

## Surgeons offer support for alcohol floor price

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The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) has reaffirmed its support for a floor price on alcohol, following the introduction of the policy across the Northern Territory almost two weeks ago.

Head and neck surgeon and RACS NT Chair, Mr Mahiban Thomas, today stated the importance of giving the policy adequate time to demonstrate its effectiveness, before embarking on any knee-jerk reactions to scrap it.

“The Riley Review, which was commissioned by the NT Government last year, highlighted just how unhealthy the drinking culture in the NT has become. As a consequence we hold a long list of unenviable records, including the highest levels of both alcohol related hospitalisations and deaths in Australia,” Mr Thomas said.

“As surgeons we see this first-hand, and we know just how devastating the consequences of alcohol related trauma can be. This is backed up by data from our own audits of surgical mortality, which consistently highlight hepatic (liver related) issues and alcohol misuse are much higher in the Northern Territory compared to similar audit reports in other jurisdictions.”

“We were pleased by the comprehensive nature of the recommendations that were put forward in the Riley Review, and also the Government’s willingness to accept them. RACS has a long track record on advocating for a minimum price on alcohol across Australia, and we applaud the Northern Territory for being the first jurisdiction to follow through with such a policy.”

“The available research shows that a minimum floor price for alcohol leads to a significant reduction in alcohol related-harm. Therefore, it is imperative that practical evidence-based measures that benefit our community are supported, so that we can move towards a safer drinking culture in the Territory.”

### **About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)**

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

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