

## **Call for moratorium on facial recognition technology use in alcohol and gambling venues across Australia**

### **Alarming potential to breach the privacy of people who are vulnerable**

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**Pubs, bars and casinos are using facial recognition technology (FRT) to monitor customers and exclude those with addictions – despite warnings from human rights experts that these technologies violate privacy laws.**

This alarming development has prompted the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) and the Alliance for Gambling Reform (AGR) to join forces to write to the liquor and gaming regulator in every State and Territory seeking an immediate moratorium on the use of FRT in these venues.

The organisations want an explanation on the extent of the use of FRT in alcohol and gambling venues together with an immediate halt on its use until current investigations by the Australian Information Commissioner and the Human Rights Commission have concluded, and appropriate new legislation has been introduced.

“We are gravely concerned about the use of FRT to exclude, isolate, blame and punish people with dependencies, at the cost of other, more effective and system-wide responses,” the letter says.

“We are also concerned about the potential use of FRT data for targeted advertising of addictive products to individuals who are especially vulnerable to the harms that these products can cause.”

There is also concern that due to the error rate of FRT - especially the proven failure of the technology to correctly identify people of colour, women and people with a disability - that people will be mistakenly identified and wrongly banned from venues or even arbitrarily detained and arrested.

Media reports have indicated that 15 venues in South Australia, two in the Australian Capital Territory, and 170 in New Zealand are using its technology.

South Australia has implemented a framework for the use of FRT in hotels, clubs and the casino, while Crown Casino Melbourne has facial recognition technology to detect possible breaches in self-excluded individuals.

“The gambling industry has a business model based on exploiting vulnerable people, there is no chance that they can be trusted to self-regulate this technology and unless it is independently regulated it will lead to more gambling harm,” the CEO of the Alliance for Gambling Reform, Carol Bennett, said.

“We need to thoroughly scrutinise the use of this invasive technology and ensure that the right checks and balances are in place so that our communities aren’t taken advantage of and that their health and safety is prioritised.” the CEO of the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), Caterina Giorgi, said.

**Media contact:** Martin Thomas – 0477 340 704  
See [here](#) for a *gambling language guide for journalists*.