



fare

Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education

ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Australians are impacted by alcohol harm every day, including through injury, violence, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and chronic diseases such as cancer. Tragically, far too many Australians die each year because of alcohol. This needs to change.

That's why at FARE we are committed to the vision of an Australia free from alcohol harm.

The period of July 2020 to June 2021 has been one of significant milestones for FARE. As the Chair of the Board, I am proud to highlight some of the key moments in our journey to reduce alcohol harms in Australia.

In July 2020, together with community leaders and advocates, we won a long-fought campaign to see mandatory, visible pregnancy health warnings on all alcohol products in Australia and New Zealand. This was a significant outcome for people with FASD and for people who advocated for almost two decades to make sure the next generation of Australians have a healthier future.

With the changing ways companies sell alcohol, we are overdue for reforms that consider the potential harms caused by selling alcohol online. A key milestone was passing the new online sales reform by the New South Wales Parliament in November 2020, including mandatory online ID checks at the point of sale. These new laws also made it compulsory for alcohol companies to check that they're not selling alcohol to kids or people who are intoxicated for same-day deliveries.

After a five-year battle, Woolworths decided not to proceed with an 1,800-square-foot alcohol megastore in Darwin, at the doorstep of dry Aboriginal communities. We were honoured to

stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, health and community advocates in the Northern Territory as they continued fighting even when the odds were against us. This was a huge community outcome after years of poor consultation and lack of empathy for community concerns from one of the nation's biggest corporations.

This year, FARE is preparing to launch a 3-year-long awareness program, funded by the Australian Federal Government Department of Health, highlighting the importance of not drinking during pregnancy and breastfeeding. We are now working with partners and stakeholders to develop this nationwide initiative. Developing this program is a wonderful opportunity and a big responsibility, so we are dedicated to ensuring we achieve the best possible outcomes and impact for the community.

These highlights are a testament to the passion and hard work of the people behind FARE – our team, our partners, and our community.

For me, this year also marks my last year as the Chair of the Board. I would like to thank my fellow board members, past and present, whose guidance and expertise have been insightful in changing the conversations around alcohol harm. I would also like to congratulate the incoming Chair and wish him, the Board and the FARE team the best in advocating for healthier communities. Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to former CEO Michael Thorn and current CEO Caterina Giorgi whose leadership during my tenure helped us become an organisation that is at the forefront of alcohol policy, advocacy and awareness.

I have truly been proud to serve as Chair for these past eight years and to be part of a legacy working towards an Australia free from alcohol harm.

Sincerely,

Andrew Fairley AM

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

When we started this year, we had a clear vision of the impact we wanted to see in our communities.

We wanted to provide honest and accurate information in our health promotion work and work with decision-makers to implement policies that improve the health and wellbeing of our communities. We also wanted to engage with communities across Australia through people-led advocacy.

And that is what we did.

Throughout the past year, we had conversations with people from across Australia who shared their stories to help to create change. We engaged with people through social media and emails. And we listened to grassroots community leaders and enabled them to bring about the change they wanted in their communities.

We know that the health and wellbeing of everyone in Australia can be improved when we collaborate with local communities, values-aligned organisations, and researchers across the country. We also know that change happens when people with lived experience drive that change and their voices are elevated.

This year gave us two significant milestones that we at FARE are incredibly proud to have been part of: Visible pregnancy health warnings on alcohol products; and stopping the building of a Dan Murphy's alcohol megastore in Darwin.

Through this advocacy, we were reminded of two valuable lessons.

First, communities must be at the heart of decision-making.

In July 2020, when the time came to make sure alcohol products have visible pregnancy health warnings, thousands of Australians from around the country put incredible heart and energy into making sure that powerful alcohol corporations would not drown out community voices.

People with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), like Jessica Birch, and parents of children with FASD, like Cheryl Dedman, opened their hearts and shared their stories of FASD with the world. More than 4,000 people and 180 organisations signed an open letter so that decision-makers could hear how their vote would impact everyday people. Our collective voices were heard loud and clear, and today visible health warnings are required on alcohol products.

Second, people never lose hope, even when it seems as though the odds are against them.

Woolworths' decision to halt the development of an alcohol megastore near dry Aboriginal communities in Darwin is an acknowledgement of people power. Over the last five years, there were many instances when this outcome did not seem possible. But this did not stop the community from fighting. Aboriginal leaders like Aunty Helen Fejo-Frith from the Bagot community and organisations like Danila Dilba, Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT) and Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) kept the pressure alive. Thousands of people across the country were inspired by their courage — more than 155,000 people signed petitions and shared content on social media to amplify their voices. Again, our collective voices were heard loud and clear.

These milestones are testament to the fact that, as a community, we can bring about real-world change.

This year has also been a tough year for many people who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19. Throughout the pandemic, we've been concerned that the aggressive marketing tactics and massive increase in alcohol sales into homes would cause increased harms. We're only now just starting to see what this means because –

like many of the impacts of the shadow pandemic – the harms are primarily hidden behind closed doors.

We will continue to work collaboratively with communities across Australia to do all we can to advocate for measures that prevent further harm.

Before we present our impact throughout the past year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Andrew Fairley AM, who is retiring as the Chair of the Board after more than eight years of service. His leadership during this time has been instrumental in evolving FARE into the leading health education and advocacy organisation that it is today.

Sincerely,

Caterina Giorgi



VISION

An Australia free from alcohol harms

Who we are

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is the leading not-for-profit organisation working towards an Australia free from alcohol harm.

With local communities, values-aligned organisations, health professionals and researchers across the country, we strive to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in Australia.

We develop evidence-informed policy that puts people's health first, enable people-powered advocacy to help create change, and deliver health promotion programs designed to reduce the risk of alcohol harm in our communities.

Alcohol affects our families and communities every day through injury, violence, chronic diseases like cancer, mental ill-health and disabilities like Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

Far too many Australians die each year because of alcohol.

By working together, we can change this.

Our values



Collaborative

We work with and are informed by a diverse community of people and organisations who are passionate about creating change to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians.



Empathetic

We listen and seek to understand the views of people directly impacted by alcohol harm, having their voices guide our work.



Courageous

We know lasting change can only happen if we elevate the voices of the community ahead of people with vested interests, and we don't shy away from this challenge.



Impact-driven

We focus on achieving the best outcomes for communities, and learn and grow by evaluating our work to extend our impact.

PEOPLE- POWERED ADVOCACY

Our objective: We engage in advocacy that elevates the voices of people with lived experience and values-aligned organisations.

Our outcome: We want people's voices to be heard by decision-makers in government. We also want companies that sell alcohol products to be accountable for the harms their products cause.



Stopping Dan Murphy's in Darwin

After almost five years, Woolworths decided not to proceed with the development of an alcohol megastore in Darwin.

This is a huge community outcome after years of poor consultation and lack of empathy for community concerns from one of the nation's biggest corporations.

Thank you for joining with FARE to amplify the voices of the local community, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and health organisations and leaders, who have been fighting for what is right.

Woolworths relentlessly fought to build what would have been one of Australia's largest liquor stores – an 1800-square-meter Dan Murphy's – on the doorstep of Bagot Community, a dry Aboriginal community in Darwin.

Woolworths pursued this store in the face of community opposition and concern, in the full knowledge that the Northern Territory (NT) already has the highest levels of alcohol harm in the country, and despite being aware that the proposed development threatened to undermine the successful alcohol policies that the NT Government introduced to reduce community harm.

The development was opposed by the Bagot Community, members of the public, and organisations including the Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS), Danila Dilba Health Service, Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT (AMSANT), and Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APONT).

In April 2021, Woolworths conceded to public pressure and decided to stop building the alcohol megastore in Darwin.

So what happened?

In September 2019, the NT Liquor Commission rejected Woolworths' application for this store.

In making its decision, the Commission found that "approving the application would lead to a significant increase in the level of alcohol-related harms which already exist in this community."

Yet Woolworths continued to ignore community concern in the pursuit of its giant Dan Murphy's store, refusing to accept the clear decision of the independent Liquor Commission. They appealed to the NT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT) and then the Supreme Court. In the end, Woolworths did not win any cases in favour of building this store.

Enter the NT Government. Introduced by the Minister for Small Business in November 2020, the Government passed legislation to allow yet another reconsideration of the proposed development. This time, Woolworths could have their liquor license decided by just one person – the Director of Liquor Licensing – rather than the independent Liquor Commission.

Since the rules of natural justice did not apply under this new legislation, the Director of Liquor Licensing was not required to consult with the impacted community — and decided to approve Woolworths' application to build their alcohol megastore in Darwin.

But this legislation and change in the process also drew further attention to the problems with this store and how community views had unfairly been ignored.

In response to growing community pressure from around the country, just before receiving their liquor license approval, Woolworths announced they would fund a review of their proposed store led by Danny Gilbert, co-founder and managing partner of law firm Gilbert + Tobin. The review would also look at whether Woolworths had behaved appropriately in their engagement with the community.

The community told their story to the review panel and made sure their voice would be heard.

In April 2021, Mr Gilbert and his panel submitted their report, which clearly stated that the development should not go ahead because local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities were not adequately consulted during the process.

Woolworths conceded. After almost a five-year battle, Woolworths decided not to proceed with the alcohol megastore in Darwin.

During this long period of advocacy, people from all over the country helped amplify the campaign efforts at various stages. Together with community organisations in the NT, we stood with Aunty Helen from Bagot Community and other community leaders, we shared community stories, we published a full-page open letter in the Financial Review, we spoke on radio and TV, and we challenged Woolworths in the NT supreme court.

More than 155,000 people signed petitions and shared content on social media. They actively engaged in this campaign and made sure that Woolworths and Dan Murphy's felt the public pressure and listened to what the communities had to say.

Woolworths' decision to halt the development of the store is an acknowledgement of people power and how we can bring about real-world change.

"It just goes to show people that if you can use your mouth like I do, and use it in the right way, you can get to where you want to go."

- Helen Fejo-Frith, Bagot Aboriginal Community



Getting mandatory visible health warnings on alcohol products

For more than 20 years, people with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), their families, health groups, and community organisations such as National Organisation for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (NOFASD) have been advocating for visible pregnancy warning labels on alcohol products. After many years of research and advocacy, in 2020, these health warnings became a reality.

After years of research and advocacy from people with FASD, their families and supporters, independent regulator Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) developed and proposed an effective and evidence-based pregnancy health warning label. This label would be mandatory on all alcoholic products and included the key features required to make the label effective, such as ensuring it had contrasting, identifiable colours (red, white and black).

In March 2020, this label was considered at the Forum on Food Regulation. Facing pressure from industry, Food Forum Ministers did not support the effective warning at this meeting and instead requested FSANZ consider changes to the colour and warning text.

Removing colour and changing the warning text was the core request of alcohol companies and their lobby groups, who launched a campaign against the evidence-based label called 'Not This Label.'

The elements the companies wanted to water down were critical to ensuring the label was effective, visible and easily understood. Watering down the label through changes to its colour, size or wording, would be risking the health and wellbeing of thousands of Australians for years to come.

Ministers were to meet once again in July 2020 to hear the outcome of FSANZ deliberations and make a final decision whether to support the

evidence-based health warning label in full — or concede to alcohol corporation requests.

What happened?

Health and community advocates knew this was the final chance for the long-fought label. They also knew alcohol companies would be lobbying hard to do whatever they could to stop the warning from going ahead. In response, thousands of Australians around the country put incredible heart and energy into making sure alcohol companies would not drown out community voices by sharing why this label was important to them in letters, calls, and meetings with Food Forum Ministers.

The FARE team worked closely with communities and advocates to help them share their stories with the right people at the right moment. We shared insights into the policy-making process, helped community members navigate conversations with decision-makers, created

At the same time, we gathered support from people across Australia by asking them to sign an open letter that called for clear, visible health warnings. More than 4,000 community leaders and advocates, and more than 180 organisations, signed this open letter. Many who signed the open letter also wrote to, called and met with the Food Forum Ministers leading up to the vote. A range of stakeholders were also media spokespeople who ensured the message was heard from a diverse cross-section of the community.

video content to reach a wider audience via social media and supported advocates to share their stories in the national press. When the Ministers met in July 2020 to vote, they listened to the community. They placed the health and safety of families first by voting to have mandatory, visible and effective health warnings on alcohol products. These labels have started appearing on alcoholic products and must be on every alcoholic product sold in Australia by 31 July 2023.

This was an important community victory after many years of research and advocacy.

CUSTOMER CARE: CALL 1800 061 562
VEGAN FRIENDLY.



PREGNANCY WARNING
Alcohol can cause lifelong
harm to your baby



Hard Drinks
1.2

330mL
4.5% ALC/VOL
ENJOY RESPONSIBLY



EVIDENCE- INFORMED POLICY

Our objective: We shape, drive and support the development of evidence-informed policy and programs that contribute to an Australia free from alcohol harm.

Our outcome: We want decision-makers to implement policies and programs that put the health and wellbeing of Australians first.





Our response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to be a defining period in our lives over the past year.

The uncertainty left some Australians feeling isolated, anxious, and worried — and during these moments of heightened anxiety, alcohol retailers and companies aggressively marketed their products, resulting in big profits at the cost of the health and wellbeing of our families and communities.

We published a report *Alcohol Retail During COVID-19* that found Australia recorded its highest month ever for alcohol retailer turnover in December 2020, close to an eye-watering \$2 billion. Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data, this report shows alcohol retailer turnover in Australia increased by \$3.3 billion from 2019 to 2020, reaching a record \$15.6 billion in 2020 — an increase of 26.7 per cent.

The impact of lockdowns caused by the pandemic was felt across all states and territories, which likely contributed to dramatic increases in alcohol retailer turnover, especially in Victoria, where sales remained elevated over a nine-month period continuing from the first COVID-19 wave to the second.

We published another report, *Online and Delivered Alcohol During COVID-19*, where we found that total website visits to online alcohol retailers in 2020 increased to 148 million, a 37 million (34 per cent) jump in website traffic compared with 2019. The four biggest online alcohol retailers – Dan Murphy's, BWS, Liquorland, and First Choice Liquor – were visited an estimated 134 million times in 2020. The growth between 2019 and 2020 is more than triple the website traffic growth seen between 2018 and 2019.

No doubt, this has had significant effects on the health of our communities. Working with the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA), together we found 70 per cent of Victorian alcohol and other drug services reported more people are seeking help for alcohol use since the pandemic began in Australia.

Not only have the number of people dealing with alcohol issues increased, but we have also consistently heard from services that there is a greater level of severity among those presenting with alcohol issues.

We are continuing to monitor the impact of COVID on alcohol harm and communicate these impacts and possible policy responses to decision-makers across the country so that more can be done to prevent these harms.

Online sales and delivery of alcohol

Online alcohol sale and home delivery is currently not regulated in Australia to the standard the community expects, creating risks of alcohol harms for families and communities. While laws have been slow to catch up, the flow of alcohol into homes via online sales has increased drastically since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The largest alcohol retailer in Australia reported a 35 per cent increase in online alcohol sales in 2021 compared with 2020. This means more alcohol is being sold directly into the home at a time when the community is dealing with prolonged impacts of the pandemic, including isolation, mental ill-health, family violence and greater strain on our health system.

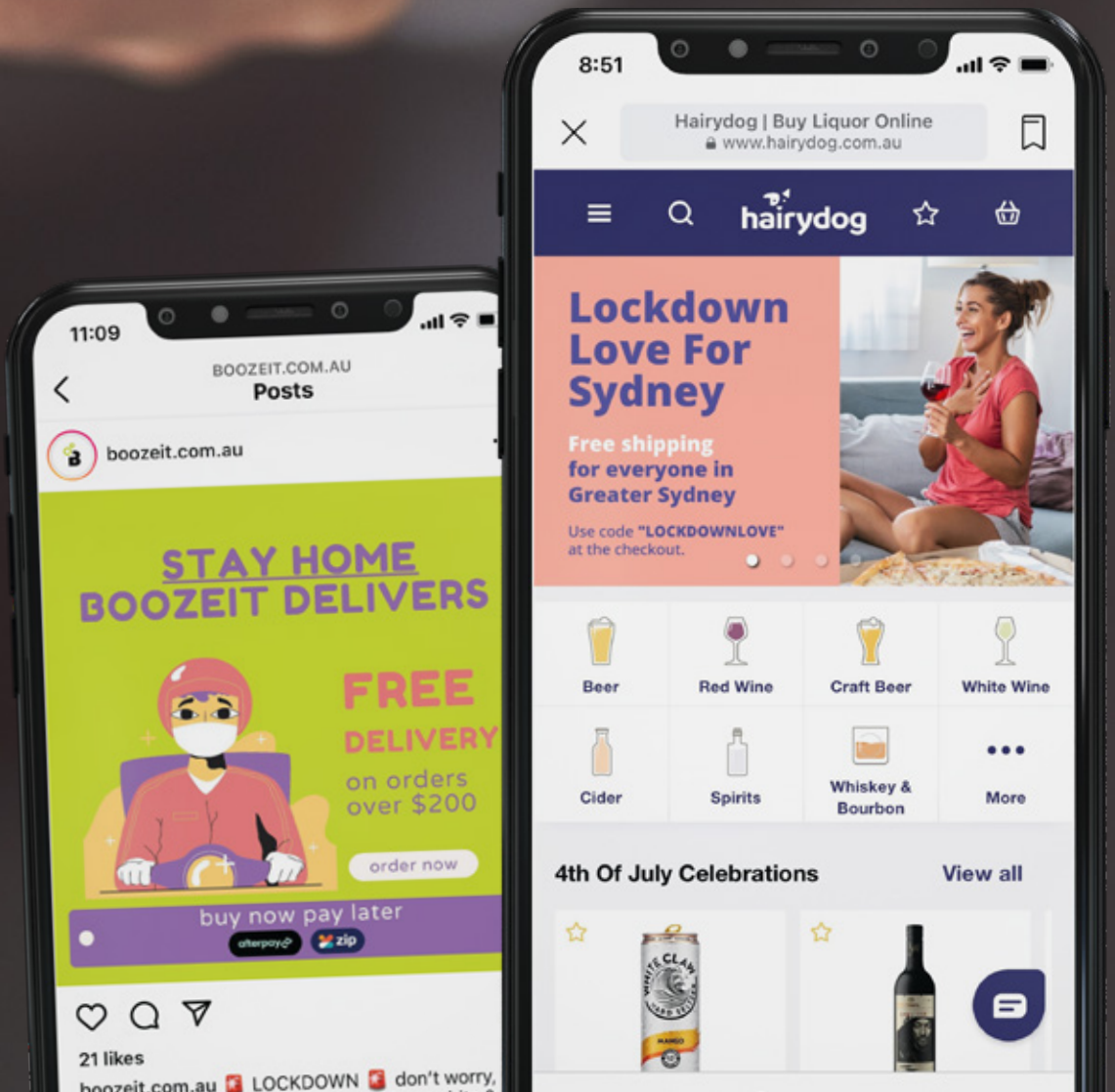
FARE has been working with community groups and individuals to ensure Australian state and territory governments introduce standards for the online sale and delivery of alcohol. This includes vital changes to ensure rapid late-night deliveries do not fuel alcohol harms in

the home, protections to ensure alcohol is not sold to children, and controls on companies' aggressive promotion of alcohol products.

In 2020, FARE successfully advocated for reforms in New South Wales, the first state to enact detailed laws for online sales and delivery of alcohol. These Australia-first reforms included a significant win to require digital age verification for online alcohol sales, a safeguard that will help ensure alcohol is not sold to children.

Victoria and South Australia have been the next states to make inroads on this policy issue, introducing legislation into their parliaments in 2021. FARE will continue to advocate for strong safeguards across all Australian states and territories, ensuring governments regulate alcohol companies to make sure they meet community expectations for the sale and delivery of alcohol.





Digital marketing by alcohol companies

We envision an Australia where people enjoy the benefits of digital technologies to work, learn and play through safe digital environments that enable people's health and wellbeing rather than undermining it.

However, marketing by harmful industries is pervasive, persistent, personal, and persuasive online.

By its very nature, digital marketing is designed to target people who are at their most vulnerable. Using digital technologies, these industries market their products and thus profit by targeting people's susceptibilities and vulnerabilities. This actively undermines the overall health and wellbeing of our communities.

In the case of alcohol, this often means that people who already buy and drink alcohol products in high amounts are the ones that are targeted most aggressively by alcohol companies through their digital marketing practices.

Digital marketing by such industries largely occurs below the line, is seamlessly integrated into digital platforms through native content, and is increasingly ephemeral. With no requirements for transparency in digital marketing practices, this makes it difficult for individuals and governments to identify and control. Without adequate regulation, harmful industries are not held accountable for the harm perpetuated by their digital marketing practices.

Regulating the digital environment and effectively reducing the harms by these harmful industries is complex. Still, it is something we need to solve to benefit our kids, families and communities.

To achieve our vision, we are now working with a range of community organisations to collectively advocate for changes to digital marketing practices by harmful industries.

In November 2020, FARE collaborated with VicHealth and the Obesity Policy Coalition to produce the report *Under the radar: Harmful industries' digital marketing to Australian children*.

In the first half of 2021, we consulted with public health stakeholders to build consensus on a shared set of principles and priority actions needed to regulate harmful industries' digital marketing. We also made a submission to the Digital Advertising

Engaging in government processes

The FARE team lodged 14 written submissions to inquiries, reviews and consultations on legislation, regulations, and standards and appeared before four formal hearings.

These submissions and appearances covered topics of family, domestic and sexual violence, preventive health, digital advertising, charities regulation, food standards, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, licensing, online sales and delivery, energy labelling, COVID-19 and global action on alcohol harm.

These consultations were held by state, territory, and federal parliaments, governments and departments, state and national regulatory bodies, and international organisations such as the World Health Organisation.

Engagement in these processes provided FARE with an opportunity to communicate the impact of alcohol harm on families and communities and provide recommendations on preventing and reducing these harms.

HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAMS

Our objective: We develop and deliver programs to engage Australians in a conversation about alcohol harm and the health and wellbeing benefits of reducing drinking.

Our outcome: We want Australians to engage with honest and accurate information to prevent and minimise alcohol harms in their lives and their communities.



Every Moment Matters

In 2019 FARE received funding from the Australian Government Department of Health to design, develop and deliver a national awareness program about alcohol, pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Throughout the year, we conducted formative research, engaged with the community and developed the creative concept for the national program, which focuses on the risks of drinking alcohol during pregnancy and while breastfeeding.

This program aims to

- increase the proportion of Australians who are aware of the risks associated with alcohol consumption during pregnancy
- raise awareness of alcohol-related conditions including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and
- reduce the incidence of FASD in Australia by supporting and informing women so they can make healthy choices while planning and during pregnancy.

The program will launch in November 2021 and be delivered over the next three years, placing Australia in a strong position to lead on FASD prevention and support globally.

The program has four streams that focus on the following:

- general public
- women at higher risk of having alcohol-exposed pregnancies
- health professionals
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

This year, we worked with stakeholders from across the country to establish a steering committee that would provide oversight

and guidance to the program. The steering committee comprises people with lived experience of FASD, expertise in diagnosis and FASD research, representatives from health professional colleges, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. On 22 September 2020, FARE held the first steering committee meeting for the national awareness program.

FARE also attended the Senate Community Affairs References Committee public hearing for the [FASD Inquiry](#). The FASD Inquiry investigated effective approaches to preventing and diagnosing FASD and strategies for optimising life outcomes for people with FASD. FARE also provided the Committee with an update on the national program. The Committee handed down its [final report](#) on Wednesday 17 March.

FARE looks forward to continue working collaboratively with the National Organisation for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (NOFASD), National Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisations (NACCHO), and a range of health professionals, community leaders, and consumer organisations on the national awareness program.

We would like to once again thank the Australian Government for funding and supporting the program, demonstrating its ongoing commitment to addressing FASD, the leading preventable developmental disability in Australia.

Through the program, we hope to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for our children, families and communities now and into the future.

This program is an important opportunity for the community, and FARE is dedicated to ensuring we achieve the best possible outcomes through the program.

“Once I learned how devastating FASD is, and how little alcohol it can take to cause irreversible harm, I felt compelled to make some noise about it. FASD has been a “hidden” condition for so long, and FARE’s awareness campaign - in collaboration with NOFASD, Professor Elizabeth Elliott, medical specialists and allied health professionals - will make a big difference in bringing FASD further into the open.”

- Senator Stirling Griff

“We know that if we can ensure that a pregnant mum and expectant mum and mum who is considering becoming pregnant, if they have the information... then they can have help, they can have the support and this can save and protect many, many lives... And so, I want to acknowledge and thank you for your work and recommit to the joint approach of zero FASD cases in Australia.”

- Minister Greg Hunt



Ripple

Problem:

We have seen an increase in drinking among Australian women over 40 years, with many reporting they drink alcohol four or more times a week.

Despite this, studies examining this trend in detail are hard to come by. There is even less research about the types of support that women aged 40 years and over need to reduce their drinking and prevent the negative impact of alcohol on their health and wellbeing.

Solution:

Ripple, a project led by FARE in collaboration with La Trobe University's Centre for Alcohol Policy and Research (CAPR) and funded by ACT Government Health Directorate under the Health Promotion Grants Program, was launched to reduce alcohol harm among women aged 40-64 years in the ACT.

This project had two parts:

A targeted health promotion program rolled out across the Canberra region sharing messages about the risks of drinking alcohol and how cutting back can have a positive ripple effect in your life.

Health promotion information was shared during March-May 2020, and included targeted social media posts, flyers and brochures in health clinics, and video commercials in doctors' surgeries.

The goal was to raise awareness of the benefits of cutting down on alcohol use, and the short- and long-term harms from alcohol use.

A randomised control trial to test effective ways women could be supported to reduce their drinking.

This study tested an online intervention program, informed by CAPR-led focus groups, which included information on reducing the risk of alcohol harms, mindfulness, and tips and discussions around social drinking and cutting back.

These were complimented by podcasts from Dr Sandro Demaio and FARE CEO Caterina Giorgi to enhance the variety of content and offer additional information and advice.

As part of recruitment efforts for the study, FARE collaborated with local GPs and Canberra women willing to share their stories, creating a series of short [videos](#) that were shared on the website and across social media.

Impact:

Both the health promotion campaign and the recruitment for the randomised trial reached the target group.

- Website analytics show that there were more than 4,000 visits to the Ripple study page during the campaign rollout when women were encouraged to sign up for the trial.
- More than 200 women enrolled in the randomised control trial during the nine-week recruitment period. This is an important achievement, with evidence from this study laying the groundwork to better understand the effectiveness of online interventions and support measures needed for women aged 40 and over to reduce their drinking.
- CAPR continues to collect data on the trial participants, with the last enrolled participant due to complete their involvement in the trial in early August 2021. An evaluation of how effective the program has been at encouraging women to reduce their drinking will be carried out in the following weeks, with a follow-up survey to be conducted in September 2021.

Pregnant Pause

Problem:

Alcohol consumption during pregnancy can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth and low birth weight. It is also the cause of FASD, a lifelong disability that can result in significant cognitive, behavioural, health and learning difficulties.

However, mixed messages being shared within the community means that the official advice – women who are pregnant or planning pregnancy should not drink alcohol – is not getting through.

A baseline survey undertaken by FARE showed low awareness of the conditions associated with alcohol use during pregnancy (stillbirth, miscarriage and low birth weight) among adults in the ACT.

Solution:

With the help of the ACT Government's Health Promotion Grants Program, FARE has delivered Pregnant Pause to the Canberra community for seven years, with the goal of supporting women who are pregnant to achieve alcohol-free pregnancies.

This year, through *Pregnant Pause: Community Heroes*, the project reached out to Canberra-based businesses and organisations to create a community of support for women who are pregnant by sharing correct health messages and meeting expectant parents where they are – in their community.

Community heroes featured in a range of content that promoted their involvement in the program, which was then re-shared on Pregnant Pause social media channels.

A *Pregnant Pause Community Heroes: Meet the Village* event rounded off the project, where around 50 people came together to celebrate the program, including representatives from community heroes, expectant parents and new mothers.

Impact:

We recruited 26 Canberra businesses and organisations as community heroes, such as service providers, gyms, cafes, community organisations, not-for-profits and bespoke businesses. With the help of these organisations, the program reached more than 720,000 social media users on Pregnant Pause social media platforms.

The project also engaged two local publications: *Her Canberra*, which has a high following of professional women, and *Canberra Mums*, known locally as a trusted source of conversations and discussion around pregnancy and motherhood. These partnerships enhanced the promotion of the project and its messages to a broader audience. More than 55,000 local women saw content relating to the program on the Canberra Mums Facebook page; meanwhile, content created for Her Canberra's electronic direct mail (EDM) achieved nearly 10,000 unique opens.

Pregnant Pause's own Instagram followers grew by 23 per cent, and website performance showed that pageviews were stable throughout the project (over 1,000 per month). These combined figures show that the project's messages resonated with the target audiences and that information distribution and recruitment via digital media effectively reached the relevant audience.

Key learnings from the *Pregnant Pause: Community Heroes* program will help inform community engagement opportunities on larger-scale alcohol and pregnancy projects, such as FARE's national awareness program on alcohol, pregnancy and breastfeeding set to launch later in 2021.



PREGNANT PAUSE

MAKE THE PLEDGE TO GO ALCOHOL FREE DURING YOUR PREGNANCY OR THE PREGNANCY OF A LOVED ONE



[pregnantpause.com.](http://pregnantpause.com)

... is an initiative developed by the Found...
... search and Education (FARE), an indepen...
... working to stop the harm caused by alcohol...
... encourages Australians to go alcohol free d...
... cy, or the pregnancy of their partner, fa...
... d or loved one.

Supported by



TAKE ACTION

Now more than ever, Australians deserve to have a say in the role that alcohol plays in their lives and communities.

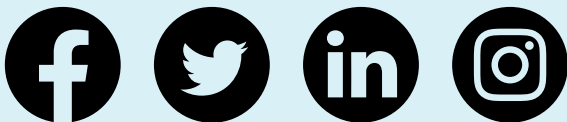
Every day, Australians around the country are putting incredible heart and energy into preventing alcohol harms in their communities.

With your support, our team can work alongside grassroots advocates, health organisations, and government agencies to help create the change they want to see in our communities.

To join our community, visit [this link](#).

To donate, visit www.fare.org.au/donate.

You can also stay up-to-date on our work by following us on social media:







Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education

PO Box 19, Deakin West, ACT 2600

02 6122 8600 | info@fare.org.au | www.fare.org.au