

## **RAPID ALCOHOL DELIVERY SERVICES RAMP UP RISK OF HARM**

**17 November 2019:** New research has exposed the risks posed by the sudden growth in online alcohol sales and delivery, finding high levels of risky drinking associated with rapid delivery services.

The report, from the Centre for Alcohol Policy Research (CAPR) at La Trobe University, was based on a survey of 528 participants aged 18 to 69 who used an online alcohol delivery service in the past month.

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is now calling for Australia-wide bans on rapid delivery of alcohol within two hours of online purchase.

CAPR researcher Dr Sarah Callinan says their report, *Alcohol home delivery services: An investigation of use and risk*, found that on-demand delivery services were most popular among the youngest age group of 18 to 29 year-olds.

“Our study indicates that while a wide range of people use online alcohol delivery services, there is a cohort of young risky drinkers who are using on-demand delivery services to prolong their drinking occasions,” Dr Callinan said.

“One in five participants (22 per cent) who ordered alcohol via an on-demand delivery service did so because they were over the blood alcohol limit to drive. Meanwhile, more than a quarter who used on-demand services (28 per cent) reported that the delivery enabled them to continue drinking when they would otherwise have had to stop,” she said.

In a submission to the NSW review into same-day delivery, FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn said the burgeoning online sales and delivery market has outstripped Australia’s inadequate system of alcohol regulation, creating significant risks for younger Australians.

“The CAPR report shows that younger risky drinkers are the biggest users of rapid delivery services, which enables them to extend existing drinking sessions,” Mr Thorn said.

Mr Thorn says the CAPR study suggests the convenience of ordering alcohol through on-demand delivery services is facilitating a pattern of heavy, risky drinking by younger Australians.

“Sixty-nine per cent of respondents who had alcohol delivered within two hours reported consuming five or more standard drinks during the same session, while 28 per cent consumed 11 or more drinks on the same occasion,” Mr Thorn said.

Mr Thorn says it’s also concerning that more than one-third of respondents aged 25 years and under (36 per cent) didn’t have their ID checked when receiving their alcohol order, which increases the risk of underage drinking.

“It is a simple equation: inadequate age verification at point of sale plus inadequate age verification at point of delivery equals children accessing alcohol,” Mr Thorn said.

FARE agrees with the study's conclusion that both existing government regulation and industry self-regulation are not adequate.

"Governments are responsible for protecting communities and the CAPR research has emphasised significant regulatory gaps in our existing system of safeguards against alcohol harm," Mr Thorn said.

"For example, age verification is only sporadically used, concerns around rapid delivery and delivery late at night have not been addressed, and there are no requirements to reduce the delivery of alcohol to people already intoxicated. This puts vulnerable people at even greater risk, including dependent drinkers and people at risk from someone else's drinking," he said.

Mr Thorn says online sales and delivery of alcohol must be regulated, and that compliance with regulations must be monitored and enforced by governments as a matter of public interest, otherwise this market disruption will undermine alcohol controls in Australia.

"FARE has identified seven key principles that would guide the development of strong, proactive policies for online sales and home delivery that are focused on preventing alcohol harm to the community," Mr Thorn said.

"We call on governments to urgently consider this new research and policy principles to help safeguard all Australians," he said.

Ends

**Mr Thorn and Dr Callinan are available for interview. Contact Clare Ross, FARE Media Manager on 0429 291120**

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The **Centre for Alcohol Policy Research (CAPR)** is an innovative, world-class research facility examining alcohol-related harms and the effectiveness of alcohol-related policies. The Centre, which receives funding from the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) and La Trobe University, is led by Professor Emmanuel Kuntsche and Professor Robin Room. To find out more visit [www.capr.edu.au](http://www.capr.edu.au)

**La Trobe University** is an Australian public institute founded in 1964. In 1967, 552 students enrolled at La Trobe University, the third university to open in Victoria. It has grown to accommodate more than 30,000 students including approximately 7,600 international students from over 90 countries. It now has a network of campuses with 21,000 students at our Melbourne campus and over 5,900 at our campuses in Albury-Wodonga, Bendigo, Mildura, Melbourne City, and Shepparton. [www.latrobe.edu.au/](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/)

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. To find out more visit [www.fare.org.au](http://www.fare.org.au).