

## Alcohol and cancer go together – reduce your risk World Cancer Day

### 4 February 2022:

Today on World Cancer Day, the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) and Cancer Council ACT are reminding people that by reducing your drinking, you can reduce your risk of cancer.

Alcohol is linked to cancer in at least seven sites in the body and is responsible for around 3,500 cancer cases in Australia each year.

FARE CEO, Ms Caterina Giorgi, said that the link between alcohol and cancer is well-established.

"The more alcohol you drink, the greater the risk of cancer in the mouth, throat, breast, liver, and bowel," Ms Giorgi said.

"World Cancer Day is an opportunity for us to remind ourselves of the link between alcohol and cancer and that, reducing the amount of alcohol you drink can reduce your risk of cancer, and deliver significant short and long-term health improvements."

This comes as an evaluation report by FARE shows awareness of the link between alcohol and cancer in people aged 25-65 years in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) increased due to an award-winning campaign called Reduce Your Risk.

The report measured the impact of FARE's Reduce Your Risk campaign from July to September 2021 and 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, including:

- colon or bowel cancer – increase from 46 per cent pre-campaign to 72 per cent post-campaign (+26 per cent)
- head and neck cancers – increase from 28 per cent pre-campaign to 63 per cent post-campaign (+35 per cent)
- breast cancer – increase from 27 per cent pre-campaign to 39 per cent post-campaign (+12 per cent).

The report also found an increase in people aware of the updated *Australian Guidelines to reduce health risks of drinking alcohol* (Alcohol Guidelines) who could correctly identify the recommended daily or weekly maximum numbers of standard drinks to reduce the risk of alcohol-related disease or injury.

People in the ACT who were aware of the Alcohol Guidelines and could correctly recall the advice to have no more than four standard drinks in a day increased from 6 per cent to 24 per cent (+18 per cent), while those aware of the recommendation to have no more than 10 standard drinks in a week increased from 21 per cent to 38 per cent (+17 per cent).

FARE CEO, Caterina Giorgi, said the campaign demonstrates the crucial need for trusted sources to raise awareness and empower people with the advice they need to make informed decisions.

"There have been a lot of mixed messages about the health risks of alcohol, and this means many people are unaware that alcohol is a cause of a range of cancers," Ms Giorgi said

"This campaign provided the community with clear information and resources about alcohol and cancer from a trusted source."

Cancer Council ACT CEO Verity Hawkins said as we work toward a cancer-free future, awareness and prevention are key areas of concern.

“Cancer Council ACT welcomes the achievements of the Reduce Your Risk campaign,” Ms Hawkins said.

“The campaign has highlighted a gap in awareness around the link between alcohol and cancer, and it has done some amazing work in bringing this issue to the forefront in our community.”

FARE would like to thank the ACT Government Health Promotion Grants Program for its support in funding the awareness campaign and the West Australian Mental Health Commission for licensing the campaign for use in the ACT.

Read the full evaluation report for the Reduce Your Risk campaign here: <https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Reduce-Your-Risk-Campaign-Evaluation.pdf>

For more information about the link between alcohol and cancer and for tips to reduce your risk visit: <https://reduceyourrisk.org.au/>

## **Background**

### **About the campaign**

The Reduce your Risk campaign was the ACT’s first-ever campaign about the link between alcohol use and cancer.

FARE, with funding from the ACT Government’s Health Promotion Grants Program, delivered the health campaign, which was aired on television, radio, social media, and outdoor advertisements.

The campaign had over 1.5 million advert impressions, including over 560,000 video views on social media and 184,000 on television, and more than 20,000 website visits.

The Reduce Your Risk campaign recently won Silver at the 2021 Public Relations Institute of Australia Golden Target Awards in the Regional Communications Campaign category.

For more information about the campaign visit <https://reduceyourrisk.org.au/>

### **About the research**

To evaluate the impact of the campaign, FARE commissioned YouGov Galaxy to undertake surveys of Australian Capital Territory (ACT) residents aged 18 – 65 years, including ACT residents who drink alcohol. The surveys measured awareness of the updated Alcohol Guidelines and the content of the Guidelines, and awareness of the link between long-term alcohol use and specific cancers. The surveys also measured the extent to which ACT residents who drink alcohol had discussed their alcohol intake with a health professional or planned to do so.

The surveys were undertaken in May 2021 to provide baseline data for evaluating the campaign, and September 2021 to provide post-campaign data.

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The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)** is the leading not-for-profit organisation working towards an Australia free from alcohol harms. We do this through developing evidence-informed policy, enabling people-powered advocacy and delivering health promotion campaigns. To learn more about us and our work visit [www.fare.org.au](http://www.fare.org.au).