

**INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE ROAD TRAUMA IN REGIONAL NSW CAUSED
BY SPEEDING, FATIGUE, DRINK AND DRUG DRIVING**

Organisation: Alcohol and Drug Foundation

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Greg Warren MP, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety
NSW Parliament House
6 Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000
staysafe@parliament.nsw.gov.au

To the Chair and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the ***Interventions to reduce road trauma in regional NSW caused by speeding, fatigue, drink and drug driving Inquiry***.

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) delivers evidence-based approaches to minimise alcohol and other drug (AOD) harm. We recognise the power of strong communities and the important role they play in preventing problems occurring in the first place. A community-centric approach is at the heart of everything we do.

As the Committee will be aware, AOD use is a leading contributing factor to road fatalities and serious injuries in regional New South Wales (NSW).ⁱ As such, along with targeted drug and drunk driving prevention action, general investment in AOD prevention programs and policies supported by a strong regulatory framework, can play a vital role in lowering the incidence of impaired driving, crashes, injuries, and deaths.

The goal of AOD prevention and early intervention policies and programs is to stop or slow progression along the continuum with harm reduction strategies operating at all levels once AOD use has begun. Prevention also works to strengthen protective factors, including social determinants of health, connection to family, school, community and peers as well as factors like employment and housing.

As with all prevention activity, drink and drug driving prevention should be place based and community-led. There can be significant variations in the relationship between rurality, hazardous AOD use and harm, and the risk factors for these outcomes. This means that our approach should enable a balance between generally applicable regional campaigns and those targeted to specific geographical regions,ⁱⁱ and that local knowledge is important in understanding and addressing AOD driving harms.

AOD prevention policy to reduce AOD harms, including impaired driving

Policy levers available to support the NSW government in reducing AOD harms, including road trauma, include limiting access to alcohol by restricting the hours of sale for onsite and online alcohol sale and deliveries. There is a long-established link between the hours of sale of alcohol and alcohol related harm,

New South Wales
331/410 Elizabeth St
Surry Hills NSW 2010

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 adf@adf.org.au
adf.org.au ABN 66 057 731 192

including road trauma.ⁱⁱⁱ Similarly, there is also growing evidence that supports 'safety pauses' and restricting the hours of alcohol delivery, due to associations between on-demand alcohol delivery and increased alcohol consumption (extended drinking sessions and binge drinking).^{iv}

Emerging evidence also suggests that policies such as minimum unit pricing (MUP) that reduce the availability of alcohol through price controls are associated with reductions in alcohol-related harms, including road crashes.^v

AOD prevention programs

Investment in AOD prevention programs support reduced road trauma. The ADF is a leading actor in the primary prevention and ADF programs that work to reduce harms include:

- *Community-led, place based AOD prevention programs* – As noted above, prevention works best when it is place based and community led. ADF's successful, independently evaluated [Good Sports](#) and [Local Drug Action Teams](#) programs offer a unique, well-established platform for targeted community-led AOD harm prevention support sporting clubs and communities to plan, deliver and evaluate effective, targeted, evidence-informed AOD prevention activities.

Involvement with the Good Sports program effects positive change in drinking culture and to reduce drink driving: **for each season (six months) a club was in the Good Sports program there was an 8% reduction in the odds of drink driving compared with non-Good Sports clubs.** The longer a club is in the Good Sports program, the less likely patrons and players are to report driving home after consuming alcohol at their club.^{vi}

Additional government investment can boost the reach and impact of these important programs. For example:

- In NSW, via the Road Safety Plan, the NSW Government is funding ADF until 2027 to support and guide 3,400 existing NSW clubs with a policy or action plan to support positive road safety outcomes for the NSW community.
- In Victoria, the ADF is working with the Transport Accident Commission on a new 'Road Safety Toolkit' for Victorian Local Drug Action Teams (LDATs). The Toolkit will support communities to work with high risk AOD users, increase service providers' knowledge of AOD and driving harms, and increase access to information and earlier supports among those at risk of AOD and driving harms.
- *Information services* – accurate, evidence-based information about AOD and its impacts, including effects on driving ability. Supports individuals, families, and communities with accessible knowledge to make safer choices.
- *Digital AOD services* – digital services like the ADF's [Path2Help](#), [Dib \(AI\) chatbot](#) and [Text the Effects](#) act as a trusted but anonymous 'digital front door' to connect people with the information and services they need to address their AOD use. Internal ADF data gathered from these services shows increasing engagement from young people on alcohol and cannabis harms – offering new digital prevention and early intervention opportunities efforts for young people who may otherwise be difficult to reach.

Screening, brief intervention and referral to treatment (SBIRT) for alcohol use is well established as an effective, low-cost intervention, particularly when delivered in health care settings.^{vii} Evidence suggests that targeted SBIRTs may also be useful for reducing drink-driving. For example, SBIRTs have been found to be effective in the short term for young drivers admitted to emergency departments with injuries in the context of regular (but not dependent) alcohol use.^{viii}

Targeted prevention of impaired driving

Road safety campaigning that addresses the behavioural and attitudinal drivers of AOD-related road trauma can be effective, but different approaches should be targeted to specific cohorts, as message acceptability and persuasiveness tactics varies based on a range of factors including age and gender.^{ix}

In addition, campaign messaging may be more effective where it is positively framed, contrasting socially acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, encourage emotional and social connections, and promote planning can be more effective than punitive measures in addressing impaired driving behaviour long-term behaviours.^x

Recent targeted road safety prevention campaigns undertaken by the ADF include the:

- [Game Ready Round](#), which educates and raises awareness about road safety to our Good Sports clubs, and delivers these messages at scale.
- [Trade Facts](#) campaign and website, which targets young tradies and provides essential information on drug harms, roadside drug testing and AOD supports.
- [Keep Their Futures Bright](#) campaign, which aims to reduce parental supply of alcohol to young people, a modifiable risk factor associated with risky drinking in adolescence and beyond.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this inquiry. Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss any aspect of this submission.

Sincerely,



Allison Reid

State Manager - NSW/ACT



References

ⁱ New South Wales Auditor General, Performance Audit: Regional Road Safety (2023), [Tabling Report - Regional road safety](#).

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- ⁱⁱⁱ See, for example, Morrison, C., et al. (2016). "Spatial relationships between alcohol-related road crashes and retail alcohol availability." *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* **162**: 241–244; Azar, D., et al. (2016). "The association between alcohol outlet density and alcohol use among urban and regional Australian adolescents." *Addiction* **111**(1): 65–72.
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- ^v See, for example, reductions in alcohol related crashes in the Northern Territory (excluding Greater Darwin) during the period for which minimum unit pricing was in effect: Frontier Economics and Yarning, Evaluation of Minimum Unit Price of Alcohol (2023), [Evaluation of minimum unit price of alcohol in the Northern Territory](#).
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- ^{ix} Morrison, B. W., et al. (2020). "The relative efficacy of positively and negatively valenced road safety campaign messages in improving dangerous driving attitudes." *Journal of Road Safety* **31**(4): 13–25.
- ^x Wyatt, B., & Novotna, G. (2021). Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol and Drugs: A Scoping Review. *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions*, 21(2), 119–138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1533256X.2021.1893952>.