

## COUNTRY LIBERALS

### MEDIA RELEASE

# MENZIES REPORT CARD – EPIC FAIL

Willem Westra van Holthe MLA

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"The Menzies School of Health Research has labelled the Katherine Alcohol Management Plan (AMP) as nothing more than 'a collection of ideas and intentions, many of them lacking clear objectives'," says Member for Katherine, Willem Westra van Holthe.

"In a new report released today, Menzies identifies a number of key measures that have significantly worsened since the inception of the AMP.

"Within six months of the commencement of the plan, Emergency Department (ED) admissions for mental and behavioural disorders as a result of alcohol use began to increase so that after 12 months, they were 8% higher than before the plan.

"Similarly, hospital separations for the same conditions were 16% higher in 2009 than for the same period in 2007 prior to introduction of the AMP.

"Hospital separations for injuries showed the same trend – up 18% for the first 6 months of 2008 compared to 2007. There were further increases in 2009.

"Worse still are the figures for assaults, which leapt 32% in the first half of 2009 when compared to the same period in 2007. Assault figures in Katherine remain on an upward trend.

"Disturbances and reports of anti-social behaviour have also climbed since the plan commenced and the number of apprehensions for public drunkenness continues to spiral upwards.

"For the period January to March 2009, apprehensions for public drunkenness had increased 21% from the same period the year before.

"While Minister for Alcohol Policy, Delia Lawrie, says decreases in pure alcohol consumption are her crowning achievement, the effects on the ground tell a different story.

"The Menzies Report confirms what I have been saying for a number of years – this Government's alcohol policies are failing the people of Katherine.

"And the Labor Government is clearly bereft of any new ideas to tackle this issue.

"They dressed up the old 2km law and called it a Dry Zone.

"They imposed take away restrictions on 100% of the population when less than 5% are problem drinkers.

"Their Alcohol Court experiment failed dismally, with only 19 referrals over 12 months resulting in the Clinician Nurse resigning due to boredom.

"There was no serious commitment to the AMP. There was no Responsible Drinking Campaign. No new accommodation

"Labor had an opportunity to adopt the Country Liberals' plan for the mandatory treatment of alcoholics and they couldn't even get that right.

"When it comes to managing the Territory's alcohol problems, Labor are incompetent and simply can't be trusted."

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