

Online sale and delivery of alcohol in Queensland

OCTOBER 2023

Executive summary

The Queensland Government is currently considering changes to legislation relating to the online sale and delivery of alcohol. This is critical as the regulatory environment has not kept pace with the changes in the way alcohol is sold, placing families and communities at greater risk of alcohol harms.

This report provides a snapshot of the views of Queenslanders on possible policy options for the online sale and delivery of alcohol, as well as their alcohol use.

Twice as many people (41.4%) believe that the Queensland Government is not doing enough to address the harms from alcohol, as people believing that they are doing enough (21.6%), with 37% unsure.

In relation to policy options for the online sale and delivery of alcohol, the majority of people were supportive of:

- ID being verified when placing an alcohol order (73.3%) and at the point of delivery (78.3%)
- alcohol not being delivered later than 10pm (55.3%)
- people delivering alcohol having responsible service of alcohol training (66.4%)
- strong penalties for companies that deliver alcohol to children (88.4%) and to people who are intoxicated (62.8%).

More people (37.5%) supported a two-hour pause between when an alcohol order is made online and when the alcohol is delivered, than those who disagreed (26.7%). Neutral responses made up over a third (35.8%), indicating that a substantial proportion of people may be unaware of this as a policy option.

In relation to policy options on alcohol marketing, the majority of people were supportive of:

- ensuring that children's online activity (81.4%) and anyone's online activity (75.0%) is not collected to market alcoholic products
- not allowing alcohol companies to send push notifications to a person's phone, prompting them to purchase alcohol (78.2%)
- implementing digital health warnings about the risks of alcohol on all alcohol retail websites (79.1%) and on online alcohol advertisements (78.6%)
- strong penalties for alcohol companies that advertise to people who have opted out of advertising (78.5%).

More than a quarter (29.8%) of people ordered alcohol to be delivered into their home, with 12.8% ordering alcohol into their home at least fortnightly.

The majority (82.9%) of Queenslanders had an alcoholic drink in the past 12 months. Of these people:

- over a third (35.3%) reported that they drink to relieve stress and one in six (15.9%) reported that they drink to deal with anxiety
- almost one in 10 (8.3%) reported that someone had expressed concern about their alcohol use
- one in eight (13.0%) are concerned with the amount of alcohol a family member is drinking and 8.7% are concerned with the amount a friend is drinking.

These findings provide further evidence of the need to introduce a range of policy measures relating to the online sale and delivery of alcohol that prioritise the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders.

Background

Everyone should have the opportunity to be healthy, safe and free from the harms that alcohol causes to families and communities.

However, alcohol causes significant harm to people in Queensland with almost 1,000 people dying each year from alcohol-attributable disease or injury, and more than 45,000 being hospitalised because of alcohol.¹

Alcohol harm is exacerbated by the rapid expansion of online sale and delivery of alcohol, which has vastly increased availability and accessibility, creating increased risks to community health and safety. Reform is urgently needed to address this and to prevent harm from the online sale and rapid delivery of alcohol into the home.

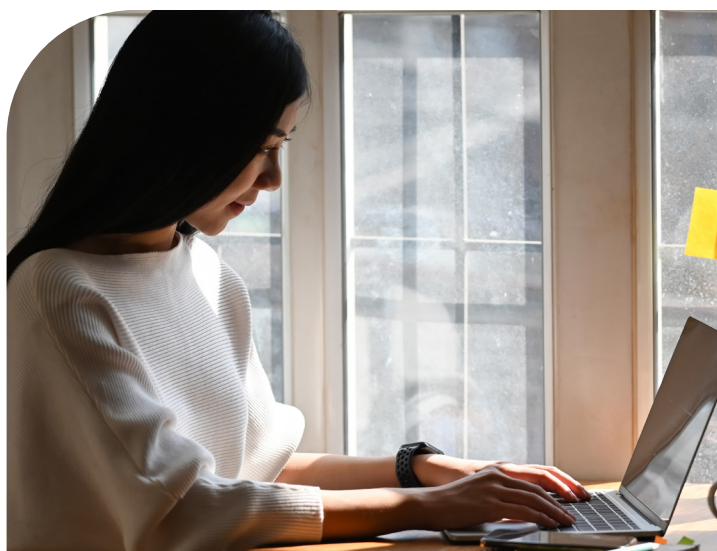
The Queensland Government is currently considering reforms to the sale and delivery of alcohol. This is vital to ensuring that the regulatory environment keeps pace with the rapidly changing environment for sales and increased risk of harm to the community.

About the polling

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) commissioned Pure Profile to conduct a poll of Queenslanders online between 30 June and 7 July 2023.

The sample comprised 1,000 people aged 18 years and over, residing in Queensland. The sample is representative for age and gender in Queensland.

In reporting analysis by gender, only male and female respondents have been included, due to low sample size for respondents answering non-binary.



¹ National Drug Research Institute (2023). *Australian alcohol-attributable harm visualisation tool*. <https://www.alcoholharmtool.info/index.php>

Findings

Perspectives on government action

Queenslanders were asked if they believe the Queensland Government is doing enough to address the harms from alcohol.

Twice as many people (41.4%) believe that the Queensland Government is not doing enough to address the harms from alcohol, then people believing that they are doing enough (21.6%), and 37% are unsure.

Belief that the government is not doing enough is consistent between men and women.

Table 1. Proportion of Queenslanders that think the Queensland Government is doing enough to address harm from alcohol, by gender (N=1,000)

	YES DOING ENOUGH %	NO NOT DOING ENOUGH %	UNSURE IF DOING ENOUGH %
Total	21.6	41.4	37.0
Gender			
Male	23.5	41.1	35.4
Female	19.7	41.7	38.6

Perspectives on policy options for online sale and delivery of alcohol

Queenslanders were asked their opinion on policy measures to regulate the delivery of alcohol into homes.

The majority of people agree that people's identification should be verified when placing an alcohol order online (73.3%; Table 2) and at the point of delivery (78.3%). Women were more supportive of both policies in comparison to men.

Table 2. Support for policy measures to regulate alcohol delivery – Identity verification, by gender (N=1,000)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
People's ID should be checked online when alcohol is ordered.			
Strongly disagree	5.0	6.1	3.9
Disagree	5.4	6.3	4.5
Neutral	16.3	19.2	13.6
Agree	37.9	35.2	40.4
Strongly agree	35.4	33.1	37.6
People's ID should be checked at the door when alcohol is delivered.			
Strongly disagree	3.1	4.3	2.0
Disagree	4.9	4.7	5.1
Neutral	13.7	17.2	10.4
Agree	38.5	35.8	40.9
Strongly agree	39.8	38.0	41.5

More than half (55.3%; Table 3) of people agreed that alcohol should not be delivered later than 10pm. Results were consistent between men and women.

Table 3. Support for policy measures to regulate alcohol delivery – Deliveries no later than 10pm, by gender (N=1,000)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
Alcohol should not be delivered later than 10pm.			
Strongly disagree	4.5	4.9	4.1
Disagree	15.5	15.5	15.6
Neutral	24.7	24.1	25.4
Agree	30.1	29.0	30.9
Strongly agree	25.2	26.4	24.0

Over a third (37.5%; Table 4) agreed that there should be at least two hours between when an alcohol order is made online and when the alcohol is delivered to the home, which is more than people who disagreed (26.7%). Results were consistent between men and women.

Table 4. Support for policy measures to regulate alcohol delivery – At least 2 hours between order and delivery, by gender (N=1,000)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
There should be at least 2 hours between when an order is made and when alcohol is delivered.			
Strongly disagree	7.8	9.2	6.5
Disagree	18.9	17.6	20.1
Neutral	35.8	35.0	36.4
Agree	24.5	25.8	23.4
Strongly agree	13.0	12.5	13.6

Most (66.4%; Table 5) Queenslanders agreed that people delivering alcohol should have responsible service of alcohol training. Women (70.5%) were more supportive of this policy than men (61.9%).

Table 5. Support for policy measures to regulate alcohol delivery – Responsible service of alcohol training, by gender (N=1,000)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
People delivering alcohol should have responsible service of alcohol training.			
Strongly disagree	3.3	4.5	2.2
Disagree	9.0	9.4	8.7
Neutral	21.3	24.1	18.7
Agree	36.2	33.9	38.2
Strongly agree	30.2	28.0	32.3

There was significant (88.4%; Table 6) support for strong penalties for companies that deliver alcohol to children. Results were consistent between men and women.

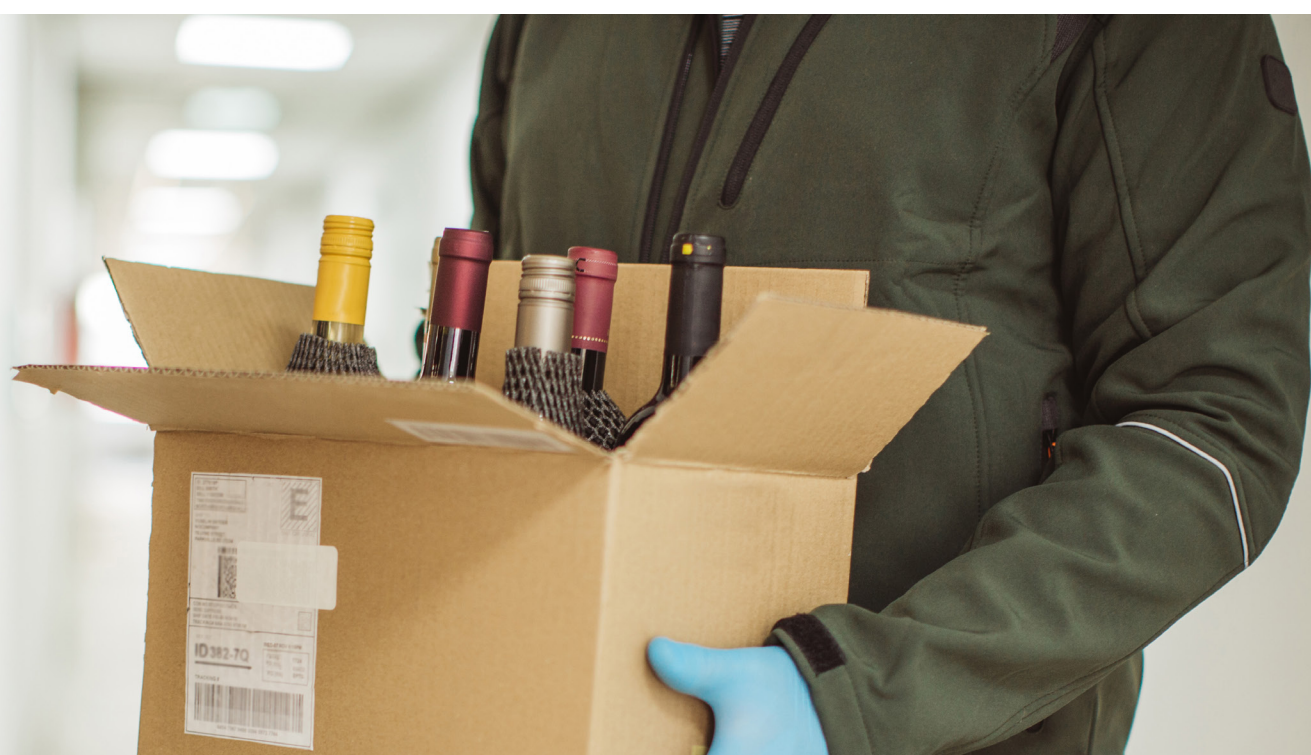
Table 6. Support for policy measures to regulate alcohol delivery – Penalties for companies that deliver alcohol to children, by gender (N=1,000)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
There should be strong penalties for companies that deliver alcohol to children.			
Strongly disagree	1.3	0.8	1.8
Disagree	1.7	2.0	1.4
Neutral	8.6	10.4	6.9
Agree	24.0	23.3	24.4
Strongly agree	64.4	63.4	65.6

A majority (62.8%; Table 7) of people agreed that there should be strong penalties for companies that deliver alcohol to people who are intoxicated. Around a quarter (24.3%) of people were neutral about this policy. Women (66.6%) were more supportive of this policy than men (58.9%).

Table 7. Support for policy measures to regulate alcohol delivery – Penalties for companies that deliver alcohol to people who are intoxicated, by gender (N=1,000)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
There should be strong penalties for companies that deliver alcohol to people who are intoxicated.			
Strongly disagree	3.1	4.1	2.2
Disagree	9.8	11.0	8.7
Neutral	24.3	26.0	22.6
Agree	29.9	27.2	32.5
Strongly agree	32.9	31.7	34.1



Perspectives on policy options for alcohol marketing

Queenslanders were asked their opinion on policy measures to regulate the sale of alcohol online. When asked about data collection, the majority (81.4%; Table 8) agreed that children's activity online should not be collected to market alcoholic products. A majority also (75.0%) agreed that no one's activity online should be collected to market alcohol products. Results were consistent between men and women for both policies.

Table 8. Support for policy measures to regulate the sale of alcohol online – Using personal data for alcohol marketing, by gender (N=1,000)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
Data on children's activity online should not be collected and/or used to market alcoholic products.			
Strongly disagree	3.5	4.3	2.6
Disagree	3.6	3.7	3.5
Neutral	11.5	11.5	11.6
Agree	27.5	26.4	28.3
Strongly agree	53.9	54.2	53.9
Data on people's activity online should not be collected or used to market alcoholic products.			
Strongly disagree	2.4	3.1	1.8
Disagree	4.7	5.1	4.3
Neutral	17.9	17.8	18.1
Agree	32.5	30.3	34.4
Strongly agree	42.5	43.8	41.3

A majority of people (78.2%; Table 9) agreed that alcohol companies should not be able to send push notifications to a person's phone, prompting them to purchase alcohol. Results were consistent between men and women.

Table 9. Support for policy measures to regulate the sale of alcohol online – Push notifications, by gender (N=1,000)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
Alcohol companies should not be able to send push notifications to a person's phone prompting them to purchase alcohol.			
Strongly disagree	1.5	1.8	1.2
Disagree	3.4	3.3	3.5
Neutral	16.9	19.2	14.8
Agree	30.4	28.2	32.5
Strongly agree	47.8	47.4	48.0

When asked about health warnings being applied on alcohol websites, a majority of people agreed that health warnings about the risks of alcohol use should be on all alcohol retail websites (79.1%; Table 10) and that health warnings should be on all alcohol advertisements online (78.6%). Women were more supportive of both policies in comparison to men.

Table 10. Support for policy measures to regulate the sale of alcohol online – Health warnings online, by gender (N=1,000)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
Health warnings about the risks of alcohol use should be on all alcohol retail websites.			
Strongly disagree	1.0	1.2	0.8
Disagree	3.7	4.9	2.6
Neutral	16.2	19.6	13.0
Agree	40.2	36.6	43.5
Strongly agree	38.9	37.6	40.2
Health warnings should be on all alcohol advertisements online.			
Strongly disagree	1.0	1.4	0.6
Disagree	3.1	4.1	2.2
Neutral	17.3	19.2	15.6
Agree	40.8	39.1	42.3
Strongly agree	37.8	36.2	39.4

A majority (78.5%; Table 11) of people agreed that there should be strong penalties for alcohol companies that advertise to people who have opted out of advertising. Results were consistent between men and women.

Table 11. Support for policy measures to regulate the sale of alcohol online – Penalties for companies that advertise to people, by gender (N=1,000)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
There should be strong penalties for alcohol companies that advertise to people who have opted out of advertising.			
Strongly disagree	1.1	1.0	1.2
Disagree	3.1	3.7	2.6
Neutral	17.3	16.2	18.5
Agree	33.5	32.7	34.1
Strongly agree	45.0	46.4	43.7

Use of alcohol delivery

More than a quarter (29.8%, 249 people; Table 12) of Queenslanders who drink alcohol have ordered alcohol to be delivered to their homes in the past 12 months. People were asked about the frequency with which they order alcohol for delivery – 12.8% receive deliveries at least fortnightly, 15.3% monthly, 31.3% every couple of months, and 40.6% less often.

People were also asked about the times of day and the types of alcohol they have had delivered in the last 12 months and were able to select multiple answers.

Almost two thirds (62.2%) of alcohol deliveries were received between 10am and 5pm, followed by 37.3% who receive an alcohol delivery was between 5pm and 10pm and 8.8% who receive an alcohol delivery between 10pm to 10am.

The most common type of alcohol delivery was delivery on the next day or week (49.4%), followed by same day delivery (28.5%) and rapid delivery (19.3%). One in eight (12%) of people reported using a subscription service for regular alcohol delivery.

Table 12. Queenslanders ordering alcohol online in the past 12 months (N=249)

	%
Frequency of ordering alcohol online	
At least fortnightly	12.8
Monthly	15.3
Every couple of months	31.3
Less often	40.6
Time of day of alcohol delivery	
5am to 10am	6.4
10am to 5pm	62.2
5pm to 10pm	37.3
10pm to 5am	2.4
Type of alcohol delivery	
Rapid – alcohol is delivered as soon as possible	19.3
Same day – where alcohol is delivered same day but not as soon as possible	28.5
Delivery on next day or week	49.4
Subscription – where delivery occurs regularly based on a subscription	12.0

Alcohol use

The majority (82.9%; Table 13) of Queenslanders had an alcoholic drink in the past 12 months. More men (86.3%) reported having an alcoholic drink in the past 12 months than women (79.5%).

When asked about the frequency of drinking alcohol, more than half (59.9%) reported having an alcoholic drink at least weekly, with nearly a quarter (23.4%) drinking three to six days a week. Two thirds (68.1%) of men and just over half (51.3%) of women drink at least weekly.

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol (Alcohol Guidelines)² specify that healthy adults should drink no more than 10 standard drinks a week or more than four standard drinks on any one day to reduce their risk of alcohol-related disease or injury.

One in seven (14.9%) Queenslanders reported exceeding the Alcohol Guideline and reported drinking five or more standard drinks in one sitting. Men (18.0%) were more likely than women (11.8%) to exceed this guideline.



² National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) (2020). Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol. <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/alcohol>

Table 13. Queenslanders who have had an alcoholic drink in the past 12 months, by gender (N=836)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
Total - Had alcoholic drink in past 12 months	82.9*	86.3	79.5
Frequency			
Every day	8.5	11.3	5.4
3-6 days a week	23.4	29.3	17.4
1-2 days a week	28.0	27.5	28.5
2-3 days a month	16.1	12.9	19.7
~1 day a month	9.6	6.8	12.3
Less often	13.8	11.7	16.0
Standard drinks (SD) on usual occasion			
<1 SD	9.6	7.3	12.1
1-2 SD	49.2	44.8	53.5
3-4 SD	25.8	29.2	22.3
≥5 SD	14.9	18.0	11.8
≥7 SD	5.5	6.4	4.6

*The sample size for Table 13 is 836 – those that answered ‘yes’ and those that answered ‘maybe’. However, the figures reported in the top row are only those that answered ‘yes’ and refers to a sample size of 831.

Reasons for drinking alcohol

People were asked about the reasons why they drink alcohol. For people who indicated that they had an alcoholic drink in the past 12 months, the most common reason people reported using alcohol was to socialise (67.9%; Table 14).

More than a third (35.3%) reported that they drink alcohol to relieve stress. One in six (15.9%) reported that they drink alcohol to deal with anxiety. One in ten (10.8%) indicated that they drink alcohol to get drunk. Almost one fifth (18.4%) reported that they drink because other people around them are drinking alcohol.

The results were consistent regardless of gender.

Table 14. Reasons for having an alcoholic drink, by gender (N=831)

I DRINK ALCOHOL...	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
To relieve stress	35.3	35.8	34.7
To deal with anxiety	15.9	14.9	17.1
To get drunk	10.8	9.2	12.6
When socialising	67.9	64.9	71.0
Because other people are drinking	18.4	16.5	20.5
Other	18.7	22.9	14.4

Concern about alcohol use

Queenslanders were asked about whether anyone they know has expressed concern about their alcohol use.

Nearly one in ten (8.3%; Table 15) reported that someone has expressed concern about their alcohol use. Men (11.0%) were more likely than women (5.4%) to have someone express concern about their alcohol use.

Table 15. Has someone expressed concern about your alcohol use, by gender (N=836)

	YES %	NO %	UNSURE %
Total	8.3	89.2	2.5
Gender			
Male	11.0	86.2	2.8
Female	5.4	92.4	2.2

Queenslanders were also asked if they were concerned with the amount of alcohol they drink, and the amount of alcohol consumed by their family members and friends. When reporting concern with their own drinking, 7% reported that they are concerned with the amount of alcohol they are drinking. Men (8.8%) were more likely than women (5.3%) to report concern about their own alcohol use.

One in eight (13.0%) were concerned with the amount of alcohol a family member is using, which was consistent regardless of gender. Nearly one in ten (8.7%) were concerned with the amount of alcohol a friend is using, with responses by gender remaining consistent.

Table 16. Concern about yourself and others, by gender (N=996)

I AM CONCERNED WITH THE AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL...	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
That I am drinking	7.0	8.8	5.3
That a family member is drinking	13.0	11.7	14.2
That a friend is drinking	8.7	7.2	10.3
I am not concerned about my alcohol use or that of anyone I know	71.3	72.2	70.2