

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR
ACTION ON ALCOHOL



2018 ALCOHOL POLICY SCORECARD

Benchmarking Australian state and territory governments' progress towards preventing and reducing alcohol-related harm

MARCH 2019



ABOUT THE NAAA

The National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA) is a coalition of health and community organisations from across Australia, which was formed in 2009 with the goal of reducing alcohol-related harm. Today, the NAAA represents more than 40 organisations from across Australia. The NAAA's members cover a diverse range of interests, including public health, law enforcement, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, child and adolescent health, and family and community services.

This broad coalition of interests highlights the widespread concern in Australia about alcohol-related harm, and emphasises the importance of cross-sector community partnerships. The far-reaching impacts of alcohol-related harm urgently require a coordinated strategy across Australian governments to drive and sustain action on this pressing community issue.

MEMBERS INCLUDE:

Alcohol and Drug Foundation	Injury Matters
Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT	Inner South Community Health Service
Anglicare Australia	Lives Lived Well
Australasian College for Emergency Medicine	McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth
Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and Other Drugs	Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation
Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance	National Heart Foundation Australia
Australian Dental Association	NOFASD
Australian Health Promotion Association	Pedestrians Council of Australia
Australian Injury Prevention Network	People's Alcohol Action Coalition (Alice Springs)
Cancer Council South Australia	Police Federation of Australia
Cancer Council Victoria	Public Health Advocacy Institute WA
Centre for Alcohol Policy Research	Public Health Association of Australia
Centre for Youth Substance Abuse Research	Queensland Alcohol and Drug Research and Education Centre
Dalgarno Institute	Royal Australasian College of Physicians
Deakin University	Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
Drug ARM Australasia	Russell Family Fetal Alcohol Disorders Association
Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education	School of Medicine & Public Health, University of Newcastle
Game Changer	The Salvation Army - Southern Territory
Kidney Health Australia	Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre
Independent Order of Rechabites Fraternity (Victoria) Inc	UnitingCare ReGen
Independent Order of Rechabites Queensland District No. 87 Inc.	Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies

SUMMARY

The Alcohol Policy Scorecard (the Scorecard) is an initiative of the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA) and aims to raise awareness of progress in alcohol policy development, recognise good practice in alcohol policy, and motivate governments to improve alcohol policy.

This is NAAA's fifth Alcohol Policy Scorecard and provides detailed results of state and territory alcohol policy actions from 2018.

The Scorecard rates states and territories on nine criteria on their overall performance for policy implementation in 2018.

A Fizzer Award is given to the worst performer and an award is given to the best performer. Both of these categories are assessed on a five-point scale by three separate alcohol policy experts in each state and territory.

The Scorecard also provides information on the actual change in scores and rankings between 2017 and 2018.

RESULTS

Fizzer - New South Wales

New South Wales (NSW) won the Fizzer Award for the overall worst alcohol policies and implementation in 2018.

Best performer - Northern Territory

Northern Territory (NT) won overall best performer in 2018. The NT's overall ranking improved by five places from 2017 to 2018.

Rank of states and territories for overall performance in 2018

	NT	WA	QLD	VIC	SA	ACT	TAS	NSW
Performance in 2018	1	2	2	4	5	6	7	8
	68%	56%	56%	53%	50%	48%	32%	28%

Changes in overall performance scores between 2017 and 2018

JURISDICTION	RANK	SCORE (%)	SCORE % (RANKING) 2017	PROGRESS SINCE 2017	RANKING CHANGE
NT	1	68	38 (6)	Increase	+ 5
WA	2	56	51 (3)	Increase	+ 1
Queensland	2	56	66 (1)	Decrease	- 1
Victoria	4	53	40 (5)	Increase	+ 1
SA	5	50	64 (2)	Decrease	- 3
ACT	6	48	51 (4)	Decrease	- 2
Tasmania	7	32	23 (8)	Increase	+ 1
NSW	8	28	24 (7)	Decrease	- 1

INTRODUCTION

The Alcohol Policy Scorecard (the Scorecard) is an initiative of the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA) and aims to raise awareness of progress in alcohol policy development, recognise good practice in alcohol policy, and motivate governments to improve alcohol policy.

This is NAAA's fifth Alcohol Policy Scorecard and provides detailed results from 2018.

ASSESSMENT

The Scorecard rates states and territories on nine criteria on their overall performance for policy implementation in 2018.

A Fizzer Award is given to the worst performer and an award is given to the best performer.

The Scorecard consists of nine alcohol policy criteria:

1. A whole-of-government strategic plan for the prevention and reduction of alcohol-related harm
2. Regulating physical availability
3. Modifying the drinking environment
4. Drink driving countermeasures
5. Education and persuasion
6. Treatment and early intervention
7. Data management and research
8. Transparent and independent policy
9. Restrictions on marketing.

For each of these, three alcohol policy experts rate the state or territory using a five-point scale relating to the overall performance for policy implementation. Assessor scores were averaged and transformed to a proportion for the purposes of this report. Criteria two and three were weighted 50% more heavily than the other criteria because of the overwhelming evidence supporting their effectiveness.

The Scorecard also provides information on the actual change in scores and rankings between 2017 and 2018.

THE FIZZER

Fizzer - New South Wales

New South Wales (28 per cent) won the Fizzer Award for the overall worst alcohol policies and implementation in 2018. Tasmania (32 per cent) and the ACT (48 per cent) also received scores below a pass mark of 50 per cent.

New South Wales - Winner - Fizzer

OVERALL SCORE AND RANKING	28% [8TH]
Change in overall ranking between 2017 and 2018	-1

ASSESSOR COMMENTS

'There is no effective whole of government approach to the prevention and reduction in alcohol related harms in NSW.'

'Industry is significantly involved in policy decision making. Liquor Act interpretation is geared towards supporting industry growth rather than community safety.'

'The input and interest of licensees are currently being prioritised over health and community interests. These problems are exacerbated by the regression in transparency around developing and reviewing policy.'

SUMMARY

The NSW Government does not have an Alcohol Strategy in place. In 2018, the NSW Health Alcohol and other Drug Strategy was being finalised, but this strategy will not address the whole-of-government measures across portfolios needed to reduce the harms from alcohol. The restrictions around trading hours for licensed premises that were introduced in 2014 were reviewed in 2017 and relaxed.

Throughout 2018 there were attempts to further relax these measures and exemptions were often applied for and approved. There were also attempts from the NSW regulator to remove key community safeguards without proper consultation.

The NSW Government also failed to introduce several of the recommendations arising from the Alcoholic Beverages Advertising Prohibition Bill. Further, concerns remain at the influence that the alcohol industry has on policy development in NSW.

THE BEST PERFORMER

Best performer – Northern Territory

The NT (68 per cent) won the overall best performer. WA (56 per cent), Queensland (56 per cent), Victoria (53 per cent) and SA (50 per cent) also received a pass mark of 50 per cent or above.

Northern Territory – Winner – Best Overall Performance

OVERALL SCORE AND RANKING	68% [1ST]
Change in overall ranking between 2017 and 2018	+5

ASSESSOR COMMENTS

‘[The *Alcohol Harm Minimisation Action Plan*] is a comprehensive plan in a jurisdiction where patterns of alcohol consumption, and associated harms, are the highest in Australia.’

‘There has been very significant change in the NT during the assessment period.’

‘There has been substantial progress in implementing the recommendations within the Action Plan.’

SUMMARY

Across 2018 the NT Government undertook extensive work to implement alcohol policy and program changes arising from the *Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review* (The Riley Review). In February 2018 the NT Government responded to the Riley Review supporting all but one of the 220 recommendations. The NT Government’s Alcohol Harm Minimisation Action Plan 2018-19 outlined immediate actions to be taken to progress the implementation of these recommendations.

The NT Government made substantial progress against introducing these recommendations with more than 50 implemented and further consultation and redrafting of legislation and policies flagged for 2019.

An implementation team was also established within the Chief Minister’s Department to facilitate communication about, and oversee progress with, implementation of the Action Plan, including collaboration with stakeholders.

Some of the specific changes that were introduced in 2018 include:

- The establishment of the NT Liquor Commission, an independent statutory authority responsible for regulating liquor licensing
- The establishment of the Alcohol Review Implementation Team (ARIT) within the Department of the Chief Minister to oversee the implementation of the reforms
- The introduction of a minimum unit price or floor price of \$1.30 per standard drink
- The introduction of a new power for the Police Commissioner to suspend a licence for up to 48 hours in specified circumstances, including riotous conduct or a breach of the peace
- Consultation on the introduction of risk-based licensing
- The release of the Road Safety Action Plan 2018-22 which includes a first year action to introduce a reduced BAC limit for supervising drivers
- The development of public education campaigns, including a targeted program on ‘sly grogging’ in remote communities
- Commissioning a study on the demand for treatment and rehabilitation facilities
- Funding for research and evaluation activities.

Rank of states and territories for overall performance in 2018

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Performance in 2018	1	2	2	4	5	6	7	8
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Changes in scores

The biggest increase in overall ranking was seen by the NT, whose overall ranking improved by an impressive five places from 2017 to 2018.

Changes in overall performance scores between 2017 and 2018

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Tasmania	7	32	23 (8)	Increase	+ 1
NSW	8	28	24 (7)	Decrease	- 1

Snapshot of the alcohol policy landscape in each state and territory

JURISDICTION	RANK	SCORE (%)
NT	1	The NT Government responded to the <i>Alcohol Policies and Legislation Review</i> by supporting all but one of the 220 recommendations. Actions to implement these recommendations commenced immediately with the <i>Alcohol Harm Minimisation Action Plan 2018-19</i> and the implementation of the Australia's first minimum unit or floor price. The re-establishment of an independent Liquor Commission also commenced.
WA	2	The WA Government released the <i>Mental Health Promotion, Mental Illness, Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Plan 2018-2025</i> in October 2018. Amendments to the <i>Liquor Control Act</i> in 2018 support the licensing authority to manage the number of packaged liquor outlets. Restrictions on alcohol marketing on public transport were phased in from mid-2018. The WA Government also supports world leading public education campaigns under the ' <i>Alcohol. Think Again</i> ' program.
Queensland	2	The Queensland Government remained committed to implementing and evaluating evidence-based measures to reduce alcohol harm in late-night entertainment precincts. The Drug Court pilot commenced, which now includes alcohol. The Qld Mental Health Commission also released the <i>Shifting minds: Queensland Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategic Plan 2018-2023</i> which set the five-year direction. The Government has also shown a strong commitment to supporting FASD diagnostic services.

JURISDICTION	RANK	SCORE (%)
Victoria	4	The Victorian Government is undertaking a phased review of the <i>Liquor Control Reform Act 1998</i> . In the first phase of the review, a number of reforms were introduced, including a ban on alcohol advertising near schools and reforms to ensure children cannot be served alcohol at on-premise venues, and to prevent delivery of alcohol to children. In 2018, the Victorian Government also introduced bans on alcohol advertising on trams and trains under its contracts with private operators. A second phase of the review has been promised for 2019.
SA	5	The SA Government has the <i>South Australian Alcohol and Drug Strategy 2017-2021</i> in place. Reforms to the <i>Liquor Licensing Act 1997</i> to stop the secondary supply of alcohol and increase penalties for serving alcohol to minors came into force in September 2018. This brought them up to the same standard as all other jurisdictions. The SA Government has agreed to wholesale data collection; however, this has not been introduced. Plans to introduce risk-based licensing have been put on hold and proposed restrictions to alcohol advertising on public transport have been stopped.
ACT	6	The ACT Government released the <i>ACT Drug Strategy Action Plan 2018-2021</i> in 2018 and includes an action to conduct evidence-informed alcohol public education and social marketing campaigns. The plan does not address ways to reduce harm associated with the way alcohol is made available in the ACT. The ACT Government has developed a Drug and Alcohol Court. There continues to be concerns about the low rate of RBT in the ACT.
Tasmania	7	<i>Alcohol Action Framework 2011-2015</i> is substantially out of date and has been extended to 2019. An <i>Alcohol Dynamic Stimulation Model</i> has been commissioned to inform the revised Framework development which was expected for 2019. Concerns continue about the extent of influence the alcohol industry has on alcohol policy and regulation.
NSW	8	The NSW Government does not have an Alcohol Strategy in place. The restriction of trading hours for licensed premises, introduced in 2014, were reviewed in 2017 and relaxed. Throughout 2018 there were attempts to further relax these measures and exemptions were often applied for and approved. There were also attempts from the NSW regulator to remove key community safeguards without proper consultation. The NSW Government also failed to introduce several of the recommendations arising from the Alcoholic Beverages Advertising Prohibition Bill. Further, concerns remain at the influence that the alcohol industry has on policy development in NSW.

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