

# Poll Snapshot: Children's recall of alcohol advertising

MAY 2025

## Background

Children are at increased risk of harms from alcohol. Harms include injury, illness, mental health issues, and potential adverse effects on brain development, as well as increasing their risk for longer term alcohol-related harms including alcohol use disorders. This is why the Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol recommend that people under the age of 18 should not drink alcohol.<sup>1</sup> However, over 400,000 Australian children are at risk of harms from alcohol use, with 31% of children aged 14-17 years old using alcohol in Australia.<sup>2</sup>

Research shows that when children are exposed to alcohol marketing, they are more likely to start to drink alcohol at a younger age, and to go on to drink alcohol at high-risk levels later in life.<sup>3</sup>

The National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030 sets out an Australian target of less than 10% of young people aged 14-17 years using alcohol by 2030. Measures to reduce the impact of alcohol marketing on children, as a key driver of consumption, are essential in reaching this target.

## About the research

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) and Cancer Council Western Australia commissioned the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction and the George Institute for Global Health to undertake research on alcohol advertising and young Australians. An online cross-sectional survey was conducted in May 2024 and comprised a sample of 606 Australian children aged 15-17 years old. The sample matched the Australian population for gender and residential location. This research snapshot presents findings on children's recall of alcohol advertising.

<sup>1</sup> National Health and Medical Research Centre. Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol. 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Alcohol, tobacco & other drugs in Australia. 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Jernigan D, Noel J, Landon J, Thornton N, Lobstein T. Alcohol marketing and youth alcohol consumption: A systematic review of longitudinal studies published since 2008. *Addiction*. 2017;112:7-20.

# Findings

Most children in the study reported seeing alcohol advertising in the month prior (70%; Table 1). Many children reported seeing alcohol advertising in multiple places. Forty-one percent reported seeing alcohol advertising in three or more media and almost a quarter (21%) reported seeing alcohol advertising in five or more media.

**Table 1. Proportion of children 15-17 years old reported seeing alcohol advertising in the past month (N=606)**

REPORTED SEEING ALCOHOL ADVERTISING IN PAST MONTH	%
<b>Have you seen advertising for alcohol products in any of the following media in the past month?</b>	
No – Did not report seeing advertising for alcohol products	30%
Yes – Reported seeing advertising for alcohol products (in at least 1 media)	70%
Saw alcohol advertising in 1-2 media	29%
Saw alcohol advertising in 3-4 media	20%
Saw alcohol advertising in 5+ media	21%

Alcohol advertising exposure was most recalled by children via television (32%), bottle shops (31%), social media (29%) and the internet (27%). One in six children also recalled alcohol advertising in supermarkets (17%) and 8% recalled alcohol advertising on food delivery apps (Table 2).

**Table 2. Locations children 15-17 years old reported seeing alcohol advertising in the past month (N=606)**

HAVE YOU SEEN ADVERTISING FOR ALCOHOL PRODUCTS IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING MEDIA IN THE PAST MONTH?	%
<b>Have you seen advertising for alcohol products in any of the following media in the past month?</b>	
Television	32%
Bottle shop	31%
Social media	29%
Internet	27%
Restaurants/pubs	22%
Shopping centre	21%
Supermarket	17%
Sporting events	16%
Billboards/posters	14%
At bus stops/train stations/ other public transport boarding points	10%
Food delivery app	8%
On public transport	7%
Radio	7%
Cinema	6%
Magazines	6%
Online games	5%
Newspapers	5%
None of these places	30%

## Citation information

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction, Flinders Health and Medical Research Institute, The George Institute for Global Health, Cancer Council Western Australia. Research Snapshot: Children's recall of alcohol advertising. Feb 2025.

## About our organisations

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.

The National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) is an internationally recognised alcohol and other drug (AOD) research centre that works as a catalyst for positive changes in the field. NCETA are based at the Flinders Health and Medical Research Institute (FHMRI) within Flinders University in South Australia and are a partnership between the university and the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care.

The George Institute for Global Health is a leading independent global medical research institute with major centres in Australia, India, and the UK. Our mission is to improve the health of millions of people worldwide.