

PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA  
NORTHERN TERRITORY BRANCH  
**MEDIA ALERT**



Public Health Association  
AUSTRALIA

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[www.phaa.net.au](http://www.phaa.net.au)

## Voting for a healthy Territory in 2016

Health matters to everyone, yet has received little attention in the lead up to the election on Saturday. The Public Health Association of Australia NT Branch asked all political parties and independent candidates six questions about key health related issues in a recent survey. Eleven candidates responded including the ALP leader Michael Gunner, two Greens candidates (Dupuy in Braitling and Bray in Drysdale) and eight independents (Mungatopi in Arafura; Knowles in Blain; Gould and Melky in Braitling; Kerle in Drysdale; Eldridge in Fong Lim, Purick in Goyder, Dean in Katherine). There was no interest expressed in health issues from the other parties.

**Fracking** risks the health of people, water and the climate. Investment in fracking to extract oil and gas delays efforts to tackle climate change. A moratorium, or permanent ban, on fracking was supported by ALP, Greens, Knowles in Blain, Gould and Melky in Braitling, Kerle in Drysdale; Eldridge in Fong Lim and Dean in Katherine.

NT trails the rest of Australian in access to standard health care, including **medical termination of pregnancy**. Current NT law does not allow doctors to prescribe this. Purick's great effort to change this law was blocked. Now ALP and the Greens want to change this as do Knowles in Blain, Kerle in Drysdale, Eldridge in Fong Lim. These candidates care about the needs of Territory women.

**Alcohol** causes severe social and health consequences in the NT. We have the highest consumption and most harm in Australia. Safe and fair ways to limit the harm of alcohol are supported by ALP and the Greens, together with Knowles in Blain, Eldridge in Fong Lim, and Purick in Goyder.

Deaths on Territory roads are a health issue we can avoid. **Safe speeds** reduce road deaths, and are supported by ALP, and the Greens, and independents Mungatopi in Arafura; Knowles in Blain and Eldridge in Fong Lim.

There is a **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023** drawn up by Aboriginal people and organisations in partnership with government. Aboriginal people in NT are so far missing the benefits of this plan, since our government has yet to agree to it. The ALP support the principle of a plan and would review why it has not been signed. Others who agree with the concept of a national plan include independents Knowles in Blain; Gould in Braitling.

Lastly the Public Health Association asked candidates about support for **healthy food** in remote Aboriginal communities. We see support for progress in this area from the ALP and Greens, and independents Eldridge in Fong Lim and Dean in Katherine.

Overall the ALP and the Greens intend to govern to improve our health and would be supported by Independents Knowles in Blain, Kerle in Drysdale; Eldridge in Fong Lim and Dean in Katherine. Public health professionals urge voters to consider the health of their vote.

**For further information/comment:**

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