



 Alcohol
Change
Vic 

Annual Report

2025

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Letter from ACV's Coordinator

As 2025 comes to a close, it's a fitting time to reflect on a year of renewed collaboration and progress toward reducing alcohol-related harms in Victoria. Alcohol Change Victoria (ACV) has continued to strengthen its role as a collective voice for evidence-based policy and advocacy, channelling our members' experience and expertise to create healthier, safer communities.

This year we held a strategic planning workshop to develop ACV's first-ever Theory of Change and accompanying Workplan (page 5). This milestone marks an important step in clarifying our long-term vision and the pathways through which our collective efforts can deliver measurable impact.

We published 5 position statements that translate the best available evidence and make a strong case for systems change (page 6), made 3 policy submissions (page 7) and continued to engage local and state government (page 8).

A highlight of the year was convening a roundtable on alcohol-related family, domestic and sexual violence, bringing together key stakeholders to share insights and identify opportunities for coordinated advocacy in this critical area (page 9).

We were also pleased to resume CEO meetings, creating a valuable forum for strategic discussion in addition to our regular member meetings.

And in July we launched a [new website](#), designed to better showcase our work and share resources.

As we look toward 2026, our focus remains on deepening collaboration, amplifying evidence, and driving policy change, with exciting opportunities to engage with stakeholders ahead of the state election.

A big thank you to our members for your continued dedication. I look forward to another productive and successful year together!

Best wishes,

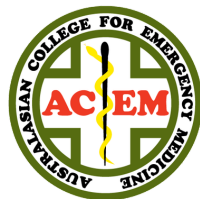
Carla Italia



About ACV

Alcohol Change Victoria is a cross-sector coalition of leading organisations united in their calls for progress on alcohol policy. Our member organisations bring a wealth of diverse knowledge to the group.

Our members:



Theory of Change and Workplan

This year, ACV developed its first-ever Theory of Change, centred on three focus areas:

- The full range of alcohol harms are prevented and minimised.
- People experiencing alcohol harms receive the treatment, care and support they need and deserve.
- Policymakers understand and work to reduce alcohol harms on individuals, families, carers and communities.

The process to land on this winning formula consisted of ACV members completing an online survey prior to coming together for a planning workshop in February. We identified our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats/risks, and clarified member priorities.

From these discussions we created a draft Theory of Change that was refined over the following months in consultation with member organisations.

Our Theory of Change is accompanied by an operational Workplan for FY 2025-26. It outlines the key issues we will address in our position statements, how we will continue to engage with local councils, and creates a plan for coordinated advocacy in the lead up to the state election in 2026.

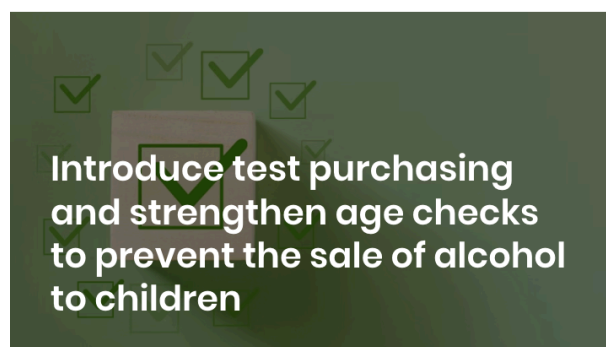
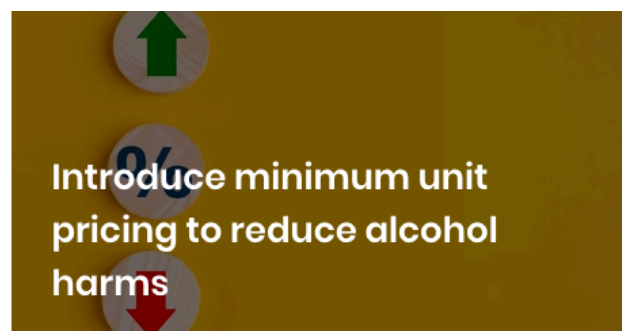
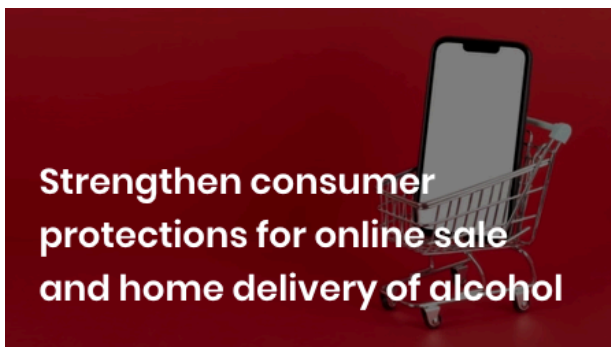
Our Theory of Change and Workplan will keep us on track, accountable, and ensure consistent and coordinated action to prevent and reduce alcohol harms.



New position statements

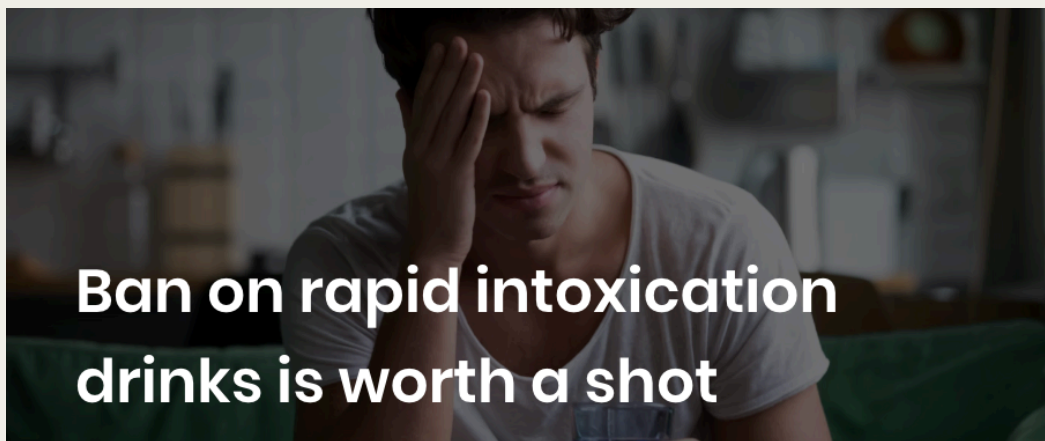
This year, we continued to build on our suite of knowledge translation products by publishing 5 position statements. These draw on the latest available evidence and make a case for systems change to ensure alcohol harms are prevented and reduced.

Click on each of the images below to read more.



Policy submissions

This year we made 3 policy submissions to: the review of the *Liquor Control Reform (Prohibited Supply) Regulations 2015*, the Economic Reform Roundtable, and the Victorian Government's consultation on the future of food safety in Victoria. Click on each image to learn more.



Government relations

This year we engaged consistently with stakeholders and leaders at both the local and state government level, with the goals of keeping alcohol policy on the agenda, responding to emerging issues, and strengthening strategic collaboration.

In March we wrote to the Victorian Minister for Casino, Gambling and Liquor Regulation, the Hon. Enver Erdogan, regarding the coronial findings following the tragic death of Kathleen Arnold.

In May, we wrote to the Victorian Minister for Planning, the Hon. Sonya Kilkenny, to clarify details around the changes to local liquor licensing announced in December 2024 as part of Victoria's new Economic Growth Statement.

Also in May, we contacted the Victorian Minister for Health, the Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas, regarding the Food Standards Australia New Zealand Board's decision to allow alcohol companies to make carbohydrate and sugar claims on alcoholic beverage labels and in broader marketing campaigns.

In November, we met with Liquor Control Victoria to discuss alcohol policy priorities and ways of working together to reduce alcohol-related harms.

At the local level, we engaged with 8 individual councils to discuss alcohol policy as they worked to finalise their Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans. We also strengthened relationships with the peak organisations representing local councils, the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Victorian Local Governance Association.



Alcohol-related violence roundtable

In May, we convened a roundtable with leading researchers, policy professionals, and service providers from the family, domestic and sexual violence sector, as well as Victoria's peak body for alcohol and other drug (AOD) services and victim-survivors with lived experience. Ten organisations were represented at the roundtable.

The conversation was thought-provoking and insightful. Participants reflected on the importance of victim-survivor experiences and perspectives, alcohol's role in culture and masculinity, and discussed how cross-sector collaboration and stronger alcohol policy can deliver effective solutions. The roundtable was intended as a conversation starter that will orient future discussions, as we work toward enhanced collaboration between the family violence and AOD sectors to tackle alcohol-related violence.

Building on this, we engaged ACV members through an online survey to hear perspectives from the AOD sector. Next year, we will continue this conversation by holding another in-person roundtable with ACV members.



ACV presents!

Knowledge translation is at the heart of what we do, and ACV members have had a busy year presenting their work at various events and forums.

Topic	ACV Member org rep
VAADA Conference 2025 (13 - 14 February)	
Age-relevant drug and alcohol recovery support for older people	Clare Davies and Jo Niven (SHARC)
RCT of an alcohol approach bias modification app among outpatients	Victoria Manning (Turning Point)
Peer navigation and recovery planning for people on addiction treatment waiting lists	Annette Peart (Turning Point)
VAADABase – A data-driven collaboration empowering Victorian AOD Treatment Services	Esther Toomey (VAADA)
Engaging Families and significant others in the treatment continuum: challenges and opportunities	Mark Powell (WRAD)
Framing and understanding what will address harms from others' drinking	Anne-Marie Laslett (CAPR)
Everything, everywhere, all at once - the expectations for the 10 year Victorian AOD strategy	Paul MacCartney (cohealth)
The critical role of lived experience in FASD prevention	Angelene Bruce (FARE)
Monash Addiction Research Centre Symposium (22 May)	
Does less drinking mean less harm? Examining alcohol-related ambulance attendances in young people	Ryan Baldwin (Turning Point)
RCT of a personalised approach bias modification smartphone app in people accessing outpatient alcohol use disorder treatment	Victoria Manning (Turning Point)
VAADA Service Provider's Conference (20 June)	
Centring communities in alcohol policy	Clare Davies (SHARC) and Sarah Callinan (CAPR)
Days of futures past: How drug policy then, impacts us now	Paul MacCartney (cohealth)
The evolution of lived and living experience workforces in the Victorian AOD and harm reduction sectors	Oscar Grano (SHARC)

Topic	ACV Member org rep
APSAD (8 - 11 November)	
Poster: Critical moments and service responses for children and young people in families impacted by alcohol or other drug use in Australia: a scoping review	Anne-Marie Laslett, Koen Smit, Jade Rintala, Kylie Lee, Yini Li, Anne Sebastian and Sarah MacLean (CAPR)
Poster: An end to blind speculation? Same-day alcohol delivery sales in New South Wales	Nic Taylor, Kira Button, Michael Livingston and William Gilmore (Curtin)
What local planners want to know about alcohol harms on public holidays and during major cultural events	Rowan Ogeil, Annette Peart and Dan Lubman (Turning Point)
A health-led response to public intoxication in Victoria	Amy Hubbard (cohealth)
Cohealth: A model of client-centred community-based specialist addiction medicine care	Paul MacCartney (cohealth)

Date	Topic	ACV Member org rep
ACV member meetings		
02/06/25	Community access to alcohol pharmacotherapy	Paul MacCartney (cohealth)
01/09/25	Results of test purchasing conducted by Communities that Care	Clive Allen-Paisley (Communities that Care)
24/11/25	Preliminary findings on illicit alcohol sales in Victoria	Nic Taylor (Curtin)
24/11/25	Liquor control reform: prioritising harm minimisation	Carla Italia (ACV Coordinator)
Other meetings		
19/11/25	Harmful Industries Roundtable presentation: Liquor control reform: prioritising harm minimisation	Carla Italia (ACV Coordinator)

Coroner's reports put alcohol harms in focus

In February, Victorian Coroner Ingrid Giles released her finding into death without inquest of Kathleen Arnold. It found Ms Arnold ordered home-delivered alcohol online in high frequency and volumes in the lead up to her death.

Coroner Giles cited Alcohol Change Victoria's submission to the Commonwealth Parliament's inquiry into AOD harms and position statement on online sale and home delivery, and made three recommendations to prevent further deaths under similar circumstances:

1. A 2-hour delay between time of order and dispatch of alcohol from the retailer (to reduce the harms associated with rapid delivery)
2. Extending delivery block out times to 10pm–10am (to reduce the harms associated with late night delivery)
3. Creating an Alcohol Action Plan.

A month later, Coroner Giles released findings into the alcohol-related deaths of four additional people, Mr. RT, Mr. GS, Mr. HS, and Mr. RJ. All four men had consumed alcohol for an extended period of time and died as a direct result of alcohol consumption. In these reports, Coroner Giles referred back to

the recommendations she had made in her first report on Ms Arnold's tragic death.

The Department of Justice and Community Safety responded to Coroner Giles' recommendations in May, noting the government was currently considering recommendations 1 and 2. It was also noted that the DJCS had met with the Department of Health to coordinate a response to recommendation 3.

We are yet to see any concrete changes to the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998* to make these changes as recommended by Coroner Giles, but the momentum for change continues to grow, with the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia both having recently introduced legislation to implement a 2-hour safety pause and extend delivery block out times.

VCAT review a win for Daylesford community

In 2021, following advocacy from Alcohol Change Victoria and its members, the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998* was amended to: 1) require the state's liquor regulator, the Victorian Liquor Commission, to give due regard to harm minimisation; and 2) to change the definition of harm to explicitly include harm to minors, vulnerable persons or communities, family violence, and anti-social behaviour.

In 2022, Endeavour Group applied to the Victorian Liquor Commission seeking a packaged liquor licence for a proposed Dan Murphy's store in Daylesford. The Commission initially granted the licence, but after community calls for an internal review the Commission set aside its original decision and the licence was refused on the basis it would be conducive to or encourage harm, specifically to children.

Following this refusal, Endeavour sought a review at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). After considering evidence from experts and community members, VCAT upheld the Commission's decision to refuse the liquor licence, citing the:

“risk of harm to minors from exposure to the premises and the potential for normalisation of alcohol associated with this location.”

Alcohol Change Victoria welcomes VCAT's decision and commends the local Hepburn Shire community on their years of tireless advocacy. It remains to be seen whether Endeavour Group will appeal to the Supreme Court of Victoria.

The ACV Coordinator presented on these landmark decisions and the legislative changes that preceded them to VicHealth's Harmful Industries Roundtable in November. To help understand these decisions, we have published case summaries on both the Commission's internal review and the VCAT review.

We also prepared a case summary on a separate decision to refuse the granting of a liquor licence in the Melbourne CBD, which was novel because it involved the proposed sale of alcohol through a kiosk window to pedestrians.



***Working towards a Victoria
free from alcohol harms***

 **Alcohol
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