# Key takeaways from the expert panel’s recommendations on alcohol to prevent gendered violence

An expert panel appointed by the Federal Government released a report outlining the steps federal, state and territory governments can take to prevent gendered violence.

The panel made 21 recommendations across a range of sectors, including calling on governments to strengthen Australia’s alcohol laws to reduce harm to women and children.

For the many people who've experienced violence involving alcohol, the expert panel’s report was an acknowledgement of their experience.

Here’s our key takeaways from the report, [*Unlocking the prevention potential: Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence*](https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/resource/download/unlocking-prevention-potential.pdf).

## The panel

In May, the Federal Government appointed an expert panel to do a rapid review into prevention approaches to end gender-based violence.

The Panel included Dr Anne Summers AO, Jess Hill, Dr Zac Seidler, Dr Todd Fernando, Elena Campbell and Dr Leigh Gassner APM.

## The recommendations

The panel’s recommendations relating to alcohol included:

**The panel noted that while it is “standard public health practice” to regulate the availability of harmful products, industries such as alcohol have not been held accountable** for the impact their products and business models have on intensifying domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV).

“This failure to consider DFSV in alcohol policy has enabled unprecedented growth in alcohol availability in relation to outlet density and duration of online delivery hours,” the panel stated.

“This increased availability of alcohol is linked to increases in alcohol-related DFSV.”

The panel recommended:

* State and territory governments adopt clear primary objectives in their liquor regulatory regimes to prevent gender-based violence, alongside existing objectives around alcohol harm reduction.
* Evidence-based reforms to address availability and access, including regulations on liquor store density and operating hours, and online delivery.
* Restricting alcohol advertising during sporting events given the statistical increase in domestic, family and sexual violence incidents during football grand finals and number of children who watch these sporting events.

**For decades, Aboriginal leaders and communities have advocated for alcohol policies that work for their communities** and are implemented in partnership with them.

The panel noted that to date, alcohol restrictions relating to domestic, sexual and family violence have predominantly been targeted at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and have tended to be stigmatising and harmful, particularly when not working closely with local communities.

It pointed to the success of responses done in partnership with communities such as the Lililwan Project which aimed to address the prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) in a remote community.

The panel supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to “restrict alcohol in culturally appropriate ways that work best for them”.

**The panel recommended federal, state and territory governments “activate the health system and workforce as a key prevention lever”.**

It recommended this include:

* Equipping and resourcing GPs, perinatal, and mental health and alcohol and other drug services to identify and support DFSV victim-survivors and people who use violence.
* Establish a five-year Prevention Innovation Fund, co-funded by the Commonwealth and states and territories, which the panel said should “require non-specialist organisations (including alcohol and other drugs and homelessness services) to partner with a specialist DFSV service to be eligible.”

The panel recommended the alcohol and other drug sector be resourced to develop domestic, family and sexual violence specialisation.

“This kind of intervention is long overdue and holds enormous potential for reducing the recurrence of violence; for intervening more effectively with people using violence; and for preventing further harm to children,” the panel said.

The panel also called for collaboration across the alcohol and other drug sector and specialist DFSV services, “to enhance the AOD sector’s responsiveness to DFSV, and ensure that victim-survivors and people using violence can access specialist DFSV assistance”.

## Next steps

The rapid review report has been handed to the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers to consider the recommendations.

[FARE joined more than 30 community, health, Aboriginal, research and women’s organisations](https://fare.org.au/call-to-national-cabinet-to-commit-to-rapid-review-recommendations-on-alcohol/) in an open letter to the country’s leaders calling on them to adopt in full the panel’s recommendations to prevent further harm to women and children.

Almost 100 [Australians also wrote to their state and territory leaders](https://fare.org.au/take-action-on-alcohol-and-gendered-violence/) also calling on them to adopt in full the panel’s recommendations relating to alcohol.