

29 September 2023

Ms Katie Taylor  
Project Manager  
Planning & Commissioning Branch  
Department for Health and Wellbeing Adelaide SA 5000  
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Dear Ms Taylor,

### **SA CANCER PLAN 2024-2028**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission on the SA Cancer Plan 2024-2028. This submission focusses on *Priority 2: Maximise cancer prevention and early detection*.

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.

The most important thing is the health and wellbeing of our families and communities. Yet alcoholic products cause far too much harm to too many people. Nearly 400 people in South Australia die each year of an alcohol-attributable disease or injury, and nearly 6,000 South Australian hospitalisations are attributable to alcohol.<sup>1</sup>

Alcohol is linked to cancer in at least seven sites in the body, and is responsible for more than 5,000 new cancer cases in Australia each year.<sup>2</sup> The risk of alcohol-related cancers increases with the amount people drink. Alcohol is classified as a Group 1 carcinogen - it damages the cells of the body and increases the risk of alcohol-caused cancer.<sup>3</sup>

Every phone in every home is now a billboard and a bottle shop. The rapid expansion of online marketing, sale and delivery of alcohol, (quadrupling in ten years to \$2.0 billion), is making alcoholic products more accessible. This increases the risk of harms to people in South Australia. Regulation has not kept pace with the ways alcohol is sold and marketed, so the rapidly changing sector is not even regulated to the same standard as traditional 'bricks-and-mortar' venues.

The Draft SA Cancer Plan 2024-2028 focuses on cancer prevention and personalised care. It notes that alcohol is a risk factor for cancer, and commits to a multi-strategy, sustained, population-based approach to cancer prevention, that includes reducing alcohol consumption. The Background paper also notes that Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia (DASSA) is considering approaches to reduce alcohol-related cancers, including the adoption of the Western Australian 'Alcohol. Think Again' public education campaign.

The "Alcohol. Think Again" 'Spread' campaign was initially developed in 2010. Following its launch in Western Australia, the campaign received international recognition for its ability to achieve

behaviour change. An independent study in 2018 compared 83 alcohol education ads from around the world and found that 'Spread' was the ad most likely to motivate drinkers to reduce their alcohol use.<sup>4</sup> The campaign was re-launched in October 2020 as a joint initiative between the WA Mental Health Commission and Cancer Council Western Australia.

In 2021, FARE adapted the 'Spread' campaign to develop the 'Reduce your Risk' campaign for the Australian Capital territory (ACT).<sup>5</sup> The 'Reduce your Risk' campaign reflected the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) new Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol.<sup>6</sup> This project was supported by the ACT Government under the ACT Health Promotion Grants Program. An evaluation of the impact of the campaign from July to September 2021, tracked a dramatic increase in the number of people aged 25-65 years who are aware of the link between alcohol and cancer and can name one or more types of cancer caused by alcohol.<sup>7</sup>

FARE recommends that the SA Government implement the following to contribute to the prevention of cancer:

1. Common sense controls limiting the availability and accessibility of alcohol, including regulating the rapid expansion of online sales and delivery, and preventing predatory marketing of alcohol.
2. A comprehensive public awareness campaign on the harms from alcohol. This should include a focus on cancer prevention.

We would be pleased to further elaborate on any aspect of our submission. If you would like to discuss any relevant issue further, please contact Dr. Catherine Earl, FARE Policy and Research Director, on [Catherine.Earl@fare.org.au](mailto:Catherine.Earl@fare.org.au).

Yours sincerely,



Caterina Giorgi

CEO

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<sup>1</sup> NDRI (2020) *Australian alcohol-attributable harm visualisation tool* <https://www.alcoholharmtool.info/index.php>

<sup>2</sup> Runggay H, Shield K, Charvat H, et al (2021) *Global burden of cancer in 2020 attributable to alcohol consumption*. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanonc/article/PIIS1470-2045\(21\)00279-5/fulltext#seccesstitle130](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanonc/article/PIIS1470-2045(21)00279-5/fulltext#seccesstitle130).

<sup>3</sup> FARE (2021) *Alcohol and Cancer* <https://reduceyourrisk.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/RYR-Fact-Sheet-Alcohol-and-cancer.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Wakefield A, Brennan E, Dunstone K et al (2018) *Features of alcohol harm reduction advertisements that most motivate reduced drinking among adults: an advertisement response study*. <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/7/4/e014193>

<sup>5</sup> FARE (2021) *Alcohol causes Cancer: Reduce your risk* <https://reduceyourrisk.org.au/>

<sup>6</sup> NHMRC (2020) *Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol* <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/alcohol>

<sup>7</sup> FARE (2022) *'Reduce Your Risk' Campaign Evaluation*. <https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Reduce-Your-Risk-Campaign-Evaluation.pdf>