

Community and health leaders call on Governments to address alcohol's role in family violence

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Community, health, Aboriginal and research organisations from across Australia are calling on National Cabinet to address the role alcohol plays in fueling men's violence against women and children.

In an [open letter](#) addressed to the members of National Cabinet, community and health leaders are asking for alcohol harm reduction measures to be included in the suite of actions agreed upon in tomorrow's urgent meeting on men's violence against women.

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) CEO Caterina Giorgi said that alcohol needs to be part of the conversation.

"At this time of crisis, we need leaders to take action to prevent more women from dying. We can no longer ignore the role of alcohol in gender based and family violence.

"If we are going to prevent family violence, we need to ensure that better alcohol regulations are part of the suite of measures that are adopted.

"Alcohol increases both the frequency and severity of family violence and there is an urgent need to address this.

"It's time for our political leaders to acknowledge that alcohol companies are profiting from pushing alcohol into homes late at night, fueling intoxication and violence – and there are evidence-based policy solutions that can address this."

Kym Valentine, an experienced television/theatre actor and Survivor Advocate, said that governments need to place onus for change on alcohol companies, not just individual Australians.

"When perpetrators of violence can have alcohol delivered into their home at any time of day or night, with the push of a button, it makes a volatile situation infinitely worse."

A recently released White Paper on Primary Prevention by Jess Hill and Professor Michael Salter outlines that governments need to address the commercial determinants of violence including alcohol.

[Australian evidence shows that](#) the increased density of alcohol outlets, particularly packaged liquor outlets like bottle-shops, increases rates of family violence.

A [further study in New South Wales](#) 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 data clearly demonstrates that alcohol is a significant contributor to family violence, with [alcohol involved in between 23 and 65 per cent](#) of all family violence incidents reported by police.

[Alcohol use by perpetrators of violence](#) also increases the severity of family violence, leading to higher rates of physical violence and injury.

The open letter outlines a range of measures to better regulate alcohol that governments can introduce 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.

Ms Giorgi said that Australians have made it clear that the current approach of awareness-raising and focus on individual responsibility to prevent violence isn't enough.

“It's only April and 27 women have died this year alone. We need our country's leaders to ensure evidence-based policies to better regulate alcohol are adopted and properly implemented across the country as part of a comprehensive approach to preventing further deaths.”

Available for interview:

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- Kym Valentine, Survivor Advocate

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The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is a not-for-profit organisation with a vision for an Australia free from alcohol harms – where communities are healthy and well and where laws, policies and programs are fair, equitable and just.

Working with local communities, people with lived experience of alcohol harm, values-aligned organisations, health professionals, researchers and governments across the nation, we are improving the health and wellbeing of everyone in Australia.

To learn more about us and our work visit www.fare.org.au