

Online sale and delivery of alcohol in South Australia

AUGUST 2023

Executive summary

The South Australian Government is currently considering changes to legislation relating to the online sale and delivery of alcohol. This is critical as the regulatory environment has not kept pace with the changes in the way that alcohol is being sold placing families and communities at greater risk of alcohol harms.

This report provides a snapshot of the views of South Australians on possible policy options for the online sale and delivery of alcohol, as well as their alcohol use.

A third (33.9%) of people believe that the South Australian Government is not doing enough to address harms from alcohol, with one in five (22.9%) people believing that they are doing enough and 43.3% being unsure.

In relation to policy options for the online sale and delivery of alcohol, the majority of people were supportive of:

- ID being verified when placing an alcohol order (72.4%) and at the point of delivery (76.6%)
- alcohol not being delivered later than 10pm (53.3%)
- strong penalties for companies that deliver alcohol to children (89.3%) and to people who are intoxicated (62.2%).

More people (35.1%) supported a two-hour pause between when an alcohol order is made online and when the alcohol is delivered, than those who disagreed (24.4%). Neutral responses made up 40.6%, indicating a large proportion of people may be unaware of this as a policy option.

In relation to policy options on alcohol marketing, the majority of people were supportive of:

- ensuring that children's online activity (81.1%) and anyone's (72.5%) online activity is not collected to market alcoholic products
- not allowing alcohol companies to send push notifications to a person's phone, prompting them to purchase alcohol (76.7%)
- implementing digital health warnings about the risks of alcohol on all alcohol retail websites (79.1%) and on online alcohol advertisements (78.4%)
- strong penalties for alcohol companies that advertise to people who have opted out of advertising (77.7%).

More than a quarter (29.1%) of people ordered alcohol to be delivered into their home, with 15.4% ordering alcohol into their home at least fortnightly.

The majority (84.6%) of South Australians had an alcoholic drink in the past 12 months. Of these people:

- nearly a third (32.2%) reported that they drink alcohol to relieve stress and one in seven (14.8%) reported that they drink alcohol to deal with anxiety
- almost one in 10 (8.3%) reported that someone expressed concern about their alcohol use
- one in seven (13.8%) are concerned with the amount of alcohol a family member is drinking and 8.3% are concerned with the amount a friend is drinking.

These findings provide further evidence of the need to introduce a range of policy measures relating to the online sale and delivery of alcohol that prioritise the health and wellbeing of South Australians.

Background

Everyone should have the opportunity to be healthy, safe and free from the harms that alcohol causes to families and communities.

However, alcohol causes significant harm to people in South Australia with almost 400 people dying each year from alcohol-attributable disease or injury, and nearly 6,000 people being hospitalised because of alcohol.¹

Alcohol harm is exacerbated by the rapid expansion of online sale and delivery of alcohol, which has vastly increased availability and accessibility, creating increased risks to community health and safety. Reform is urgently needed to address this and to prevent harm from the online sale and rapid delivery of alcohol into the home.

The South Australian Government is currently considering reforms to the sale and delivery of alcohol. This is vital to ensuring that the regulatory environment keeps pace with the rapidly changing environment for sales and increased risk of harm to the community.

About the polling

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) commissioned Pure Profile to conduct a poll of South Australians online between 30 June and 7 July 2023.

The sample comprised 1,015 people aged 18 years and over, residing in South Australia. The sample is representative for age and gender in South Australia.

In reporting analysis by gender, only male and female respondents have been included, due to low sample size for respondents answering non-binary.

¹ National Drug Research Institute (2023). *Australian alcohol-attributable harm visualisation tool*. <https://www.alcoholharmtool.info/index.php>

Findings

Perspectives on government action

South Australians were asked if they believed the South Australian Government is doing enough to address the harms from alcohol.

A third (33.9%) of people believe the South Australian Government is not doing enough to address the harms from alcohol. Approximately one in five (22.9%; Table 1) people believe that the South Australian Government is doing enough and 43.3% are unsure.

More than a third of women (35.6%) and just under a third of men (32%) believe the South Australian Government is not doing enough to address harms from alcohol. Men (27.1%) were more likely than women (19.0%) to believe that the Government is doing enough.

Table 1. Proportion of South Australians that think the South Australian Government is doing enough to address harm from alcohol, by gender (N=1015)

	YES DOING ENOUGH %	NOT DOING ENOUGH %	UNSURE IF DOING ENOUGH %
Total	22.9	33.9	43.3
Gender			
Male	27.1	32.0	40.8
Female	19.0	35.6	45.4

Perspectives on policy options for online sale and delivery of alcohol

South Australians were asked their opinion on policy measures to regulate the delivery of alcohol into homes. The majority of people agree that people's identification should be verified when placing an alcohol order online (72.4%; Table 2) and at the point of delivery (76.6%). This was consistent regardless of gender.

Table 2. South Australians' support for policy measures to regulate alcohol delivery – Identity verification, by gender (N=1015)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
People's ID should be checked online when alcohol is ordered.			
Strongly disagree	5.5	6.3	4.8
Disagree	4.7	6.9	2.7
Neutral	17.4	17.1	17.8
Agree	36.0	35.1	36.8
Strongly agree	36.4	34.5	37.9
People's ID should be checked at the door when alcohol is delivered.			
Strongly disagree	2.8	3.1	2.5
Disagree	6.1	7.6	4.8
Neutral	14.5	14.5	14.6
Agree	38.7	40.4	37.2
Strongly agree	37.9	34.5	41.0

More than half (53.3%; Table 3) of people agreed that alcohol should not be delivered later than 10pm. This was consistent between men and women.

Table 3. South Australians' support for policy measures to regulate alcohol delivery – Deliveries no later than 10pm, by gender (N=1015)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
Alcohol should not be delivered later than 10pm.			
Strongly disagree	6.1	7.1	5.2
Disagree	13.0	10.8	14.9
Neutral	27.6	28.0	27.2
Agree	29.2	28.2	30.3
Strongly agree	24.1	25.9	22.4

More people (35.1%; Table 4) supported a two hour pause between when an alcohol order is made online and when the alcohol is delivered, which is greater than those who disagreed (24.4%). 40.6% were neutral, indicating a large proportion of people may be unaware of this as a policy option. This was consistent regardless of gender.

Table 4. South Australians' support for policy measures to regulate alcohol delivery – At least 2 hours between order and delivery, by gender (N=1015)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
There should be at least 2 hours between when an order is made and when alcohol is delivered.			
Strongly disagree	8.1	9.8	6.3
Disagree	16.3	15.3	17.2
Neutral	40.6	39.8	41.2
Agree	23.0	22.7	23.4
Strongly agree	12.1	12.4	11.9

Most (68.4%; Table 5) agreed that people delivering alcohol should have responsible service of alcohol training. This was consistent regardless of gender.

Table 5. South Australians' support for policy measures to regulate alcohol delivery – Responsible service of alcohol training, by gender (N=1015)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
People delivering alcohol should have responsible service of alcohol training.			
Strongly disagree	3.4	4.5	2.5
Disagree	8.3	8.6	7.9
Neutral	19.8	21.2	18.4
Agree	38.0	37.3	38.9
Strongly agree	30.4	28.4	32.4

There was significant (89.3%; Table 6) support for strong penalties for companies that deliver alcohol to children. This was consistent regardless of gender.

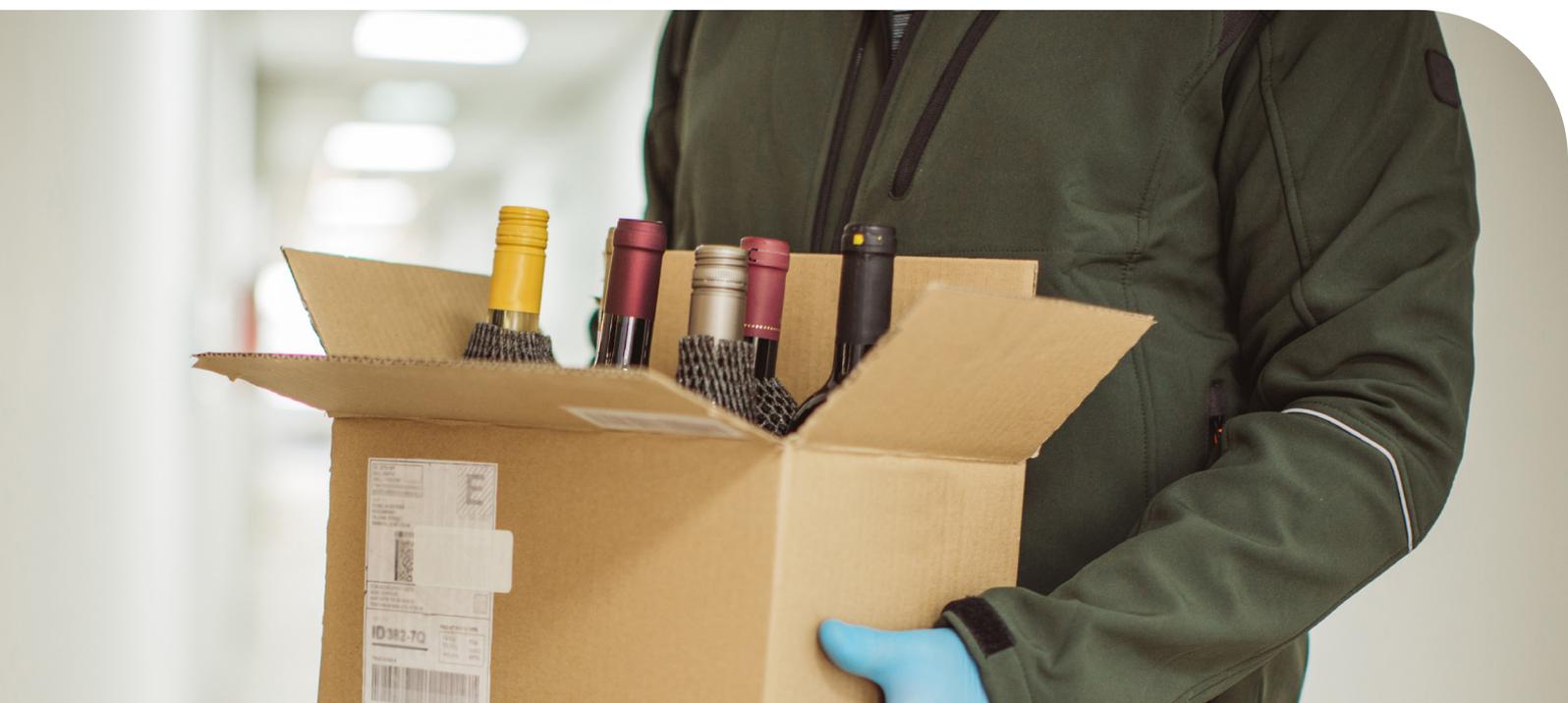
Table 6. South Australians’ support for policy measures to regulate alcohol delivery – Penalties for companies that deliver alcohol to children, by gender (N=1015)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
There should be strong penalties for companies that deliver alcohol to children.			
Strongly disagree	1.4	1.6	1.1
Disagree	1.4	1.0	1.7
Neutral	7.9	8.8	7.1
Agree	25.3	25.3	25.3
Strongly agree	64.0	63.3	64.8

The majority of people agreed that there should be strong penalties for companies that deliver alcohol to people who are intoxicated (62.2%). Results were consistent between men and women for both policies.

Table 7. South Australians’ support for policy measures to regulate alcohol delivery – Penalties for companies that deliver alcohol to people who are intoxicated, by gender (N=1015)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
There should be strong penalties for companies that deliver alcohol to people who are intoxicated.			
Strongly disagree	3.1	3.9	2.3
Disagree	6.8	6.1	7.3
Neutral	28.0	29.2	27.0
Agree	29.1	27.8	30.5
Strongly agree	33.1	33.1	33.0



Perspectives on policy options for alcohol marketing

South Australians were asked their opinion on policy measures to regulate the sale of alcohol online. When asked about data collection of online activity, the majority (81.1%; Table 8) agreed that children's activity online should not be collected to market alcoholic products. Almost three quarters (72.5%) agreed that no one's activity online should be collected to market alcoholic products. This was consistent regardless of gender.

Table 8. South Australians' support for policy measures to regulate the sale of alcohol online – Using personal data for alcohol marketing, by gender (N=1015)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
Data on children's activity online should not be collected and/or used to market alcoholic products.			
Strongly disagree	2.2	1.2	3.1
Disagree	2.9	3.7	2.1
Neutral	13.9	14.1	13.8
Agree	26.5	25.9	27
Strongly agree	54.6	55.1	54
Data on people's activity online should not be collected or used to market alcoholic products.			
Strongly disagree	2.0	1.8	2.1
Disagree	4.9	4.9	5
Neutral	20.6	22	19.3
Agree	29.2	28.4	29.9
Strongly agree	43.3	42.9	43.7

Most people (76.7%; Table 9) agreed that alcohol companies should not be able to send push notifications to a person's phone, prompting them to purchase alcohol. This was consistent between men and women.

Table 9. South Australians' support for policy measures to regulate the sale of alcohol online – Push notifications, by gender (N=1015)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
Alcohol companies should not be able to send push notifications to a person's phone prompting them to purchase alcohol.			
Strongly disagree	1.8	1.4	2.1
Disagree	4.0	4.3	3.8
Neutral	17.5	19.6	15.5
Agree	28.1	28	28.4
Strongly agree	48.6	46.7	50.2

When asked about health warnings being applied on alcohol websites, most agreed that health warnings about risks of alcohol use should be on all alcohol retail websites (79.1%; Table 10) and that health warnings should be on all alcohol advertisements online (78.4%). This was consistent regardless of gender for both policies.

Table 10. South Australians' support for policy measures to regulate the sale of alcohol online – Health warnings online, by gender (N=1015)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
Health warnings about the risks of alcohol use should be on all alcohol retail websites.			
Strongly disagree	1.1	1.4	0.8
Disagree	3.2	4.1	2.3
Neutral	16.7	16.5	16.7
Agree	39.6	40.4	39.1
Strongly agree	39.5	37.6	41.2
Health warnings should be on all alcohol advertisements online.			
Strongly disagree	1.6	2.2	1
Disagree	3.9	5.3	2.7
Neutral	16.1	15.9	16.1
Agree	39.4	39.2	39.8
Strongly agree	39.0	37.3	40.4

The majority (77.7%; Table 11) of people agreed that there should be strong penalties for alcohol companies that advertise to people who have opted out of advertising. This was consistent between men and women.

Table 11. South Australians' support for policy measures to regulate the sale of alcohol online – Penalties for companies that advertise to people, by gender (N=1015)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
There should be strong penalties for alcohol companies that advertise to people who have opted out of advertising.			
Strongly disagree	0.8	0.6	1.0
Disagree	3.4	2.7	4.2
Neutral	18.0	18.6	17.4
Agree	33.1	32.9	33.3
Strongly agree	44.6	45.3	44.1

Use of alcohol delivery

More than a quarter (29.1%, 252 people; Table 12) of South Australians have ordered alcohol to be delivered to their homes in the past 12 months. People were asked about the frequency with which they order alcohol for delivery – 15.4% receive deliveries at least fortnightly, 14.7% monthly, 26.2% every couple of months, and 43.7% do so less often.

People were also asked about the times of day and the types of alcohol they have had delivered in the last 12 months and were able to select multiple answers.

Almost two thirds (65.9%) of alcohol deliveries were received between 10am and 5pm, followed by 41.3% who receive alcohol delivery between 5pm and 10pm and 6% who receive an alcohol delivery between 10pm and 10am. Current regulation in South Australia limits alcohol delivery to between 8am to 10pm. However, the licensing authority, may on application by a licensee, vary trading hours. The poll result reflects the regulation with the majority of alcohol deliveries being received between 10am to 10pm. However, polling shows deliveries of alcohol are taking place outside of these times.

The most common type of alcohol delivery was delivery on the next day or week (50.4%), followed by same day delivery (26.2%) and rapid delivery (22.2%). Almost 10% of people reported using a subscription service for regular alcohol delivery.

Table 12. South Australians ordering alcohol online in the past 12 months (N=252)

	%
Frequency of ordering alcohol online	
At least fortnightly	15.4
Monthly	14.7
Every couple of months	26.2
Less often	43.7
Time of day of alcohol delivery	
5am to 10am	4.0
10am to 5pm	65.9
5pm to 10pm	41.3
10pm to 5am	2.0
Type of alcohol delivery	
Rapid – alcohol is delivered as soon as possible	22.2
Same day – where alcohol is delivered same day but not as soon as possible	26.2
Delivery that occurs on the next day or week	50.4
Subscription – where delivery occurs regularly based on a subscription	9.5

Alcohol use

The majority (84.6%; Table 13) of South Australians had an alcoholic drink in the past 12 months. This was consistently high regardless of gender.

When asked about the frequency of drinking alcohol, over half (58.1%) reported having an alcoholic drink at least weekly, with nearly one in five (19.5%) drinking three to six days a week. Men (68.4%) were more likely than women (47.8%) to drink at least weekly.

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol (Alcohol Guidelines)² specify that healthy adults should drink no more than 10 standard drinks a week or more than four standard drinks on any one day to reduce their risk of alcohol-related disease or injury.

One in six (16.8%) South Australians reported exceeding the Alcohol Guideline, drinking five or more standard drinks in one sitting. Men (20.4%) were more likely than women (13.0%) to exceed this guideline.



² National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) (2020). *Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol*. <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/alcohol>

Table 13. South Australians that have had an alcoholic drink in the past 12 months, by gender (N=866)

	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
Total - Had alcoholic drink in past 12 months	84.6*	86.7	83.0
Every day	8.1	10.5	5.7
Frequency			
3-6 days a week	19.5	25	14
1-2 days a week	30.5	32.9	28.1
2-3 days a month	17.9	15.9	19.9
~1 day a month	10.7	8.2	13.3
Less often	12.7	7.2	18.1
Standard drinks (SD) on usual occasion			
<1 SD	8.4	4.4	12.2
1-2 SD	45.9	41.9	49.9
3-4 SD	28.1	32.1	24.2
≥5 SD	16.8	20.4	13.0
≥7 SD	7.0	8.7	5.4

*The sample size for Table 13 is 866 – those that answered ‘yes’ and those that answered ‘maybe’. However, the figures reported in the top row are only those that answered ‘yes’ and refers to a sample size of 859.

Reasons for drinking alcohol

People were asked about the reasons that they drink alcohol. For people who indicated that they had an alcoholic drink in the past 12 months, the most common reason people reported using alcohol was to socialise (71%; Table 14).

Nearly a third (32.3%) of people reported that they drink alcohol to relieve stress. One in seven (14.8%) reported that they drink alcohol to deal with anxiety. One in eight (12.7%) indicated that they drink alcohol to get drunk. Almost a fifth (19%) reported that they drink because other people around them are drinking alcohol.

These reasons were consistent regardless of gender.

Table 14. Reasons for having an alcoholic drink, by gender (N=861)

I DRINK ALCOHOL...	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
To relieve stress	32.3	34.4	30.0
To deal with anxiety	14.8	15.7	13.9
To get drunk	12.7	12.2	12.9
When I socialise	71.0	71.4	70.7
Because other people around me are drinking alcohol	19.0	16.9	21.2
Other	18.9	19.9	18

Concern about alcohol use

South Australians were asked about whether someone they knew expressed concern about their alcohol use.

Almost one in ten (8.3%; Table 15) reported that someone has expressed concern about their alcohol use. Men (10.7%) were more likely than women (5.9%) to report that someone has expressed concern about their alcohol use.

Table 15. Has someone expressed concern about your alcohol use, by gender (N=866)

	YES %	NO %	UNSURE %
Total	8.3	88.5	3.2
Gender			
Male	10.7	85.3	4.0
Female	5.9	91.5	2.5

South Australians were also asked if they were concerned with the amount of alcohol they drink, and the amount of alcohol their family members and friends drink. Almost 7% (Table 16) reported that they are concerned with the amount of alcohol they are drinking. Men (9.4%) were more likely than women (4.4%) to report concern about their own alcohol use.

One in seven (13.8%) were concerned with the amount of alcohol a family member is drinking. Women (18.2%) were more likely than men (9.0%) to be concerned about the amount of alcohol a family member is drinking.

One in 10 (8.3%) were concerned with the amount a friend is drinking. This was consistent regardless of gender.

Table 16. Concern about alcohol use by yourself and others, by gender (N=1014)

I AM CONCERNED WITH THE AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL...	TOTAL %	MALE %	FEMALE %
That I am drinking	6.9	9.4	4.4
That a family member is drinking	13.8	9.0	18.2
That a friend is drinking	8.3	8.6	8.0
I am not concerned about my alcohol use or that of anyone I know	71.0	73.0	69.3