

“These will get you messed up”: An analysis of TikTok content on Hard Solo

NOVEMBER 2023

About FARE

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is the leading not-for-profit organisation working towards an Australia free from alcohol harms. We approach this through developing evidence-informed policy, enabling people-powered advocacy and delivering health promotion programs. Working with local communities, values-aligned organisations, health professionals and researchers across the country, we strive to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in Australia.

To learn more about us and our work visit www.fare.org.au.

You can get in touch via email at info@fare.org.au.

FARE is a registered charity, and every dollar you give helps fund projects keeping our communities healthy and safe. You can make a tax-deductible donation at: www.fare.org.au/donate.



Key findings

- » Exposure to alcohol marketing increases young people's likelihood of starting to drink alcohol at a younger age and drinking alcohol at higher risk levels later in life.¹ Ensuring that children are not exposed to alcohol marketing is therefore important to preventing harm.
- » Multinational alcohol producer Asahi's Hard Solo closely resembles the well-recognised non-alcoholic soft drink Solo. Because of the clear similarities between the two products, there is concern that the product promotes the use of alcoholic products among young people, and that children may confuse the alcoholic version with the soft drink.
- » This analysis examined content relating to Hard Solo on TikTok, a platform where it's estimated almost half the users are aged 13 to 24 years.² The hashtags '#hardsolo'* and '#hardsoloalcoholic' respectively had 10.2 million views and 741,700 views, according to the TikTok mobile application on 20 October 2023.
- » When analysing the content on TikTok, three key themes consistently emerged:
 1. Appeal to young people
 2. Speed and ease of intoxication
 3. The masked taste of alcohol
- » Currently in Australia, there isn't federal regulation covering alcohol marketing. Instead, alcohol companies set their own advertising rules through the ineffective, industry-led and funded scheme: Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code (ABAC).
- » In the absence of comprehensive federal government regulation, legislation in some states and territories allow regulators to restrict alcoholic products that are likely to be confused with soft drink,³⁻⁶ e.g., through a resemblance to soft drink. These jurisdictions can therefore take definitive action now to ensure young people are free from the risks associated with Hard Solo, a product that closely resembles the Solo soft drink.

What did this analysis include?

FARE explored what members of the community have said about the alcoholic product Hard Solo online.

Between 3 and 10 October 2023, a review was carried out of examples of TikTok videos that mentioned Hard Solo along with comments made on these videos.

During October 2023, the levels of engagement with Hard Solo-related videos and hashtags on TikTok was also examined.

*As hashtags are user-generated, these numbers may include some other topics using the same hashtag

What did the analysis conclude?

People are widely exposed to Hard Solo through TikTok

The hashtags '#hardsolo' and '#hardsoloalcoholic' had 10.2 million views and 741,700 views respectively, according to the TikTok mobile application on 20 October 2023. There was also high engagement with this content. Nine of the TikTok videos referenced in this report alone had a collective total of over 120,000 likes as of 10 October 2023.

Upon analysis of these Hard Solo-related TikTok videos, three key themes arose:

1. **Appeal to young people**

Within this theme, many young people (who appear under 25 years old) shared videos where they talked about and/or were drinking Hard Solo. This included dialogue about the appeal of the product to young people.

2. **Speed and ease of intoxication**

Within this theme, there was an emphasis on the ease of drinking to intoxication and the speed at which this can occur with this product.

3. **Masked taste of alcohol**

Within this theme, there was an emphasis on the way that alcohol is masked by the taste of soft drink.

Key examples of each of these themes are provided below.

THEME 1: APPEAL TO YOUNG PEOPLE



This video shows two young people dancing while one holds a can of the alcoholic product. The video caption includes the phrase 'have another' and '#hardsoloalcoholic'. [Source](#)



"This will take over Schoolies 2023-2024."

This video captures young people tasting the original Solo and alcoholic Hard Solo. One notes the similarity of the alcoholic product's taste to the original soft drink. [Source](#)



"If I was back at 18 this is all I'd drink."

"If you're [an] 18-year-old who doesn't like the taste of alcohol, I highly recommend [Hard Solo]."

In this video, they state that their 18-year-old self would get intoxicated from two or three of these products and recommended the product to people aged 18 who dislike alcoholic taste. [Source](#)

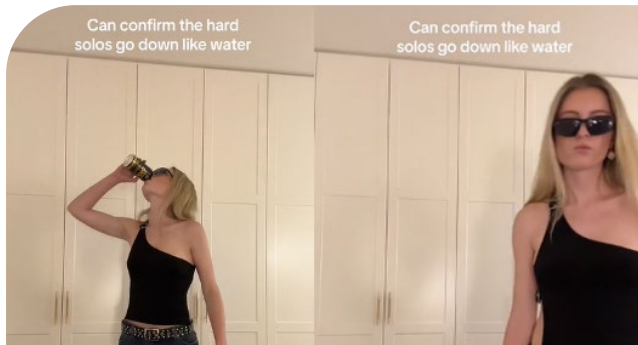
THEME 2: SPEED AND EASE OF INTOXICATION



“Like could you down like four of them?”

“Yeah!”

This video shows two young people discussing Hard Solo, with one drinking it. This young person compares the alcoholic product to the original non-alcoholic soft drink, and agrees that they could drink a large amount (‘down four’ cans) of Hard Solo. [Source](#)



This video shows a young person drinking the alcoholic product with the overlaid text “can confirm the [Hard Solos] go down like water”. This indicates that the product could encourage rapid drinking to intoxication. [Source](#)

“These will get you messed up.” [Source](#)

“I could drink a lot of that.” [Source](#)

“[Someone said] that you could get really [drunk] really quick on these.” “I could drink this so easily.” [Source](#)

These quotes are from four separate videos where the theme of drinking Hard Solo to intoxication also arose.

“I [can’t] drink fast usually but these [disappear] from my glass so quickly.” [Source \(video caption\)](#)



Unicorn tamer

Yep got a ten pac, slammed it down fast 🗨️ nzt min l’m sitting on the floor, awesome drink 🍷 but very deceptive 🤔👍👎

8-1 ❤️ 0 Reply

This comment discussing rapid intoxication was made in response to a Hard Solo-related TikTok video. [Source](#)



“You can definitely down a couple of these ... without realising how many you’ve had.”

A young person discusses how Solo is a “classic favourite”, saying the alcoholic product packaging is “iconic”. They also noted the minimal alcohol taste. [Source](#)

THEME 3: MASKED TASTE OF ALCOHOL



“Doesn’t taste like alcohol at all.”

In this video, two young people discuss Hard Solo. One notes that the product does not have an alcohol taste.

[Source](#)



**“To be honest I can’t even tell there’s any alcohol in here.”
“That’s quite concerning.”**

“If I was a kid and I just picked this up, I wouldn’t even know the difference.”

In this video, a person talks about the lack of alcohol taste and cautions adults to “be mindful of children with these”.

[Source](#)



“This is dangerous because it tastes just like Solo, it doesn’t taste like anything else.”

“You definitely don’t taste any alcohol” [Source](#)



FlashJordan

It’s actually really scary because u can’t taste the alcohol like at all I could down tons of these and end up absolutely smashed 😬😬

8-4 ❤️ 3 Reply

This comment on a Hard Solo–related TikTok video stressed that the product masks the alcohol taste. [Source](#)

Conclusion

The lack of alcohol marketing regulation results in young people being widely exposed to products like Hard Solo, which resembles the well-recognised Solo soft drink.

Until federal government regulation is implemented, legislation in some jurisdictions can restrict alcoholic products that are likely to be confused with soft drink,^{3,4} e.g., through a resemblance to soft drink.

Alcohol marketing regulation is needed and should be developed and administered by the federal government, with a focus on preventing and reducing the significant harm from alcohol.

References

1. 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 Suppl 1:7-20.
2. Iqbal M. TikTok Revenue and Usage Statistics (2023). [Internet] 2023 [updated 2023 October 2; cited 2023 October 9]. Available from: <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/tik-tok-statistics/>
3. NSW Government. Liquor Act 2007 No 90. 2007.
4. WA Government. Liquor Control Act 1988. 1988.
5. Northern Territory Government. Liquor Act 2019. 2019.
6. ACT Government. Liquor Act 2010. 2010.