

## **VICTORIAN REGULATOR SHIRKS WARNING ON DANGEROUS ALCOHOL PRODUCT**

**8 February 2019:** An American company selling copycat icy-poles spiked with alcohol has been censured for irresponsible and dangerous behaviour.

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) has made a formal complaint to the liquor regulator in Victoria about Slim Chillers Pty Ltd which sells 'Vodka Martini Skinny Freezers' online, offering free delivery Australia-wide. The product is also sold through the warehouse chain Costco.

"These alcohol icy-poles mimic the popular Zooper Dooper kids' treats and can be purchased by anyone with access to credit or an online payment account," said FARE Director of Policy and Research Trish Hepworth.

FARE warned the regulator about this dangerous product more than four weeks ago and no action has been taken about the product which is overtly and clearly promoted as being "like Zooper Doopers".

"It's irresponsible to market alcohol products designed to appeal to teens and children, and we have called on the regulator to do its job," Ms Hepworth said.

"If this was a new toy that posed a choking hazard, parents, consumer groups and politicians would be leaping into action to protect young Australians from harm and get it taken off the shelves.

"This is not a toy – it's an alcoholic product that poses a serious risk to children and teens through copycat styling, packaging and marketing which has the potential to be easily confused with similar non-alcoholic products," she said.

Alcohol is the major contributor to the three leading causes of death among Australian teenagers: unintentional injury, homicide and suicide. And there is extensive research showing that exposure to alcohol marketing leads kids to drink more frequently, at dangerous levels, and from an earlier age.

"Unless there is a swift regulatory response, this dangerous product with its striking resemblance to children's icy-poles could quickly turn into the alco-pops fiasco all over again," Ms Hepworth said.

FARE has presented a clear argument to have the product banned in the community interest.

"The regulator in Victoria has powers under the Liquor Act – and a responsibility in the public interest – to prohibit the promotion of this product and consider sanctions against the Slim Chillers company. The time for action is now," Ms Hepworth said.



**Ms Hepworth is available for interview.**

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The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)** is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to stop the harm caused by alcohol. Alcohol harm in Australia is significant. Nearly 6,000 lives are lost every year and more than 144,000 people are hospitalised making alcohol one of our nation's greatest preventive health challenges.

For over a decade, FARE has been working with communities, governments, health professionals and police across the country to stop alcohol harm by supporting world-leading research, raising public awareness and advocating for changes to alcohol policy. In that time FARE has helped more than 750 communities and organisations, and backed over 1,400 projects around Australia.