groups.”

5. Does your party support fully implementing the Australian Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Action Plan?

Yes

“The Labor Government has identified Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) as a priority area for work in minimising the health risks of drinking alcohol. On Tuesday 6 August, the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing announced a National Action Plan on FASD. The Rudd Labor Government is committed to reducing the health risks from drinking alcohol, especially for pregnant women or those planning pregnancy, and has made significant investment over several years in improving our understanding of FASD in Australia. We are building on this existing investment by committing a further \$20 million over four years towards a FASD Action Plan from 2013-14.”

Unclear

“The Coalition believes it is important to reduce the incidence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. We will continue to work with a range of stakeholders to inform future policy on this very important issue.”

Yes

“The Greens support the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Action Plan and would see it fully implemented.”

Unclear

“In principle we do, but we would need to seek further advice from the relevant agencies before firmly committing to such a program.”



**INTERNATIONALS**

**6. Does your party support closing the loophole in the Commercial Television Code of Practice that allows alcohol advertising to be broadcast on television before 8.30pm as an accompaniment to live sporting events?**

**Unclear**

“The Rudd Labor Government recognises that marketing is one element in addressing alcohol abuse. We support responsible advertising by industry, and will continue to work closely with industry groups to ensure the codes and standards that govern alcohol advertising align with community expectations. The Commercial Television Code of Practice is due to be reviewed by Free TV Australia later this year in consultation with the Australian Communications and Media Authority. The review will allow consideration of whether the current Code reflects community expectations surrounding the appropriateness of alcohol advertising during sports broadcasts. The Federal Labor Government has also asked the Australian National Preventive Health Agency to review the self-regulation of alcohol advertising.”

**No**

“The Coalition does not have plans to change the Commercial Television Code of Practice relating to alcohol advertising as an accompaniment to live sporting events.”

**Yes**

“The Australian Greens support action to legislatively close the loophole that allows alcohol advertisements to be broadcast on television during children’s viewing hours during sporting events.”

**No**

“We believe that with sensible controls in place to avoid targeting young and others at risk and to emphasise the use of alcohol in moderation, the community benefits gained from advertising revenue can continue to be enjoyed without the banning of advertising.”



**INTERNATIONALS**

**7. Does your party support phasing out alcohol industry sponsorship of sporting and cultural events?**

	<b>Unclear</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
	<p>“As part of the Federal Government’s National Binge Drink Strategy, \$25 million has been allocated to the Community Sponsorship Fund to serve as an alternative to alcohol sponsorship. The CSF has four objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the exposure of young people and children to alcohol imagery and branding.</li> <li>• Reduce the links between alcohol and sporting and cultural activities that young people are often involved in, and to provide support for community based organisations to educate their members about responsible drinking.</li> <li>• Provide support for community based organisations to provide alcohol free environments for minors.</li> <li>• Reduce harmful consumption of alcohol through appropriate responsible service of alcohol provisions at sporting and cultural events.</li> </ul>	<p>“The Coalition does not support phasing out alcohol industry sponsorship of sporting and cultural events.”</p>	<p>“The Australian Greens would like to see an end to the sponsorship of sports teams and sporting events by the alcohol industry and to see alcohol advertising phased out of sports entirely.”</p>	<p>“We believe that with sensible controls in place to avoid targeting young and others at risk and to emphasise the use of alcohol in moderation, the community benefits gained from advertising revenue can continue to be enjoyed without the banning of advertising.”</p>



**7. (Continued).**

This program covers a significant portion of sporting participants in the 15-24 demographic with around one million young Australians directly participating and many more involved indirectly through family, community and spectator participation. High profile sports including the Football Federation Australia, Basketball Australia, Netball Australia, Swimming Australia, Hockey Australia, Surfing Australia, Athletics Australia and Australia University Sport are involved.

The Federal Government has also allocated \$8.9 million to the Good Sports program. The program is helping more than 5,000 community sporting clubs across Australia better manage alcohol, making them healthy, safe and more family friendly environments for their communities. Sporting clubs who sign up to Good Sports program work through three levels of accreditation, must provide smoke-free environments and develop transport strategies to get



**7. (Continued).**

people home safely. By 2014, it's expected Good Sports will be working with 6,500 community sports clubs and reach two million Australians."

**8. Does your party support the provision of funding to improve the uptake of structured screening and brief interventions for alcohol among General Practitioners and primary healthcare professionals?**

**Unclear**

"The Rudd Labor Government has invested \$1.8 billion in Medicare Locals. Medicare Locals are organisations responsible for ensuring primary health care services are tailored to best meet the needs of each local community. We established Medicare locals, because we know patients and doctors benefit from local solutions to local challenges. Medicare Locals employ over 3,000 frontline health professionals nationally, including Drug & Alcohol coordinators. Medicare Locals are also funded to deliver a range of programs, which programs they deliver are based on an assessment of the health needs of their community. Medicare Locals are playing a very important role in the community. Medicare Locals

**Yes**

"The evidence is very strong that brief interventions in a primary care setting can significantly reduce alcohol consumption amongst those with risky drinking behaviour. This was identified in the national Preventative Health Taskforce report, "Australia: The Healthiest Country by 2020". The Coalition supports a stronger focus on brief interventions in a primary care setting to reduce alcohol consumption amongst those with risky drinking behaviour, and believe that there are significant gains to be made in this area."

**Yes**

"The Greens are supportive of this model of treatment and in government the Greens would work with medical and public health experts to design and implement protocols around screening and intervention by GPs."

**Yes**

"Yes, provided such intervention strategies are developed with medical and health care professionals."



8. (Continued).

will only be available under a Labor Government. The Coalition is on record a number of times promising to shut every Medicare Local – taking \$1.8 billion out of health care in Australia, and sacking over 3000 frontline health workers.”

9. Does your party support the development a Code of Conduct on Government engagement with the alcohol industry which removes the alcohol industry from processes on the development of preventative health policy?

Unclear

“The Federal Labor Government believes that it is important to work collaboratively with the alcohol industry on reducing the health risks of alcohol consumption. For example, Australian and New Zealand Ministers responsible for food regulation have been working with industry on pregnancy warning labels. A re-elected Rudd Labor Government would consider whether there is a need for a Code of Conduct.”

No

“The Coalition believes in the importance of working with all stakeholders in the development of preventative healthcare policy, and has no current plan to change this inclusive approach.”

Yes

“The Greens are disappointed with the pace of reform in the area of alcohol policy. We believe a key reason for this has been the government’s willingness to pursue self-regulation with the industry instead of formulating policy based on the best available public health evidence. The Greens would be willing to explore whether a Code of Conduct could remedy this situation. It is more important that government decide, as a matter of policy, that they will base public health reforms on evidence and unbiased advice and weight the opinions of interested parties such as industry appropriately.”

No

“We believe that to develop successful policy industry need to be involved. Therefore, we would not support the exclusion of the alcohol industry from the process. Obviously in the development of preventative health policy the influence of the various parties would be weighted towards health professionals.”



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