

AFTER-PAY ADDS NEW LAYER OF ADDICTION TO ALCOHOL USE

24 December 2018: FARE has called on the Australian Government to ban the sale of alcohol through 'buy now pay later' services, such as after-pay.

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn says buying alcohol via quasi-credit doubles the pain for the most vulnerable in our community.

"Using 'after pay' for addictive consumables like alcohol via cheap, prominent online promotion is of particular concern for vulnerable groups, including dependent drinkers and underage drinkers," Mr Thorn said.

"Alcohol is no ordinary commodity because of the health and social harm caused, which costs the Australian governments almost \$11 billion per annum¹," Mr Thorn said.

"Alcohol is a psychoactive drug and a group one carcinogen, which makes it one of the leading contributors to death and disability, and is a causal factor in over 200 disease and injury conditions," he said.

Mr Thorn said normalising the purchase of cheap alcohol alongside other consumables through after-pay makes alcohol harm a more invisible problem.

"With after-pay services widely used for goods such as clothing, electronics, car repairs, or even dental work, having the same method for purchasing alcohol makes it more of an everyday expense," he said.

Mr Thorn said having more options to buy alcohol on impulse was a lose/lose scenario.

"After-pay increases the availability and accessibility of alcohol through really cheap, or nil, upfront payments combined with easy delivery options, and this can lead to decisions later regretted and snowballing debt," he said.

Mr Thorn said this has the potential to increase alcohol harm because price is a crucial modifier in alcohol purchasing behaviour.

"Making it easier to access and buy alcohol is associated with increased harm to innocent third parties, including assaults, domestic violence, road crashes and child maltreatment," Mr Thorn said.



In its [submission to the Senate Economics References Committee on credit and financial services targeted at Australians at risk of financial hardship](#) FARE has called on the Australian Government to prohibit the use of unregulated after-pay services to purchase alcohol.

“There is also a window of time before the next election to lock in a public inquiry into the online sale, advertisement and delivery of alcohol, to ensure that future regulation covers the responsible service of alcohol,” Mr Thorn said.

Mr Thorn is available for interview.

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The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)** is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to stop the harm caused by alcohol. Alcohol harm in Australia is significant. Nearly 6,000 lives are lost every year and more than 144,000 people are hospitalised making alcohol one of our nation’s greatest preventive health challenges.

For over a decade, FARE has been working with communities, governments, health professionals and police across the country to stop alcohol harm by supporting world-leading research, raising public awareness and advocating for changes to alcohol policy. In that time FARE has helped more than 750 communities and organisations, and backed over 1,400 projects around Australia.

ⁱ Collins, D., and Lapsley, H. (2008). *The costs of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug abuse to Australian society in 2004/05*.

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