Belated alcohol strategy is a missed opportunity

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is pleased the National Alcohol Strategy 2019-2028 is finally out but said it lacked ambition to prevent Australians suffering adverse health impacts of alcohol consumption.

“It is good news to have this strategy now finalised, albeit many years in the making and with too much influence from the alcohol industry,” PHAA CEO Terry Slevin said.

“The strategy recommends important policy options that can reduce alcohol related harm via both national and state level efforts.”

“All governments should invest in and commit to reducing the health and social burden of excess alcohol consumption,” Mr Slevin said.

“It is a shame the federal government has again ruled out the option of volumetric tax on alcohol, which is a fairer and more sensible way of taxing alcohol.

“This is about stopping people from getting injured, ill or dying due to alcohol, so why rule out this option?”

“The current alcohol tax system is a mess and is acknowledged as such by anyone who has considered the tax system in Australia.”

“We hope this important reform will again be considered at a time in the near future.“

“Let’s remember that alcohol is Australia’s number one drug problem. Harmful levels of consumption are a major health issue, associated with increased risk of chronic disease, injury and premature death,” Mr Slevin said.

“The announcement of funding for drug treatment services is modest but we welcome the support for a report assessing the social cost of alcohol.”

“When that report is completed we hope it will influence alcohol policy into the future.”

*The PHAA is Australia pre-eminent public health organisation with a charter to promote and advocate for health prevention.*

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