

To: Minister Hunt

Subject: NATIONAL ALCOHOL STRATEGY STAKEHOLDER ROUNDTABLE

Minister Hunt..... **Date:** / /

Comments:

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Date / Time: 9:30am – 1pm, Tuesday 24 July 2018.

Minister Hunt is speaking for 5mins (at 9:30am) to open the roundtable.

Location: Main Committee Room, Parliament House, Canberra.

Purpose: National Alcohol Strategy Roundtable.

Key Attendees: A diverse range of stakeholders representing key sectors are participating in the NAS roundtable. A list of all attendees is provided at **Attachment B**.

Key Issues:

1. Stakeholder Roundtable - targeted consultation

- Following the large number of submissions received through the National Alcohol Strategy (NAS) public consultation process undertaken earlier this year, you wrote to MDAF colleagues seeking support for further consultation.
- At its June 2018 meeting, MDAF agreed to undertake further consultation through a roundtable to discuss remaining issues and make suggestions on areas for consideration by Ministers. A copy of the MDAF communique is attached (**Attachment C**).
- Your Office has been liaising closely with the Department in the lead up to the roundtable, and has approved all documentation that has been circulated to participants and MDAF jurisdictional observers.

- You will be attending the meeting for 30 minutes from 9.30 to 10am, and your opening speech (**Attachment D**) is expected to last for 5 mins.
- The roundtable is being facilitated by independent expert^{s 22}
- Discussions at the roundtable will be based on the following four domains in which the public consultation highlighted divergent views:
 - Targeted vs whole-of-population approaches;
 - Governance – role and membership of the proposed Expert Reference Group;
 - Targets and key performance indicators; and
 - Appropriateness of the identified opportunities for action.
- Following the roundtable, the MDAF Secretariat will prepare advice for MDAF and NDSC consideration.
- At the June MDAF meeting, members confirmed their commitment to finalising the NAS by the end of 2018.

Talking points

- On 14 June 2018, the Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum agreed that a targeted stakeholder roundtable would be held to discuss the National Alcohol Strategy and provide options for consideration by Ministers.
- Ministers agreed that the roundtable would feature a diverse range of stakeholders representing key sectors including public health, academia, emergency medicine, industry, service delivery and law enforcement.
- Representatives from industry only made up a small proportion of the overall total (5 out of 28)
 - It is important that representatives from key sectors, including industry, that play a role in preventing and reducing the harms associated with the misuse of alcohol are consulted.
 - Policy decisions are for Governments to make following consultation.
- Ministers nominated attendees for the roundtable and agreed to the four areas that discussion would be focused on.
- The roundtable presents an opportunity for key stakeholders to engage directly in discussion on the areas of contention within the draft strategy and to make suggestions on areas for consideration by the Forum.

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2. NAS public consultation

- The public consultation process for the NAS earlier this year drew large interest from stakeholders across a range of sectors as well as the general public with 101 submissions received.
- Overall, stakeholders are supportive of key aspects of the NAS, including the underpinning principles and broad priority areas of focus. However, stakeholders remain divided on particular aspects such as; targeted verses whole-of-population approaches and the role and membership of the proposed expert reference group.

- In addition, the lack of firm commitment to action was also highlighted by stakeholders. It is important to note the draft NAS is not intended to be an action plan, but rather a guiding framework with opportunities for action which may be implemented by jurisdictions as appropriate.
- These responses have been analysed and summarised in the attached Consultation Report (**Attachment E**).

Traditional Custodians:

Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples.

Key Stakeholder Engagement:

You have met with a number of the stakeholders that are participating in the NAS roundtable.

Sensitivities:

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Attachments:

<u>Attachment A:</u>	Key discussion points and background
<u>Attachment B:</u>	Agenda and Attendees
<u>Attachment C:</u>	MDAF June 2018 Communique
<u>Attachment D:</u>	Speech
<u>Attachment E:</u>	NAS Consultation report

Key discussion points and background on the National Alcohol Strategy

Pricing and taxation

- The overarching objective of the draft NAS is to reduce alcohol-related harm in Australia. It identifies pricing and taxation reform as opportunities, among others, to achieve this.
- The Strategy proposes there are opportunities for both targeted and broader population-based measures, and recognises that efforts need to be focused on a range of strategies, including pricing mechanisms, for preventing and minimising alcohol-related harms in all locations where harms occur as a result of alcohol consumption.

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- Overall:
 - Pricing reform options have been included in previous iterations of the NAS.
 - While the Commonwealth controls the taxation options in relation to alcohol taxation reform (which incidentally are supported by many parts of the alcohol industry) the issue of a minimum floor price sits with the states and territories.

Ongoing industry involvement in policy

- Industry groups are critical of the draft NAS explicitly stating that there is no role for industry in setting or developing a national alcohol policy.
- This is consistent with a recommendation of the World Health Organisation to reduce the likelihood of vested interests influencing evidence-based policy options to improve public health outcomes. Similar recommendations exist in relation to tobacco industry.
 - This statement does not indicate that industry is not a stakeholder (or prevent consultation). The draft NAS includes many references throughout in relation to the role and responsibility industry has, it is proposed that their role in setting and developing policy is not consistent with managing real or perceived conflicts.
 - The Department has maintained a long-standing and strong delineation between consultation and formal policy development.
 - Policy decisions are for Governments to make following consultation.

Finalisation of the NAS

- Ministers will consider advice following targeted consultation and will consider a final NAS in late-2018.
- While the Australian Government can put forward an argument to the states and territories for change in relation to the draft NAS, all changes need to be agreed by the MDAF.
- The NAS is intended to operate as a national framework to guide future action by governments – it does not commit any government to a particular action, although it

includes a high level commitment to reducing the level of alcohol-related harm in Australia.

- The draft NAS includes a mix of national, local and targeted opportunities for action against broad-based priority areas.
- The identified opportunities for action are built off a strong evidence-base for achieving reductions in harmful alcohol consumption.
- Pricing reform (and other measures designed around reducing supply at a population level) were always likely to receive a negative reaction from some industry groups.

Background

- As a sub-strategy of the National Drug Strategy 2017-2026, the NAS outlines Australia's agreed approach to preventing and minimising alcohol-related harms and is overseen by the MDAF.
 - You co-Chair the MDAF, and membership consists of Ministers from across Australia with responsibility for alcohol and other drug policy from the health and justice/law enforcement portfolios from each jurisdiction.
 - On 27 November 2017, members agreed that the draft NAS will undergo a public consultation process to further inform the strategic direction and priorities of the Strategy.
 - Following consultation, the NAS will be revised and considered by Ministers at their next MDAF meeting in 2018.

Previous NAS Consultation Process

- A public consultation process was undertaken in late 2015, consisting of face-to-face workshops, key informant interviews and an online survey and written submission process.

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