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## Open letter: Action on alcohol must be part of discussions for National Cabinet on men’s violence against women

Dear Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers,

We are writing to you ahead of the urgent national cabinet meeting on men’s violence against women to implore you to include alcohol harm reduction measures as part of your discussions on Wednesday.

We welcome this meeting being convened and wholeheartedly agree that governments across Australia need to take immediate action to prevent more women and children dying or being harmed.

It is our view as the leaders of community, health and Aboriginal organisations that if we are going to prevent family violence, we need to ensure that better regulating alcohol is part of the suite of measures that are adopted.

We support the recommendation made in the recent White Paper on Primary Prevention released by Jess Hill and Professor Michael Salter that outlines that governments need to address the commercial determinants of violence - including alcohol.

As Ms Hill and Professor Salter say in the White Paper ‘Violence prevention frameworks around gender-based violence in Australia have been reluctant to tackle wealthy industries that are profiting from violence against women, such as pornography and the technology sector, and the multi-billion dollar alcohol and gambling industries.’

The data clearly demonstrates that alcohol is a significant contributor to family violence, with [alcohol involved in between 23 and 65 per cent](https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/links-between-alcohol-consumption-and-domestic-and-sexual-violence-against-women-key-findings-and-future-directions/) of all family violence incidents reported by police.

The use of [alcohol by perpetrators of violence](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dar.12925)also increases the severity of family violence, leading to higher rates of physical violence and injury.

[Alcohol sales are also targeted at people who drink the most alcohol](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/CAPR-report-Distribution-of-alcohol-use-in-Australia.pdf), with companies selling 36 per cent of alcohol to 5 per cent of people, placing people at greater risk of harm.

Acknowledging the harmful role of alcohol in family violence is an important part of this wider effort to keep women and children safe.

[Australian evidence shows that](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2010.03333.x)the increased density of alcohol outlets, particularly packaged liquor outlets like bottle-shops, increases rates of family violence. A [further study in New South W](https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Publications/CJB/2022-Report-Takeaway-alcohol-sales-and-violent-crime-CJB247.pdf)ales found that the extension to takeaway alcohol sales from a 10pm close to an 11pm close resulted in a statistically significant increase in domestic violence assaults, equating to 1,120 family violence assaults occurring in the 38-months after trading hours were extended.

The explosion of the often-unregulated online sale and delivery of alcohol, making every phone a bottleshop, is also increasing the risk of violence. The rapid delivery of alcohol into homes in as little as 30 minutes is further exacerbating these harms.

Common sense measures to regulate alcohol need to be part of the package of actions introduced to prevent violence against women and children. These measures include:

* Including the prevention of gender based and family violence as a primary object of the liquor acts in each state and territory
* Ensuring that alcohol is not sold by delivery and take-away after 10pm
* Introducing a safety pause for the delivery of alcohol of 2 hours between when alcohol is ordered and delivered
* Regulating the density of alcohol outlets
* Addressing predatory and high-risk marketing that pushes bulk alcohol sales, including data driven marketing.

We can no longer ignore the role that alcohol plays in increasing the risk and severity of violence against women and children.

Yours sincerely,

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## Join our community

Will you join the community taking action on alcohol?