

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF IMPACT

Impact Report

2001-2021

fare.

Foundation for Alcohol
Research & Education

ABOUT FARE

The Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education (FARE) is a not-for-profit organisation working towards an Australia free from alcohol harms.

We approach this through developing evidence-informed policy, enabling people-powered advocacy and delivering health promotion programs.

Working 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.

To know more about us and our work, visit fare.org.au

You can get in touch via email at info@fare.org.au

FARE is a registered charity, and every dollar you give helps fund projects keeping our communities healthy and safe. [Click here to donate.](#)

CONTENTS

Message from the CEO	4
Investing in Community	6
Building Evidence	15
Shaping Policy to Put Health First	18
Raising Awareness to Prevent Harm	23
Achieving Change Through People Power	30
A Case Study: Creating Change on Alcohol and Pregnancy	39
Looking Forward	49

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education (FARE) is celebrating a huge milestone – we have turned 20!

I am proud to present FARE's Impact Report, which highlights our two-decade-long journey and some of our significant contributions that have brought real-world change and shifted the public narrative on alcohol harms.

We started our journey as the Alcohol Education & Rehabilitation Foundation (AERF) – a grant-giving organisation that supported community groups and researchers working in alcohol prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. It fills us with pride knowing that many of these groups are continuing to do vital work across the country.

A decade later, we built on this work and continued our focus on research, while building advocacy for evidence-informed policies using all that we'd learnt. During this time, we collaborated to shape policy and programs that protect families and communities from alcohol harm.

We also became a trusted source of accurate and honest information for Australians looking to understand the health risks of alcohol and reduce risky drinking. To date, our health promotion programs have reached hundreds of thousands of people across Australia.

We have also realised the true potential of people power. Together with community organisations and grassroots advocates, we are now building a movement of everyday Australians who want our elected representatives to prioritise our health and hold alcohol companies accountable for the harm their products cause.

Yes, we've come a long way.

Twenty years ago, research in Australia into alcohol harm reduction and prevention was developing.

Today there is a strong community of world-leading researchers contributing to solutions to reduce alcohol harm in Australia and across the world.

Twenty years ago, awareness about the risks of drinking alcohol during pregnancy such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) was still nascent. Today our collective efforts have helped us establish FASD diagnostic centres and nationwide awareness programs.

These are just few of the many things that demonstrate FARE's impact. And we are proud of it.

However, the most humbling aspect of being part of FARE is listening to the stories of everyday people and recognising the lives we have positively impacted along the way. Throughout this report, you will come across stories from people – community leaders, decision makers, and people with lived experience of alcohol harms – who continue to be inspired by our work. Hearing what they have to say about us gives us confidence that we are headed in the right direction.

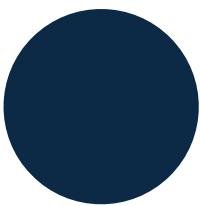
While we cannot include our entire 20-year journey in this report, each decision that we took, each activity that we conducted, and each conversation that we had contributed to changing the public narrative and policy settings around alcohol harms in Australia.

I would like to thank past and present Board Chairpersons – Professor Ian Webster AO, Cheryl Bart AO, Andrew Fairley AM, and Mark Textor – and all other board members whose guidance and expertise have been instrumental in changing the conversation around alcohol harm. I would also like to acknowledge and thank my predecessors – the late Daryl Smeaton and Michael Thorn – whose leadership helped us become an organisation that is at the forefront of alcohol policy, advocacy, and awareness. Finally, I would like to thank the more than 100 people who have worked at FARE (and AERF) over the past 20 years – it is because of their passion, dedication, and knowledge that we have been able to witness real-world changes.

Our impact isn't defined by a particular project or milestone. It is defined by our journey. And this journey has been worthwhile because everyday people across our country were a part of it.

As we look forward to the future, we will continue our dedication to working with the community towards an Australia free from alcohol harm

Caterina Giorgi
Chief Executive Officer



INVESTING IN COMMUNITY



“We want our funds wherever applied to be a legacy for the future, a platform on which future actions can be built.”

– Professor Ian Webster AO, Chair of AERF, 2001

As an organisation, we oversaw one of the most significant national funding investments in alcohol support services, programs and research in Australian history.

These investments had impacts beyond the issue of alcohol. It boosted the capacity of other related health support services, including the broader alcohol and other drug (AOD) sector.



Our origin story

In 2001, the Australian Parliament established the Alcohol Education & Rehabilitation Foundation (AERF), with the purpose of helping prevent alcohol and other licit substance misuse, including petrol sniffing, particularly among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and young people.

AERF was independent of government, governed by a Constitution and Board of Directors. A major purpose of the organisation was to distribute government funding to professional and community groups, and that at least 20 per cent of this be targeted to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Beyond government funding, in 2005 AERF also established its status as a Health Promotion Charity.



National funding to build sector capacity and expertise

Throughout the first decade, we supported hundreds of organisations in Australia, many of which continue to thrive to this day. Funding has covered a diverse range of areas, including:

- Research – Increasing knowledge of the harms from alcohol and evaluating approaches to preventing harm
- Programs and services – Providing treatment and rehabilitation for people dealing with problems from alcohol use
- Education and awareness – Increasing community knowledge of alcohol risks and harms, such as health promotion campaigns
- Training and mentoring – Ensuring workers in the alcohol support sector are skilled and supported
- Community partnerships – Promoting grassroots action and encouraging local solutions to alcohol harm
- Sector collaboration – Enabling greater coordination and collaboration between organisations working to reduce alcohol harm
- Capital improvements – Building new facilities and improving existing ones, so people can receive services with dignity and professional staff are better supported in the work they do

Success stories from AERF grants

Funding the first Alcohol and Drug Healing Service for young Aboriginal people

In 2011, FARE helped establish Bunjilwarra, a Koori Youth Alcohol and Drug Healing Service for young Aboriginal people in Victoria. At the time, it was the first service of its kind in Australia to be solely dedicated towards helping young Aboriginal people. A decade later, Bunjilwarra continues to help young people, with the support of the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, Youth Support and Advocacy Services and the Victorian Government.



Bunjilwarra, Victoria

Building rehabilitation centres

Perth-based Cyrenian House is one of the oldest alcohol and drug rehabilitation centres in Australia. In 2006, it opened a new wing on its premises, which was funded by AERF. The centre as well as the AERF-funded wing still operates today.

As there was a need for rehabilitation facilities in often-neglected rural and remote areas, in 2006-07, AERF funded the Lyndon Withdrawal Unit, which operates today in Orange as Wyla. AERF provided funding to increase capacity as well as in the interim before government funding came on-stream. AERF was also successfully involved in securing continued government funding to support the future sustainability of this facility.



Youth Off The Streets

Supporting young people

Youth Off The Streets is one of the most renowned service providers in Australia for young people to ensure that they get the support and opportunities needed to succeed in life. AERF provided significant funding for capital and management improvements for its Dunlea Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Program, which is still active today.

Resourcing the first-ever FASD diagnostic centre

In 2010-11, we provided funding for the first screening and diagnostic service for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) at the Children's Hospital at Westmead NSW. Diagnostic services are now available in several Australian states as we grapple with the often-hidden disability of FASD.

Healthy Harold

Life Education Australia, whose mascot is the famous Healthy Harold, received support from AERF at several instances. For example, AERF funded the "Let's Talk" program, an initiative encouraging interaction between parents and their children and identifying issues related to alcohol and substance use disorders within the family as well as the wider community.



Life Education Australia's school program

Helping create healthier community sport

In 2004-05, AERF assisted with the national rollout of the Good Sports accreditation program, aimed at supporting community sporting clubs to be healthy and safe, especially in relation to alcohol. Today, the program continues to be delivered by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation and has almost 10,000 clubs accredited.

Early support for Hello Sunday Morning

In 2011, we helped fund an early evaluation of Hello Sunday Morning, an online initiative to help people change their relationship with alcohol. Hello Sunday Morning has since grown into an established health service and large online community, with over 60,000 downloads of their Daybreak support app.

AER - CHANGING THE WAY WE DRINK

AER Foundation Ltd
aerf.com.au

Changing the way we drink



www.aerf.com.au

Changing the way we drink



FARE'S JOURNEY

AERF is established with a key focus on funding investments in alcohol support services.



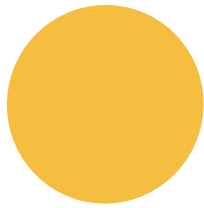
2001



2010



AERF became the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), signalling a greater focus on advocacy for evidence-based policies on alcohol harm.



2020

Along its work in influencing policies, FARE shifts its strategy to work more closely with local communities, values-aligned organisations, health professionals and researchers.





Professor Simone Pettigrew speaking at the *In their sights: The dark arts of digital alcohol marketing* event at Parliament House in 2019

BUILDING EVIDENCE



‘FARE has become a translator of research into policy action. We broker information, analyse research findings, and tease out the policy implications of this work, looking for what works and what doesn’t.’

– Cheryl Bart AO, FARE Chairperson, 2011

Our aim is to ensure that the latest research evidence informs decisions on alcohol policy and programs, which is vital for the health and wellbeing of Australians.

Communities also have a right to know about the latest evidence on the risks of alcohol, and alcohol companies must be held accountable for the true harms their products cause. In this section, we highlight several examples of this vital work.

Supporting world-leading alcohol research

Since its establishment in 2001, FARE (and AERF) invested over \$30 million in research. This funding has contributed to new evidence on alcohol harms and the effectiveness of programs and policies aimed at reducing these harms.

These have included large-scale national partnership projects supported by the Australia Research Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

FARE has also supported many students with research scholarships, such as the Ian Webster Scholarship, and attendance at international conferences. This support has meant we have played a key role in encouraging Australian researchers to build a career in alcohol research.

Establishing the Centre for Alcohol Policy Research

In 2006, AERF provided core funding to set up the Centre for Alcohol Policy Research (CAPR), a world-leading research centre, which is currently located at La Trobe University. This was to address a need in Australia for targeted research on alcohol harm and policies to reduce and prevent harm.

From providing accurate and honest information to national and international health agencies like NMHRC and World Health Organization (WHO), to producing evidence-based research to hold alcohol companies accountable for the harms they cause, CAPR's work has helped bring about some real-world change in the lives of all Australians.

For instance, CAPR staff members played crucial roles in developing the research base for the two most recent Australian Guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol (in 2009 and 2020).

Since 2006, CAPR's work to build the evidence base for policies to reduce alcohol-related harm in Australia and globally has resulted in more than 700 journal articles, more than 20 books, almost 100 book chapters and more than 100 scientific reports. There have also been countless contributions to policy positions, newsletters, blogs media releases, radio and TV interviews.

Today CAPR remains the only Australian research centre whose primary focus is on alcohol policy-relevant research.



'Harm to Others from Drinking'

Beginning in 2008, FARE funded the seminal '*Harm to Others from drinking*' study in Australia, which highlighted the many harms that alcohol use causes to people beyond the person drinking, including assault, accidents, child neglect and family violence.

This was the first study of its kind in the world and is now influencing research and policy in Australia and internationally.

Led by CAPR staff, the study has since been expanded internationally with WHO support, reaching countries such as New Zealand, Thailand, Chile, India and Nigeria.

Expansions of the study continue to this day, including a multi-year study due to deliver findings in 2023, ensuring that the extent of harms of alcohol to the community are understood.



Professor Marcia Langton at the *Harm to Others* launch in 2010

The Annual Alcohol Poll

Between 2011 and 2019, FARE conducted the Annual Alcohol Poll, highlighting the community's view of alcohol harm, a national picture of alcohol use and what Australians think need to be done by governments.

This has been an invaluable addition to other national surveys on alcohol and has provided information to organisations and decision makers to inform research and policy.

The poll has also highlighted issues of community awareness of alcohol risks where health promotion programs could focus its efforts.



Rapid evidence gathering during COVID-19

FARE has been at the forefront of monitoring changes to alcohol use and harm in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. We wanted to ensure the community and decision makers are aware of what needs to be done to protect people's health and wellbeing.

Our actions included:

- Collaborating with Movendi International, the largest independent global movement for development through alcohol prevention, to collate stories across the world on how the pandemic has exacerbated the harms due to alcohol usage.
- Conducting rapid surveys and research summaries in Australia, to monitor how alcohol use and harm is shifting due to the pandemic, such as our July 2020 report *Alcohol Use and Harm During COVID-19*.
- Revealing how alcohol companies have turned the pandemic into a marketing opportunity, with our joint report with Cancer Council WA *An Alcohol Ad Every 35 Seconds*. We also shone a light into how this aggressive marketing has resulted in big profits at the expensive of community health, through our reports on *Alcohol Retail During COVID-19* and *Online and Delivered Alcohol During COVID-19*.

SHAPING POLICY TO PUT HEALTH FIRST



“The transformation of AERF to FARE was a key moment in our history. We decided to become a permanent voice on alcohol policy, growing beyond our beginnings as a funding body.”

– **Scott Wilson, former Director of FARE**

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

Over 20 years, FARE has played a leading role in ensuring that evidence translates into alcohol policy that puts our health first.

This is no easy task. It requires being a trusted advisor to decision makers, presenting the case for change and the evidence to back it up. It also requires continuous collaboration with health and community organisations as well as with supporting individuals who have the courage to speak up about alcohol harm.

When these efforts combine, our leaders in government can implement lasting changes that we can be proud of. This section details FARE’s ongoing work to achieve policy reforms that put our health first.

Former Senator Richard Di Natale, Rosie Batty AO (Australian of the Year 2015), and Michael Thorn (former FARE CEO) at the launch of the *National framework for action to prevent alcohol-related family violence* in 2015



Advocating for alcohol tax reforms

Alcohol taxation, when applied by volume, is one of the most effective tools to reduce the harms caused by alcohol products.

FARE has long advocated for tax reform through a number of activities, contributing to ready-to-drink ('alcopops') tax reform, the Henry Tax Review, hosting tax seminars and forums, commissioning modelling research to understand the benefits of reforms to our current tax system, and calling for taxation reform in policy submissions and advocacy.

In particular, since 2011, FARE has been active in advocating for wine to be taxed based on alcoholic content instead of wholesale price, advocating for excise rates for beer and spirits to be aligned with the cost of living, and monitoring emerging products that take advantage of inequity in the taxation system.

Alcohol and family violence

Alcohol use is a risk factor in family violence, increasing the frequency and severity of violence. FARE has advocated with others for action on this issue, as well as the deeper causes of family violence including harmful cultural norms and structural inequalities.

FARE has contributed to a number of government consultations on family violence, providing recommendations on the intersection between alcohol and family violence.

In June 2015, FARE's National Framework for action to prevent alcohol-related family violence was launched by 2015 Australian of the Year Rosie Batty AO.

In 2020, we partnered with Women's Safety NSW to launch a research report on how the COVID-19 pandemic was impacting on alcohol-related family violence.

In 2021, we regularly partnered with Victorian family violence services such as Berry St and Wayss to advocate for better controls on alcohol availability.



“We must ask ourselves – are elevated levels of domestic abuse an acceptable tradeoff for allowing alcohol companies to aggressively promote rapid booze delivery into homes late at night?”

- Kym Valentine, Actor and a member of Victoria's Victim Survivors' Advisory Council

Achieving nationally significant policy reform in the Northern Territory

Tragically the Northern Territory (NT) has some of the highest rates of alcohol harm in Australia. To address this, FARE helped support the introduction of the Minimum Unit Price (MUP) in the NT. This was a watershed moment in the history of Australian alcohol policy.

In 2017, the NT government commissioned the Riley Review into alcohol policy options to reduce the rate of alcohol harms. The review recommended an MUP or 'floor price' on alcohol, to stop the sale of very cheap alcohol that can fuel harms.

In 2018 and 2019, FARE worked closely with local organisations to support the NT to become the first Australian jurisdiction to introduce an MUP. We also collaborated with the People's Alcohol Action Coalition to publish a report highlighting how the MUP had led to major reductions in alcohol harms across the NT.

Driving government action on growing risks of alcohol delivery

FARE has been leading national efforts to take action on the growing risks that online alcohol sale and delivery pose to our health and safety, such as alcohol supply to children and fuelling risky drinking.

In November 2019, FARE partnered with CAPR to complete a study on alcohol home delivery.

This study found there was a lack of age checks occurring at purchase and upon delivery, as well as risky drinking being fuelled by rapid deliveries. This evidence highlighted how a lack of regulation across Australia was creating an urgent need to act.

FARE advocated, alongside other community and health organisations, for the strengthening of online alcohol delivery controls. Laws were enacted in NSW that included mandatory age checks online and upon delivery. Since these landmark changes in NSW, other states such as Victoria have begun to implement laws to protect health and safety.

“Being able to shop online has made it harder to protect young people from buying alcohol. Governments need to do more to ensure alcoholic products cannot be sold to children.”

- Michael Perusco, CEO Berry Street



A student ambassador at a *Reduce Risky Drinking* event



RAISING AWARENESS TO PREVENT HARM

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

Throughout our history, we have had the opportunity to implement awareness programs on behalf of state, territory and federal governments. These programs have helped provide reliable and accurate information to people from different backgrounds and communities about the harms caused by alcohol and the benefits of reducing risky drinking.

Our programs are always founded on robust evidence and developed in-concert with local communities, to ensure they are effective and ultimately empower people.

In this section, we highlight our key awareness programs that demonstrate our approach and impact towards reducing risky drinking and alcohol harm.

Guiding youth in the Kimberley region

Problem: Young people in the Kimberley region identified key alcohol-related issues including binge drinking, alcohol-related violence, and drink driving. This gave rise for a need to address these alcohol-related issues among young people.

Solution: Goolarri Media in partnership with AERF developed a powerful TV and radio-based alcohol awareness campaign in 2009.

The overall goal of the campaign was to assist young people to make informed choices about alcohol.

In this project, 100 students, 10 project staff, seven media technicians and 10 facilitators were responsible for the campaign development and delivery.

Impact: This project received the National Drug and Alcohol Awards, Excellence in Alcohol and Other Drug Media Reporting.

Australian Pharmacy Guild's *Alcohol Standard Drink* Awareness campaign

Problem: As the interaction between alcohol and medication may contribute to serious health risks, consumers need to be aware of these potential effects.

Solution: AERF funded the Australian Pharmacy Guild to run the *Alcohol Standard Drink Awareness* campaign. The aim was to increase public awareness of the actual alcohol content of various alcoholic beverages.

In this campaign, on the inside cover of a pharmacy prescription folder there was a drink chart depicting standard drink sizes and on the outside a message about how to reduce risks from drinking. Pharmacists could advise on drug and alcohol interactions as well as providing advice on general consumption issues.

Impact: More than half of the direct folder recipients read the majority of the content, with many discussing with friends and family. This campaign increased the awareness of alcohol content in different drinks, recommended drink limits to reduce risk, and how alcohol can affect medication.

The most positive result was that the campaign increased the likelihood and ease of consumers approaching pharmacists with issues concerning alcohol, medication and/or interaction between alcohol and medication.



“Some medications, when taken with just one alcoholic drink can cause drowsiness or dizziness. This can be particularly dangerous when driving or operating machinery. Alcohol can also dampen the activity in the brain and so, if taken with medications that have a similar effect, can be particularly dangerous or even fatal.”

- John Bronger, National President of the Pharmacy Guild 1994-2005



Game Changer+: Increasing student literacy around harmful alcohol advertising

Problem: Research shows that children are exposed to a constant stream of alcohol advertising, and that their drinking attitudes and behaviours are strongly influenced by exposure to these messages.

Solution: In 2014, FARE developed *Game Changer+*, an initiative to minimise risky drinking by using a curriculum designed to equip students with key media literacy skills so that they can think critically about what they’re seeing and make informed choices regarding their consumption of alcohol.

This was based upon a successful New South Wales initiative developed by a team of researchers from the Australian Catholic University’s Centre for Health and Social Research (CHaSR) in Melbourne.

The eight-lesson program, which complemented schools’ existing health education curriculum, was an effective ‘counter marketing’ intervention and was piloted with Year 9 and 10 students at four Canberra schools.

Impact: The research suggested that the curriculum package had success in increasing students’ alcohol advertising literacy. In particular, students became more aware of alcohol companies’ motives towards advertising, such as knowing that many alcohol companies try to get young people to start drinking alcohol.

“It’s important that we support and empower young people in our community to make healthy choices around alcohol consumption that will become a foundation for their adult lives.”

- Meegan Fitzharris, ACT Health Minister 2016-2019





Reduce Risky Drinking: Changing students' perceptions around risky drinking

Problem: Australian studies have shown that overall alcohol consumption among people aged 18-24 years is declining. However, many young people in this age group who consume alcohol do so at very risky levels, placing them at risk of short- and long-term harm.

Solution: In 2016, FARE launched *Reduce Risky Drinking*, a 3-year program to assess the alcohol norms held by university students in the ACT, to address misperceptions about alcohol, and to increase students' confidence to discuss risky drinking.

We challenged the misperception that drinking to get drunk or 'binge-drinking' is normal. We did this by sharing research findings that a minority of young people engage in binge-drinking, in turn easing social pressure on others to drink at risky levels.

The *Reduce Risky Drinking* project was a collaboration between FARE, the Department of Health, the Australian National University (ANU), and the University of Canberra (UC).

Impact: The evaluation showed that student perceptions of risky drinking aligned more closely with reality after the campaign. This also corresponded with a significant drop in students drinking above guidelines for short-term risk (more than 4 standard drinks a day), from 61 per cent in 2017 to 37 per cent in 2019. The project successfully showcased how a social-norms approach to alcohol health promotion can be implemented across other universities in Australia.



“There’s definitely been a shift, and that can be seen in a number of ways – some of the bigger events that we hold on campus that historically have been large drinking events with lots of high-risk drinking have calmed down a lot, and the number of incidents that have occurred have been a lot less.”

- Andrew Giumelli, UC student and SRC Secretary 2019

Ripple: Supporting over 200 women to cut drinking and pilot insights for further programs

Problem: There has been 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 over 40 years 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 the ACT Government, 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 and randomised control trial (RCT) to test effective ways women could be supported to reduce their drinking

Impact: More than 200 women enrolled in the RCT during the nine-week recruitment period. The evidence from this study will help lay the groundwork to understand better the effectiveness of online interventions and support measures needed for women over 40 years to reduce their drinking.

The results of the evaluation and follow-up survey on how effective the program has been at encouraging women to reduce their drinking will be available in 2022.

“As a GP, I have met with many women in our community who said that they feel great and well-rested when they cut back on drinking. And personally, I know how important it is to stay healthy and cut back on alcohol to help reduce the chances of short- and long-term health risks.”

- Dr Anita Hutchison, a Canberra-based general practitioner



Reduce Your Risk: Raising awareness that alcohol causes cancer

Problem: The WHO has classified alcohol as a group 1 carcinogen – the highest-level category, meaning there is convincing evidence that alcohol causes cancer. However, there have been a lot of mixed messages about the health impacts of alcohol, and this means many people are unaware that alcohol causes a range of cancers.

Solution: With funding from the ACT Government, FARE sought to address this knowledge gap in the Canberra community.

A public campaign across a combination of TV, radio, streaming services, GP surgeries, print and digital media aimed to increase people’s awareness of the updated Alcohol Guidelines, the link between alcohol and cancer, the types of cancers caused by alcohol, and the need to discuss their alcohol use with their doctor.

Impact: The campaign website, which included information for people about alcohol and cancer, what they can do to reduce their risks, tips and tricks for cutting down their drinking, and where to find help saw more than 20,000 website visits from people and health professionals over the campaign period.

The campaign had over 1.5 million advert impressions, including over 560,000 video views on social media and 184,000 on television.

This led to a dramatic increase in the number of Canberrans who became aware of the link between alcohol and cancer and those who could name one or more types of cancer caused by alcohol.

The campaign also saw an increase in awareness of the updated Alcohol Guidelines and an increase of the number of people who could correctly identify the recommended daily or weekly maximum numbers of standard drinks to reduce the risk of alcohol-related disease or injury.



“The campaign has highlighted a gap in awareness around the link between alcohol and cancer, and it has done some amazing work in bringing this issue to the forefront in our community.”

- Verity Hawkins, Cancer Council ACT CEO

oh!

Alcohol and cancer go together



Reduce your drinking to reduce your risk



Talk to your doctor today to learn more



ACT

fare

Coalition of Alcohol Treatment & Education

NO MORE THAN

4 **10**
on any day standard drinks a week

ACHIEVING CHANGE THROUGH PEOPLE POWER



“Experience-based policy advocacy is very powerful. People who are in the community, who see the problems every day, can speak from the basis of this experience”

– Professor Robin Room, Distinguished Professor at the Centre for Alcohol Policy Research

We want people’s voices to be heard by decision-makers in government and for companies that sell alcohol products to be accountable for the harm their products cause.

People have power when they come together for a shared cause. Decision makers listen when we speak with a united voice, which is the foundation of our democracy.

FARE works with grassroots advocates and community organisations to ensure that the voices of everyday Australians are heard – what we call people-powered advocacy.

We highlight the impact created by our advocacy work, which is testament to the fact that when communities are at the heart of decision-making, real-world change is possible.



FARE staff with Deborah Di Natale (left), CEO of Northern Territory Council of Social Service



FARE staff with participants at the 2019 KBS Thematic Meeting: Public Health and the Global Governance of Alcohol

Building alliances across Australia

In 2007, AERF created the National Alliance against Alcohol-Related Violence (NAARV), which consisted of 60 organisations advocating for an agreed set of evidence-based policy changes to reduce alcohol-related harms in our communities.

This alliance building approach continues to this day. Since this time, FARE worked with a number of coalitions of health, community, and frontline organisations in different jurisdictions with an interest in preventing and reducing alcohol harm. These include the National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA), Alcohol Change Victoria (ACV), NSW ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance (NAAPA), Queensland Coalition for Action on Alcohol (QCAA), and People's Alcohol Action Coalition (PAAC) in the NT.

FARE contributes to and supports activities calling for effective evidenced-based alcohol policy and advocacy through engaging with decision makers, joint submissions, engaging in public discussions, hosting events, and coming together to take action.

This collaboration allows organisations to work together and share resources and expertise. They also allow greater understanding of the different ways in which people experience alcohol harm in the community and the factors that contribute to this.

Participating in international civil society

Alcohol harm is a global issue that requires international collaboration. FARE's role as a global citizen is important to ensure all nations are prepared to tackle alcohol harms, especially with an alcohol industry that is increasingly operating across borders.

We have provided, and continue to provide, input into world forums such as the WHO's development of alcohol policy strategies.

Much of our research efforts have also involved international researchers and organisations, including our co-hosting of the 2017 Global Alcohol Policy Conference in Melbourne.



The 2017 Global Alcohol Policy Conference in Melbourne, co-hosted by FARE

Amplifying community power to hold corporations accountable

After almost five years, in 2021, Woolworths conceded to public pressure and 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.

What did we achieve?

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 Northern Territory (NT), we stood with Aunty Helen from the 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.



Aboriginal community leaders opposing the Dan Murphy's alcohol megastore in Darwin

What was the issue?

Since 2016, 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, a dry Aboriginal community in Darwin.

Woolworths pursued this store in the face of community opposition and concern, in the full knowledge that the 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 alcohol harm.

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

KEY MOMENTS

- SEPTEMBER 2019** ● The NT Liquor Commission rejects Woolworths’ application for the store. In making its decision, the Commission finds that “approving the application would lead to a significant increase in the level of alcohol-related harms which already exist in this community.”
- OCTOBER 2019 - OCTOBER 2020** ● Woolworths lobbies government to reconsider its application. It appeals to the NT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT) and then the Supreme Court, both of which are unsuccessful.
- NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2020** ● The Government passes legislation to allow another reconsideration of the proposed development, this time bypassing normal consultation so the decision can be made by just one person - the Director of Liquor Licensing.

● Community action builds momentum:

 - A change.org petition hits more than 130,000 signatures.
 - Community members speak out at the Woolworths AGM.
 - An Open Letter from 45 organisations and community leaders to the Woolworth’s Chairperson is published in the Australian Financial Review.
- DECEMBER 2020** ● The Director of Liquor Licensing approves the Woolworth’s application amid community outrage.

● Woolworths announces a review of their proposed store led by Danny Gilbert, co-founder and managing partner of law firm Gilbert + Tobin, to consider whether Woolworths had behaved appropriately in their community engagement.
- JANUARY - MARCH 2021** ● The community makes its voice heard loud and clear during the review process, with frequent media attention.
- APRIL 2021** ● Mr Gilbert and his panel submit their report, stating the development should not go ahead because local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities were not adequately consulted during the process.

● Woolworths concedes. After almost a five-year battle, Woolworths decides not to proceed with the alcohol megastore in Darwin.



“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.”

- Aunty Helen Fejo Frith, Bagot Aboriginal Community

Driving a national conversation about alcohol harm

Public discussion on alcohol harm in Australia has gained significant momentum over the past 20 years, and FARE has played a leading role in this.

Since its inception, FARE has released more than 400 media statements, sparking regular conversations about alcohol harm in Australia.

Since 2010, FARE has also made over 200 submissions to public inquiries and reviews. These submissions have been for consultation processes at state and territory, national and international levels, and undertaken by governments and government agencies. These submissions play an important role in ensuring agenda setting by governments considers the harms from alcohol.

Since 2012, with over 800 online articles in Drink Tank, a website for commentary and debate about alcohol in Australia, and FARE blog site, FARE has been a platform for people from all walks of life – researchers, policymakers, government officials, community leaders, and everyday people to talk about alcohol and the harms caused to communities.

2001-
2021:

400+

MEDIA STATEMENTS

200+

SUBMISSIONS

800+

BLOG POSTS





Kristen Davidson, a *Pregnant Pause* ambassador



A CASE STUDY: CREATING CHANGE ON ALCOHOL AND PREGNANCY

For too long, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) has not been well understood both in Australia and internationally. This has meant people with FASD and their families do not receive the support they need. However, this is now starting to change thanks to continued efforts by FARE and other community organisations and individuals.

Today, after investments in research and diagnostic centres, awareness programs, and active community engagement, we have contributed to ensuring there is national awareness and action on the risks of drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

In this section, we talk about how FARE worked with people with FASD and their families, community groups, grassroots organisations, health professionals, researchers, and decision-makers to create change to prevent FASD and ensure there are better diagnostic and support services for people with FASD.

“While FARE is only one of several key organisations in Australia raising awareness on alcohol and pregnancy, it is in the field of political activism that FARE excels. Not only has FARE developed the programs, ‘Women Want to Know’, and ‘Pregnant Pause’, they have actively lobbied government representatives to elevate FASD to be a recognised disability... Without FARE, it is unlikely we would have achieved the level of awareness that we currently have in Australia.”



- Anne Russell, Russell Family Fetal Alcohol Disorders Association

What is the problem?

Drinking alcohol 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 official government health guidelines – women who are pregnant, planning pregnancy or breastfeeding should not drink alcohol – is not well understood.

Investing for the future generation

In 2010, AERF announced a new multi-pronged program aimed at reducing the number of children born with FASD. This work complemented the Government's study into assessing the prevalence of FASD and its impact on the health service needs of children and their families in the Fitzroy Valley, WA.

Our investment of over \$500,000 included seven projects across Australia to shed light on FASD, such as:

- The Children's Hospital at Westmead, New South Wales: To develop Australia's first screening and diagnostic service for FASD (\$108,000 grant).
- The National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, New South Wales: To undertake a research study aimed at improving services for pregnant women dependent on alcohol (\$50,057 grant); and another study to help improve services to families affected by FASD (\$50,057 grant).
- The University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research: To carry out an Australian-first study into the knowledge and training gaps within the state's criminal justice agencies regarding FASD (\$63,560 grant).
- The Telethon Institute for Child Health Research: To undertake an Australian-first research study into how young people with FASD are treated by the criminal justice system in Western Australia (\$50,000 grant); and another into the screening and diagnosis of children with FASD in State care (\$150,000 grant).
- The George Institute for Global Health: To contribute to the production of a feature documentary about the life of an Aboriginal child with FASD, and an educational film about the broader issue of FASD (\$40,000).

Putting FASD on the national agenda

FARE, alongside other organisations and advocates such as the National Organisation for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (NOFASD), have been instrumental to ensuring there is federal government action on FASD.

In 2011, FARE made a submission to the House of Representatives Inquiry into FASD and appeared before a public hearing of the Inquiry in 2012.

At this hearing, FARE tabled a four-year action plan that it had developed to reduce FASD. The [*Australian Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Action Plan 2013–2016*](#) provided a detailed plan that addressed five priority areas: increasing awareness of FASD, increasing diagnostic capability, improved services and support for people with FASD, improved data collection, and efforts to close the gap among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This plan was developed in conjunction with wide range of groups including researchers, service providers, policy experts, and people with lived experience.

It was then presented to the House of Representatives Inquiry, where in its final report *FASD: The Hidden Harm Inquiry into the prevention, diagnosis and management of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders* recommended the introduction of a FASD National Action Plan, a key recommendation of the FARE submission, and introduction of mandatory health warning labels.

The report acknowledged the work done by FARE in developing the above action plan, saying:

'On 12 September 2012, FARE launched *The Australian Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Action Plan 2013–2016*. The Committee commends FARE for their work on FASD and considers that the actions from this plan are a useful adjunct to the recommendations of this report.'

This national leadership contributed to the creation of national FASD strategies, including the Australian Government's current National FASD Strategic Action Plan 2018–2028.

In 2014, we made a Submission to the NT *Select Committee on Action to Prevent Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder*. We also appeared before the Inquiry at a [public hearing](#) in May 2014 and raised FASD in related submissions in areas such as drug and alcohol policy, justice, and children's health.

In 2019, FARE provided a submission to [The Community Affairs References Committee Inquiry](#) into *Effective approaches to Prevention, Diagnosis and Support for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder*.

There were many meetings with parliamentarians because of this coordinated effort and opportunities for public debate through government Inquiries and activities such as the [Conference on FASD](#) in Australia, the Australasian Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Conference in Brisbane in 2013, which was hosted by PHAA and FARE.



Hon Catherine King MP and Amy Ferguson (former Director of Policy and Research at FARE) raising awareness for FASD Awareness Day 2017

Pregnant Pause: Achieving alcohol-free pregnancies

Between 2013 and 2020, FARE delivered *Pregnant Pause* with the help of the ACT Government to achieve alcohol-free pregnancies.

During this period, we met with mums- and dads-to-be, health professionals, families and carers in the ACT to share the message that there is no safe amount, no safe time, and no safe type of alcohol during pregnancy.

The campaign featured an extensive digital and social media component coupled with television and radio advertisements, community activities, and local events.

In 2019, we also launched *Pregnant Pause: Community Heroes*, a project reaching 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.





age  PREGNANTPAUSE

Pregnant Pause wrap-up event in Canberra in 2021

Women Want To Know: Supporting health professionals

Developed in collaboration with leading health professional bodies across Australia, in 2014 FARE launched *Women Want to Know*, a program which provided online training and resources to support health professionals and women who are pregnant, planning pregnancy or breastfeeding, to access important information about the guidelines.

FARE's promotional activities were successful in prompting 60,000 requests for printed resources, driving more than 18,000 visitors to the campaign website, and had a positive impact on the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours of general practitioners, midwives, obstetricians, and gynaecologists across Australia.



Achieving visible health warnings on alcohol products

For more than 20 years, people with FASD, their families, health groups, and community organisations such as NOFASD have been advocating for visible pregnancy warning labels on alcohol products. In 2020, these health warnings became a reality.

In 2011, FARE commissioned [research](#) into attitudes and perceptions about health warnings on alcohol products. We also contributed to the development of the NAAA Submission to the Labelling Review.



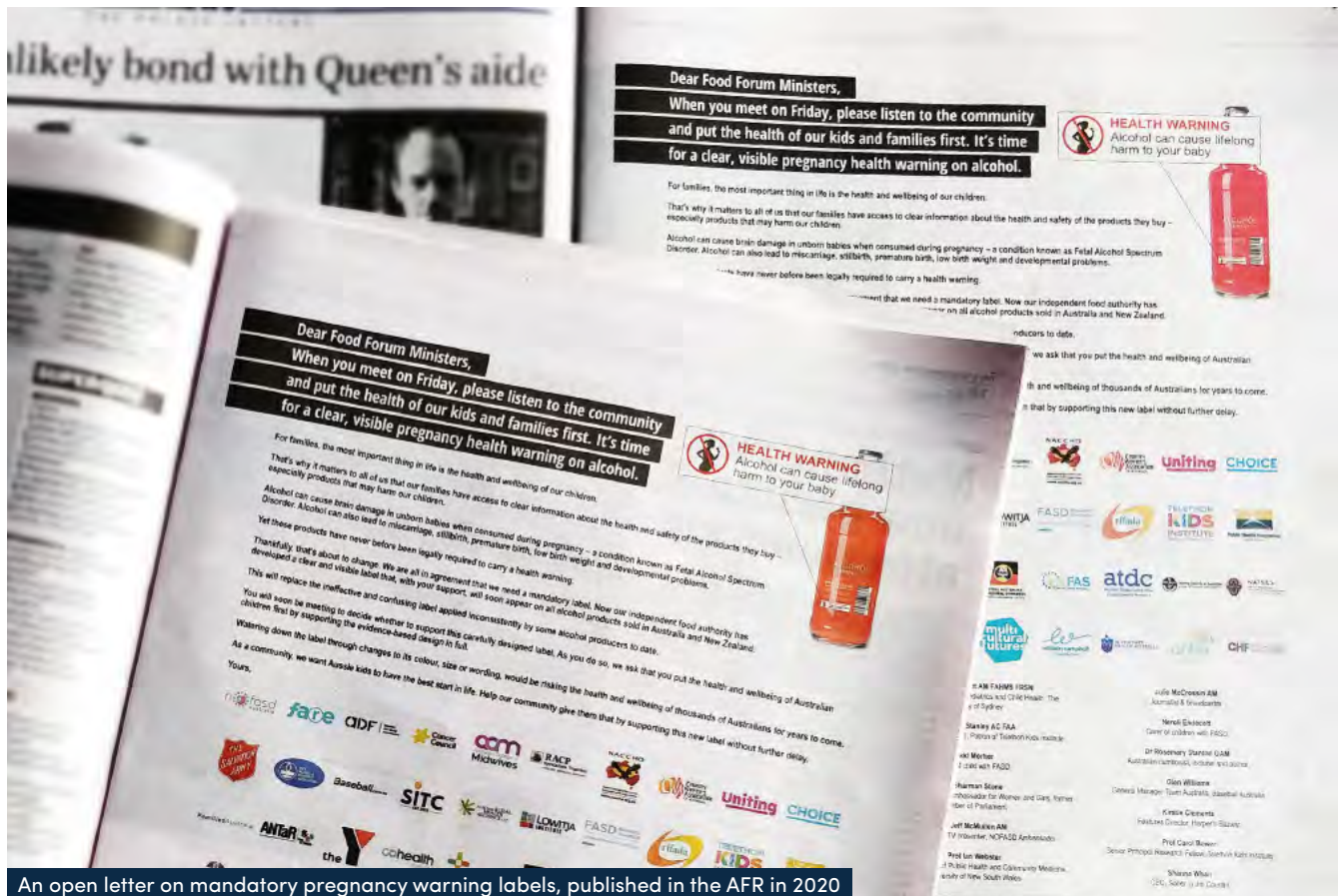
Pregnancy warning label approved by decision makers in 2020

FARE continued to put pressure on Forum on Food Regulation (FoFR) to introduce mandatory health warning labels over the years as evaluations of implementation of the industry’s voluntary labels showed slow uptake, lack of consistency, misleading messages, and poor visibility.

In 2018, FARE prepared its [submission](#) and supported other community organisations to make submissions to the FoFR regarding pregnancy warning labels, calling for a mandatory label that was developed by FSANZ to ensure an evidence-based label that would be visible and understood and would likely be effective in changing behaviour.

In July 2020, Food Forum Ministers were to meet to make final decision whether to support the evidence-based health warning label in full – or concede to alcohol corporation requests, who wanted to water down elements of the label that would make it effective.

Health and community advocates knew this was the final chance for the long-fought label.



An open letter on mandatory pregnancy warning labels, published in the AFR in 2020

Thousands of Australians around the country put incredible heart and energy into making sure alcohol companies would not drown out community voices. We shared insights into the policy-making process, helped community members navigate conversations with decision-makers, created video content to reach a wider audience via social media and supported advocates to share their stories in the national press. 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.

When the Ministers met 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.

Every Moment Matters: Launching a nationwide awareness program

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.

The program aims to increase the proportion of Australians who are aware of the risks associated with alcohol use during pregnancy such as FASD and reduce the incidence of FASD in Australia by supporting and informing women to make healthy choices while planning and during pregnancy.

The program will launch in November 2021 and be delivered over 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 groups of people:

- General public
- Women at higher risk of having alcohol-exposed pregnancies
- Health professionals
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

FARE is working collaboratively with NOFASD, National Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisations (NACCHO), and a range of health professionals, community leaders, and consumer organisations on the national awareness program.

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



“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

The moment you
**start
trying**

is the moment to
**stop
drinking**





LOOKING FORWARD

This Impact Report celebrates the 20-year history of FARE. This celebration is important to acknowledge the years of hard work by FARE staff, partner organisations and supporters.

The report has provided a snapshot of our significant progress towards our vision of an Australia free from alcohol harms. But as we know, there is still more work needed to achieve this vision.

As we enter our third decade, we look forward to this work in collaboration with local communities, values-aligned organisations, health professionals and researchers.

Our [Strategic Plan 2021-2023](#) provides a clear plan of action for us to follow and measure progress.

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 fare.org.au/subscribe.

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

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







fare.

Foundation for Alcohol
Research & Education