



**Dalgarno**  
INSTITUTE

# Media Release



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## ISSUE: *Drinking Ban register – Does it go far enough?*

[*“Permissibility, availability and accessibility - all increase consumption.”* Dalgarno Institute.]

“According to recent statements from the Federal Government, there is a strong recommendation that Banned Drinking Registers should be considered for retention as, ‘they’ve worked’.

When asked, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs - Jenny Macklin, what evidence was that it worked, she reported to ABC’s Lateline that *‘The evidence really is coming from the Alice Springs Hospital, just to use one example; the evidence was also provided from the previous Northern Territory government that the banned drinkers register had actually seen a reduction in anti-social incidents.’*<sup>1</sup>

In a statement released on Friday, NT Treasurer and Attorney-General Delia Lawrie said that

*“Alcohol is the biggest cause of crime in the Territory with 60 per cent of all assaults and 67 per cent of all domestic violence incidents involving alcohol, costing our community an estimated \$642 million a year.”* She went on to say about this initiative that *“The problem drinker bans provide a direct health intervention for problem drinkers without criminalising alcoholism.”*<sup>2</sup>

*“The key to any intervention and prevention based initiative is that it will be/is as good as the agencies that monitor and/or enforce it”,* said Shane Varcoe, Executive Director of the Dalgarno Institute. Mr Varcoe went on to add, *“Much like RSA (Responsible Serving of Alcohol) it is the point of dispensing that these initiatives fail and if strong incentives for compliance by liquor outlets are not partnered with the Banned Drinkers Register, this initiative will also struggle to maximise its potential. Whilst it appears that this ‘Register’ initiative has (arguably) worked, though it has its detractors, its frame of reference is too limited.”*

The Dalgarno Institute and its growing coalition have been long-time supporters and initiators of effective interventions, that curb violence, protect women and children and make for better public amenity, but we would join in some detractors concerns regarding this initiative in declaring that it does not go far enough and a case of racial discrimination may even be made.

Currently this scheme is seen as curbing an Indigenous Australian’s social problem, but we all know the problem is more widespread than that, and in some areas/circumstances it is the non-indigenous drinking population that need to be subject to the same Drinking Ban Register – just look at the admission Statistics for St Vincent’s Hospital near Kings Cross in Sydney.

### The Dalgarno Institute

- a) **Supports Banned Drinkers Registered for all Australian’s who fit the criteria.**
- b) **Tighter controls on and tougher penalties for breaches of R.S.A legislation.**
- c) **The raising of the drinking age back to 21**
- d) **The continual investigation and addressing of causal/culture issues.**

Communications Liaison – [research@dalgarnoinstitute.org.au](mailto:research@dalgarnoinstitute.org.au)

<sup>1</sup> <http://jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/node/2226>

<sup>2</sup> <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/banned-drinker-register-for-the-nt-20110506-1ebjq.html>

**Dalgarno Institute**

[admin@dalgarnoinstitute.org.au](mailto:admin@dalgarnoinstitute.org.au)

P: 1300 975 002 F: 1300 952 551



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