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The expanding market for online sales and delivery of alcohol has outstripped Australia’s inadequate system of regulation, causing a sharp increase in risk for young Australians and vulnerable people.

The sale and supply of alcohol is regulated because of the extraordinary risks of consuming alcohol, which is proven to cause seven types of cancer and more than 200 other health conditions.

Alcohol kills people – almost 6,000 deaths a year and more than 144,000 hospitalisations. Alcohol also harms others through drink-driving accidents, domestic violence, assaults, and child neglect.

It is a scientific fact that greater alcohol availability generates greater harm to alcohol users and those around them.

Responsibility to minimise harm to communities lies with governments and liquor regulators. Yet, currently there are virtually no restrictions on who can purchase alcohol, how much, how late, or how rapidly it can be delivered to homes and other premises.

With no effective mechanisms in place, there’s increasing risk for vulnerable people accessing alcohol or being targeted by advertisers, including:

* children under 18
* intoxicated people
* people at risk of suicide
* people at risk of experiencing domestic violence
* children living in a household where family violence is present
* people who are dependent on alcohol or at risk of developing dependency.

In light of these risks, alcohol regulation needs to be expanded to include online sales and delivery. Due to the emerging nature of the market, regulation needs to be strong and have proactive monitoring, enforcement and evaluation.

FARE is working with its research and public health partners to influence and advocate strong measures to stop alcohol-related harm.

FARE is working with its research and public health partners to influence and advocate strong measures to stop alcohol-related harm. We have developed a comprehensive policy position about online sales and delivery, in conjunction with the Public Health Association of Australia and the Public Health Advocacy Institute of WA. This complements the latest FARE research conducted by the Centre for Alcohol Policy Research at La Trobe University.

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