



MEDIA RELEASE

DECLARE MORATORIUM FOR ONLINE ALCOHOL LICENCES

Thursday 14 February 2019: The NSW/ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance (NAAPA) is calling for an immediate moratorium on new online alcohol licences until an urgent review has been carried out by the incoming NSW Government.

“The online alcohol market has exploded, becoming the ‘wild west’ of under-regulation,” said NAAPA spokesperson and Chief Executive of the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) Michael Thorn.

“The number of online-only liquor licences approved in NSW has jumped from 45 to around 500, which is a 10-fold increase over the past decade,” Mr Thorn said.

According to KPMG’s 2017 Global Online Consumer Report, alcohol was the third most purchased category online, and indicates that ‘bricks and mortar’ retailers have opportunities in the online space due to consumer familiarity with and trust in them.

“The alcohol industry’s own ‘back of the coaster’ trade commentary is that online continues as the fastest growing sales channel in Australia,” he said.

Mr Thorn says regulation is woefully behind the innovation and disruption in the online alcohol market as it expands at a rate of 11 per cent per year.

“In tandem with online sales, the home-delivery market is also spiralling out of control, and NAAPA has serious concerns about the lack of responsible service of alcohol (RSA) and proof of age controls, which provide protections in the ‘bricks and mortar’ policy setting,” he said.

“The online market is poorly controlled, therefore making it easier for intoxicated, underage and dependent drinkers to get access to alcohol, leading to more harm to drinkers and those around them,” he said.

Liquor and Gaming NSW acknowledges that under-regulation is an issue, making it a top 2019 priority, noting “expansion has been rapid, and the pace of change has contributed to emerging risks around responsible service of alcohol (RSA)”.

NAAPA’s election platform also calls for strengthening RSA conditions for home deliveries, including displaying licence details on websites selling alcohol, and introducing a 12-hour cooling-off (sober-up) period on the delivery of online orders.





Election Scorecard drives political accountability

NAAPA has written to all the major parties asking for their position on strengthening online/home delivery regulation and four other key policy reforms to reduce alcohol harm:

- Investing \$30m in a four-year statewide campaign program to raise awareness of the long-term harm from alcohol including cancer, heart disease and dementia
- Conducting an urgent inquiry into the disproportionate level of alcohol harm in regional and rural NSW and recommend appropriate reforms
- Protecting children travelling to school from exposure to alcohol marketing by banning alcohol advertisements from public transport and other government owned infrastructure
- Keeping youth safe – retaining and not weakening the evidence-based measures that have successfully reduced harm in Kings Cross, Sydney CBD and Newcastle.

“Preventing four alcohol-related deaths every day in NSW is very achievable if politicians and policymakers set a decisive agenda for the future – this is what NAAPA seeks to secure through our Election Scorecard,” Mr Thorn said.

Michael Thorn is available for interview.

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