



MEDIA RELEASE  
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**NT Governments supports big business and alcohol access over community concerns for safety and health says the Indigenous National Health Leadership Forum**

The National Health Leadership Forum (NHLF) has called for the NT Government to listen to the concerns of the local community to reduce the easy access to alcohol by stopping the development of new liquor outlets.

The call comes after the NT Government has passed legislation that overrides the Independent Liquor Commission who declined the application for the development of new Dan Murphy outlet in Darwin. Alcohol is already freely available for consumption in the Northern Territory. The NT Government acknowledges that the Territory has the highest rate of alcohol consumption per person in Australia.

Ignoring the concerns of the local community in favour of big business, raises concerns about the NT Governments support for the public health and safety of the community, particularly for the three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that have in place a no-alcohol policy to address and regain control over the negative impact of alcohol.

“The Aboriginal health leadership within the NT have called on the NT Government to not support the opening of more liquor outlets, especially where they are located near vulnerable communities. It is also concerning that the NT Government has deliberately overridden independent decision-making processes because of the decisions do not suit”, said Donna Murray, Chair of NHLF.

“There are serious questions for the NT Government must immediately answer particularly why they have chosen to ignore the advice of the Liquor Commissioner, the Police, and the very legislation design to reduce the harmful effects of alcohol in the NT.”

“The Riley Review was undertaken due to the high levels of alcohol harm within the NT and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is the leading cause of preventable developmental disability in Australia. Consumption of alcohol generates both, short and long term risk of harm, and these incur costs to the healthcare system at levels greater than any rationale for approving further development of liquor outlets”

“We’re calling on the NT Government through the Director of Liquor Licensing to uphold the decision of the Independent Liquor Commission and not approve new alcohol outlets, especially the large-scale Dan Murphy development proposal.”

The NHLF is deeply concerned about the stresses on alcohol and other drug support services available in the NT.



“The Northern Territory Government must do better by Aboriginal people and urgently listen to and work with the Aboriginal communities to ensure culturally safe decision-making practices within its government. As a signatory to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap the NT Government should be listening to and working with the local Aboriginal Community Controlled Services when it comes to decisions that impact on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people.”

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