Watering down the NSW alcohol laws is too risky

Wednesday 14 September, 2016

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) notes Justice Callinan’s strong endorsement of the effectiveness of New South Wales liquor laws in mitigating alcohol related harm.

High Court Judge Ian Callinan’s statement that any relaxation of the lockout laws is risky, is strongly endorsed by RACS.

RACS Trauma Committee Chair John Crozier said that the College supports retention of these reasonable measures, which have proven very effective since their introduction in February 2014.

“We know that increased trading hours result in increased harms, therefore even a half hour increase carries too high a risk,” he said.

“For every additional hour of trading after midnight, there is a 16-20 per cent increase in assaults. Conversely, for every hour of reduced trading there is a 20 per cent reduction in assaults.”

Dr Crozier also referred to the suggestion in the report that trading hours for takeaway sales of alcohol could increase across the state from 10pm to 11pm.

“There are links between takeaway sales of alcohol and non-intentional injury. Violence in homes increases by 26 per cent for every extra 10,000 litres of alcohol sold. Retention of the reasonable 10pm restriction on takeaway liquor sales will reduce domestic violence and child abuse,” Dr Crozier said.

“Ultimately it is surgeons and other medical professionals who see first-hand the extent of the problem and have seen the dramatic benefit of the legislation.

“Now is not the time to water down these effective laws, which have reduced alcohol-related harm.”

RACS strongly encourages the NSW Government to retain the laws and extend them across the state.

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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