

Media Release

SA SUPERMARKET WINE BILL ILL-CONCEIVED AND DANGEROUS

11 March 2013: The South Australian Government's proposal to sell wine in supermarkets has been labelled irresponsible and ill-conceived by Australia's leading alcohol and research organisation.

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) has called on the South Australian Government to abandon the plan, saying it would lead to increased alcohol-related harms and, contrary to the bill's intent, bring no benefits to South Australian wine producers.

FARE's submission on the *Wine in Supermarkets Discussion Paper* and *Draft Liquor Licencing (Sale of Wine in Supermarkets) Amendment Bill 2013*, builds a strong case against the proposed legislation, arguing that the increased availability of alcohol would result in increased consumption and harms.

South Australia has more liquor licences per person than any other State or Territory, one liquor licence for every 224 people over 18 years of age compared to a national average of 317.

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn says the State would be negligent if it made alcohol even more readily available.

"The proposal to sell wine supermarkets is flawed, and fatally so. In 2005 alcohol caused 238 deaths and 6,756 hospitalisations in South Australia. The country is awash in alcohol, nowhere more so than South Australia, and all the evidence shows us, that increased availability will lead to even greater harms; increased rates of chronic disease, increased risky drinking by young people and increased domestic violence," Mr Thorn said.

This will undermine the State's objective to reduce the proportions of South Australians drinking at risky levels by 30 per cent by 2020.

Mr Thorn says the proposal is bad public policy and would have a detrimental effect not only on the health and welfare of South Australians but also on local and independent wine producers.

"Selling wine in South Australian supermarkets will not only lead to an increase in alcohol-related harms. It will also harm South Australian wine producers – the very group the proposal was designed to assist. This legislation is ill-conceived. Far from increasing sales of South Australian wines, allowing all wine to be sold in supermarkets will instead drive down wines prices even further to the detriment of local wine producers and at the expense of South Australians health," Mr Thorn said.

Mr Thorn says that because the potential harms and costs to the South Australian community are so high, the onus should sit squarely on the proponents of the measures to demonstrate that the sale of wine in supermarkets will not result in any additional harms.

“It is a concern that ahead of the public debate on this issue, the South Australian Attorney General John Rau has already publically indicated his support for the proposal. In the face of evidence that clearly shows increased availability results in increased harms, his first duty as Attorney General, should lie, not in pursuing his own agenda, but in protecting the people of South Australia,” Mr Thorn said.

Michael Thorn is available for interview.

Media Contact: Jeremy Henderson 0425 559 710

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) FARE is an independent, charitable organisation working to prevent the harmful use of alcohol in Australia. Since 2001, FARE has invested over \$115 million in research and community projects to minimise the impact of alcohol misuse on Australians. Through its national grants program and commissioned research, FARE has established itself as a leading voice on alcohol and other drugs issues. FARE works with community groups, all levels of government, police, emergency workers, research institutions and the private sector to address alcohol-related problems. For further information visit FARE’s website: www.fare.org.au