

Alcohol in digital environments: FARE's advocacy on the online sale and promotion of alcohol in Australia.

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Background: The way that alcohol is marketed and sold in Australia is changing, increasing the risk of harm for families and communities. Alcohol companies are capitalising on the rapid development of digital capabilities which have outpaced regulatory oversight and protective mechanisms. We now see data-driven alcohol advertisements which are targeted to people most at risk from alcohol harm. Online advertisements are inherently linked to retail through shoppable buttons directing people to buy alcohol online which can then be delivered into their home in less than 30 minutes. The promotion and availability of alcohol afforded through digital technologies is exacerbating existing alcohol harm in our communities and creating new risks for harm.

Approach: Most of Australia's regulatory environment for the sale and promotion of alcohol was designed for brick-and-mortar stores and traditional advertising channels. Policymakers are grappling with how to regulate the rapidly developing digital environment to ensure that consumer protections remain fit for purpose. To address this critical and rapidly developing policy area, FARE is engaged in a comprehensive program of work including policy development, research translation and advocacy/campaigning.

Implementation: FARE has developed key policy asks and assessed strategic opportunities for influencing current regulatory processes which impact the online sale and promotion of alcohol. We are engaging across government to advocate and support policy implementation.

Conclusions and Next Steps & Implications for Practice or Policy: There is a critical window of opportunity to ensure that measures to mitigate harms from the digitalisation of alcohol sale and promotion are included in reform. A collective and collaborative response will be crucial to driving policy change. We will present ways that researchers, practitioners and the community can engage in advocacy in this space.