



FIONA NASH
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR HEALTH, REPRESENTING THE PRIME MINISTER,
FARE'S LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION TO
PREVENT ALCOHOL-RELATED FAMILY & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
17 JUNE 2015

Good morning all, it is a great pleasure to be here, representing the Prime Minister, for FARE's launch of the National Framework for Action to Prevent Alcohol-Related Family and Domestic Violence.

First and foremost I want to acknowledge Ms Rosie Batty, Australian of the Year, who is with us today, for her personal fortitude, courage and leadership in speaking out on this important issue.

I would also like to also welcome with us today, Mr Andrew Fairley, FARE Chairman and Mr Michael Thorn CEO of FARE and Ms Moo Baulch CEO of Domestic Violence NSW.

I know that the Framework has been something that FARE has invested a lot of time, effort and resources into over the last 9 months. I thank all involved in the formulation of this report for their work.

This framework is both important and timely.

Important, because alcohol-related family and domestic violence is a challenge to all of us – to all levels of society, to governments, to law enforcement authorities, to health institutions and, of course, to individuals.

Timely, because I do believe there is a growing recognition of the problem of alcohol-related family and domestic violence right across Australia – and, with that, a growing realisation that the time is right for something to be done about it – for action.

It will require commitment from everyone – a commitment that says, unequivocally – ‘enough is enough’

Stopping the violence is a national priority for this Government and we must all seize this opportunity to work together to create real and sustainable cultural and attitudinal change.

I take heart from some of the latest stats. The 2013 National Drug Strategy Household Survey continues a positive trend that shows more young people have been heeding warnings against excessive alcohol consumption. Fewer 12-17 year olds are drinking alcohol and the proportion abstaining has increased significantly between 2010 and 2013, from 64 per cent to 72 per cent.

While the Survey does indicate that people aged 18-24 years are more likely to drink at harmful levels than the rest of the adult population, it also shows a significant decrease in very high risk alcohol use in 2013 compared to 2010. So, it’s movement – and it’s movement in the right direction.

There is a lot of good work going on around this country at the moment in tackling the harms – physical, social, economic and health – caused by alcohol-related family and domestic violence – and FARE’s National Framework will help to inform the debate as we go forward.

The Australian Government's investments to address domestic violence include \$100 million over four years to support the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children, as well as the recently announced \$30 million national awareness campaign.

We've also restored \$25.5 million in funding for Legal Aid Commissions, community legal centres and Indigenous legal service providers, aimed at supporting victims of domestic violence.

Funding of \$6 million has gone towards the Northern Territory's \$18 million Domestic and Family Violence Reduction Strategy; and funding to the White Ribbon campaign has been increased by \$1 million over four years.

Our investment was reinforced last month with an extra \$4 million for the 1800RESPECT hotline so it can continue to meet increased demand on its services.

More recently, my colleague Senator Michaelia Cash, as Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women, announced more than \$500 million for frontline services in 2015-16, which provide support to vulnerable Australians including women experiencing violence. This includes \$230 million to extend the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness for two years to 2017, with funding priority given to frontline services focusing on women and children experiencing domestic and family violence, and on homeless youth under 18.

A Domestic Violence Advisory Panel has been created and has held its first meeting, led by former Victorian Police Commissioner Ken Lay, our Australian of the Year Rosie Batty, and Heather Nancarrow, who brings more than 30 years' experience on the prevention of violence against women.

The panel's purpose is to advise the Council of Australian Governments on where current gaps in dealing with this shocking issue exist and make recommendations on how governments can best respond.

As Senator Cash has pointed out, the Advisory Panel will focus on presenting innovative, practical and deliverable proposals to make a real and lasting difference.

As well, the Australian Government is committed to promoting responsible consumption of alcohol through a range of measures, and through increased education using the National Health and Medical Research Council's Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol, so that Australians can make informed decisions.

This approach includes considering broader strategies to reduce both short term and lifetime risks of alcohol related harm. The Government is especially interested in initiatives that have been proven to result in better health outcomes.

The Government is also committed to increasing awareness among Australians about the dangers of harmful drinking. We are particularly concerned about the culture of binge drinking among young people, and the violence and other harms that can result.

The Australian Government welcomes and supports initiatives being implemented by state governments to address alcohol and drug fuelled violence.

We will continue to work with states and territories, parents and communities to tackle alcohol related violence as well as with the alcohol industry in the challenge to get the balance right.

The National Drug Strategy is based on an over-arching harm minimisation approach and is overseen by the InterGovernmental Committee on Drugs, comprising senior government officials from health and law enforcement agencies from each state and territory government and the Commonwealth.

The existing National Drug Strategy is due for revision by the end of 2015 – and development of the next National Drug Strategy by the IGCD is under way. Stakeholder consultation is a key part of this work. So too are publications that raise important issues, questions and pathways for improvement – such as the national framework developed by FARE – which will be so important in ensuring the Strategy will make a difference.

Once finalised, the Strategy will provide a framework to guide actions by governments, communities and service providers to minimise drug and alcohol related harms over the next five years.

Alongside this, work is also commencing on the next National Alcohol Strategy, which will build on existing progress, infrastructure and frameworks in place at local, state and national levels. It will also be informed by evidence of what works to reduce alcohol-related harm, and – once again – by an extensive stakeholder consultation process.

Pending Ministerial endorsement, the next National Alcohol Strategy is expected to be implemented from 2016. This timetable has been set to ensure alignment and consistency with the new National Drug Strategy.

The reforms made in establishing the Australian National Advisory Council on Alcohol and Drugs recognises the need for our national advisory body to focus on alcohol as well as drugs. ANACAD's key role will be to provide advice to the Government on a range of national drug and alcohol issues to ensure the Government is well placed to respond. The Australian Government has requested that the ANACAD provide advice on alcohol related harm as a priority area.

A range of Government-funded programs and initiatives are aimed at changing behaviours and attitudes, and at providing frontline health services and drug and alcohol treatment services.

The Government has committed \$19 million over four years to continue the Good Sports Programme, which aims to change behaviour and attitudes around alcohol consumption through partnerships with more than 6,500 sporting clubs.

Funding of \$1 million will help the Hello Sunday Morning team to expand their online support service. The Hello Sunday Morning team will further develop a suite of evidence-based online programmes that support people to make a long-term 40 per cent reduction in their overall alcohol consumption.

Some \$200,000 in 2014-15 is supporting the successful Danny Green Coward Punch campaign to reduce alcohol-related violence.

The Government has also committed \$9.2 million towards the National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Action Plan. This action plan ensures Government funds are directed at the frontline of dealing with this important issue –

providing better diagnosis and management, development of best practice interventions and services to support high-risk women.

Funding of more than \$200 million is being allocated to alcohol and drug treatment services, peak organisations, research and a number of prevention activities.

Under the National Drug Strategy, the Government also provides core funding to three National Drug Research Centres of Excellence – the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre; National Drug Research Institute; and National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction.

So you see, there is a lot of work being done – but we don't shy away from the fact that there is always more to do- Government will continue to work with state and territory health agencies, law enforcement, the alcohol industry, families communities to reduce the harm caused by unsafe alcohol consumption.

And here lies the key– only by working together as a true team will we ultimately have greater success in minimising the crippling impacts of alcohol related family and domestic violence.

This is a national problem demanding a national solution – and the National Framework for Action to Prevent Alcohol-Related Family and Domestic Violence, is an important contribution to that solution as we move forward – together.

For more information, contact the Minister's Office on 02 6277 7440