

For immediate release

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New laws in NSW close loopholes for online alcohol delivery

Community organisations have welcomed new legislation in NSW to hold alcohol companies that sell their products online to a higher standard.

The rapid growth of alcohol being sold online and delivered directly into people's homes has raised concerns among family violence specialists.

"COVID-19 has increased the already unacceptably high risk of violence for many women and children.

"While it's not the primary driver of family violence, alcohol can increase both its severity and frequency.

"73 per cent of family violence specialists report that they have noticed an escalation in violence and abuse triggered by alcohol and drug use during COVID-19," said Ms Hayley Foster, CEO of Women's Safety NSW.

The reforms will stop alcohol being delivered to people who are intoxicated and raise the standard for Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) training.

"Nine out of ten family violence workers say it is important to further regulate the supply of alcohol, especially late night and high-volume deliveries of alcohol.

"These measures are a good first step, and we look forward to working together with the NSW Government on further reforms to keep women and children free from violence," said Ms Foster.

Caterina Giorgi, CEO of the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) welcomed the moves to verify that people were over 18 before they were sold alcohol.

"Nobody should be able to sell alcohol to children, but until today there were no requirements to verify a person's age before they click the buy button.

"This is a common-sense measure that will help to keep children and young people safe," said Ms Giorgi.

The new laws in NSW will make it mandatory for companies to check that they're not selling alcohol to children for deliveries made the same day.

FARE's 2020 Annual Alcohol Poll found the great majority of people in NSW (87 per cent) think age should be verified to purchase alcohol online. The NSW Parliament has taken the first step to achieve this aim.

Ms Giorgi said that while the changes are welcome, more needs to be done to ensure alcohol companies selling online are accountable for the harm their products can cause.

"Unattended delivery and rapid deliveries within two hours are still able to be made up until midnight and are putting our children and families at risk of harm.

“This year our Annual Alcohol Poll found that the rapid delivery of alcohol within two hours of the previous delivery is associated with heavy drinking.

“It also showed the majority of people who received rapid delivery (70 per cent) drank more than four standard drinks that day.

“This included more than a third (38 per cent) of people who drank more than ten standard drinks that day.

The NSW Government has committed to undertaking a two-year review to consider these and a range of other issues.

“The review is an important part of examining how alcohol companies use direct and social media marketing, as well as personal data to target people who are most vulnerable.

“It’s critical that other states and territories address the loopholes in laws relating to online alcohol delivery to help keep our families and children safe,” Ms Giorgi said.

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