

FARE welcomes crossbench call to restrict marketing of harmful products

31 May 2023:

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) has welcomed a call by crossbench MPs for the Federal Government to introduce measures that protect children and people who are most vulnerable from harmful product marketing including alcohol, gambling and unhealthy food.

MPs Dr Sophie Scamps, Ms Zali Steggall, Ms Allegra Spender, Mr Andrew Wilkie, Ms Kate Chaney, Ms Kylea Tink, Dr Monique Ryan, Ms Zoe Daniel, Dr Helen Haines and Ms Rebekha Sharkie on Wednesday called on the Government to close loopholes that allow companies to “saturate broadcast and social media with harmful product marketing”.

FARE CEO Caterina Giorgi said the crossbench MPs, many of whom are medical professionals, represented widespread community concern about being bombarded with ads for alcohol, gambling and unhealthy foods.

“By the time a child reaches 13 years of age, 72 million data points will have been collected on them – and this is used to build a profile of them so that marketing can be used to most effectively target them.” Ms Giorgi said. “Alcohol and gambling companies are using this data to track, trace and target our children with marketing online.

“This is an alarming statistic. When it comes to addictive products like alcohol and gambling this targeted marketing causes significant harm.”

Research has shown that Facebook and Instagram collect hundreds of data points on young people aged 16 to 25 years, [with 42 per cent assigned terms like ‘alcohol’, ‘alcoholic drinks’, ‘bars’, ‘bartender’ and ‘beer’ as advertising interests, including children.](#)

“We are now in an environment where every phone is a bottle shop and a poker machine,” Ms Giorgi said. “Common sense measures are needed to protect children and people at risk of harm from this predatory marketing. This is particularly important as we know that the earlier children are exposed to alcohol advertising, the more likely they are to drink alcohol at a younger age and in larger amounts.”

As a first step, the Government can protect the community by legislating strong protections in the new Privacy Act, including include a fair and reasonable test that looks at the best interests of the child – as recommended by [the Attorney-General’s Privacy Act review.](#)

“Children should be able to go online to learn and play without being tracked and their data harvested by alcohol companies,” Ms Giorgi said.

Caterina Giorgi, CEO Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education is available for interview.

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