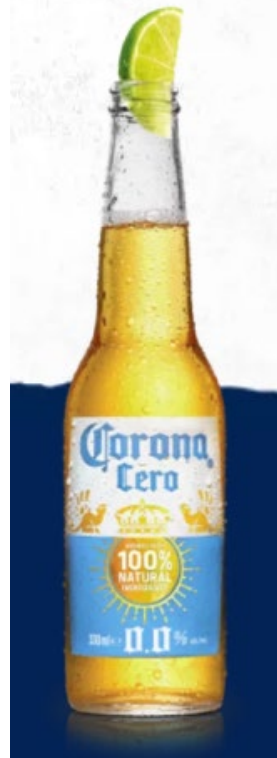




Zero alcohol products: A useful tool or is caution needed?

Julia Stafford
Alcohol Program Manager, Cancer Council WA

Presenting work led by Danica Keric





20% Off
No or very low alcohol^A

Discover our no or very low alcohol beverages

\$6⁸⁰ ea
SAVE \$1.70
\$4.53 per litre
Cattlen Zero Non Alcoholic 4 x 375ml

\$11^{ea}
SAVE \$4
\$11 per litre
Naked Life Non Alcoholic Varieties 4 x 250ml

\$8^{ea}
SAVE \$4
\$8 per litre
Vok Mocktail Cans 4 x 250ml

\$12^{ea}
SAVE \$3
\$6.06 per litre
Heineken Alcohol Free Pure Malt Lager Bottles 6 x 330ml

\$10⁴⁰
SAVE \$2.60
\$4.62 per litre
Great Northern Brewing Co Non Alcoholic Beer 6 x 375ml

\$12^{ea}
SAVE \$3
\$6.06 per litre
Asahi Super Dry 0% 6 x 330ml

^AExcludes Coopers Ultra Light 6 x 375ml, Everyday Low Price, Lower Summer Price and products marked in store as clearance items.

The zero alcohol market.

The market for ZAPs has increased over recent years.

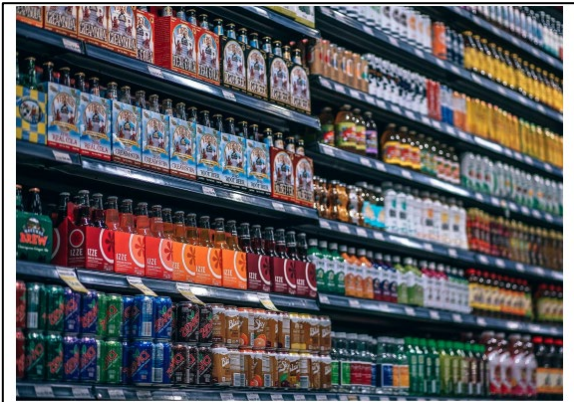
- Industry analysts report increases in both the availability and demand for zero alcohol products in Australia.
- Almost 1/3 of Australian consumers now buy zero alcohol products.
- Zero alcohol beer accounts for nearly half of all zero alcohol sales, and 10% of total beer sales.
- Well-established alcohol brands continue to dominate the zero alcohol market.

Evidence scan

- Google Scholar and Science Direct searches to identify relevant research on the impacts of zero alcohol products on specific population subgroups.
- Considered the broader alcohol marketing literature.
- Excluded research with links to the alcohol industry.

Examples of evidence.

Adolescent perceptions of zero alcohol products.



Adolescents' perceptions of and experiences with zero alcohol products and alcohol brand extensions: A multimethod study

JUNE 2023
REPORT PREPARED FOR
CANCER COUNCIL WESTERN AUSTRALIA



- Survey of 679 Australian teenagers aged 15-17 years
- Focus groups with 44 Australians aged 15-17 years
- Published 2024

Lead researcher Dr Leon Booth:
“Our research shows that zero alcohol products and marketing are likely making young people more familiar with alcohol brands and further normalising alcohol consumption.”

Parents' views, practices and intentions.



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Preventive Medicine

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/ypmed

Which parents provide zero-alcohol beverages to adolescents? A survey of Australian parents' practices and intentions

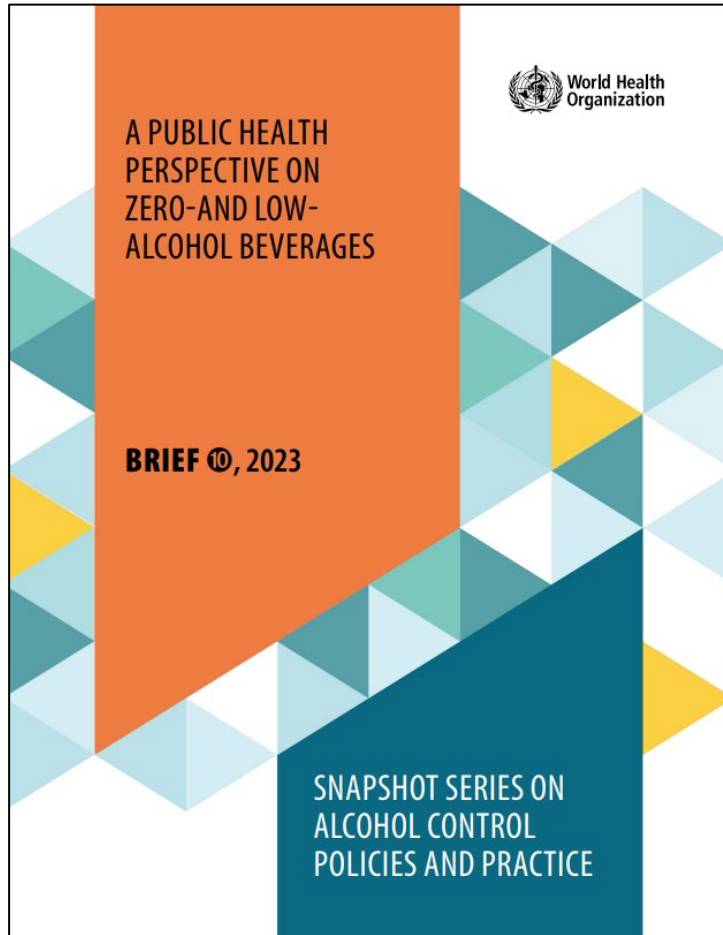
Ashlea Bartram^{a,*}, Nathan J. Harrison^a, Christina A. Norris^a, Susan Kim^{a,1}, Simone Pettigrew^b, Robin Room^{c,d}, Caroline Miller^{e,f}, Ian Olver^g, Rebecca Jenkinson^{h,i,j,2}, Marina Bowshall^{k,3}, Jacqueline A. Bowden^a

“They start on the zero-alcohol and they wanna try the real thing”: Parents' views on zero-alcohol beverages and their use by adolescents

Nathan J. Harrison,^{1,2,*} Christina A. Norris,^{1,2} Ashlea Bartram,^{1,2} Michael Murphy,³ Simone Pettigrew,⁴ Ally O. Dell,⁵ Robin Room,^{6,7} Caroline Miller,^{5,8} Ian Olver,^{9,10} Marina Bowshall,¹¹ Cassandra J. C. Wright,^{6,12,13} Rebecca Jenkinson,^{13,14} Jacqueline A. Bowden^{1,2}

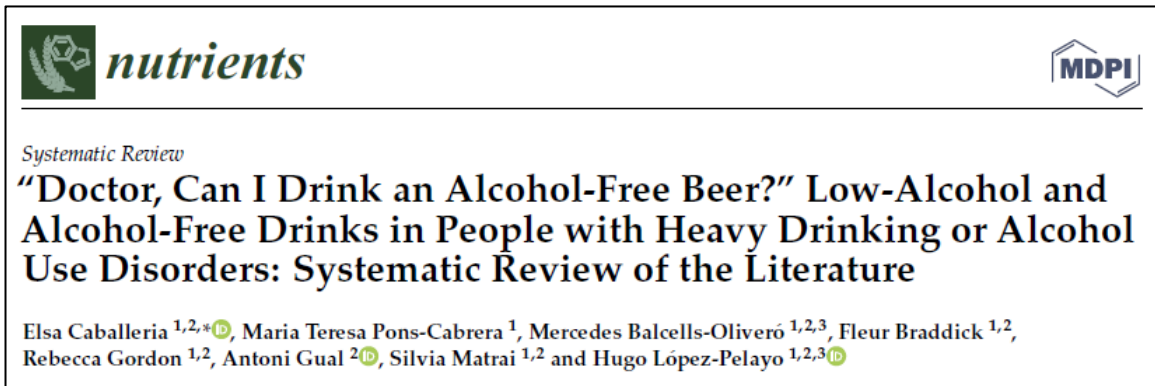
- Parents are feeling conflicted, confused and concerned.
- Parents who viewed zero alcohol products as beneficial were more likely to provide them.
- Parents who provided alcohol were more likely to provide zero alcohol products.

World Health Organization brief.



- Concerns zero alcohol products normalise a culture of alcohol consumption and blur potential conflict of interest in developing public health policies.
- The extent to which substitution between zero alcohol and higher strength alcohol products occurs is unclear.
- Labelling varies across products, producers and countries, resulting in unclear alcohol content.

Evidence on effects with people with high-risk drinking patterns.



Published 2022

- Systematic review identified ten studies.
- Alcohol-related cues (e.g. product appeal, flavour) might trigger physiological reactions and arousal similar to those which occur when drinking alcohol.
- Further evidence needed
- Precautionary principle

Proposed guidance.

Proposed guidance – adults.

- Zero alcohol products can provide an alcohol-free alternative to alcoholic products and may be a suitable option for people who are looking to drink less alcohol, particularly if they are available in places and contexts where alcohol is generally used.
- Some products can provide more kilojoules than people expect.
- Zero alcohol products may reinforce alcohol as the norm.

Proposed guidance - young people.

- The safest option is for young people under 18 years of age to not use zero alcohol products.
- Given that zero alcohol products are designed to taste the same as alcoholic products, these products could introduce and get young people familiar with the taste of alcoholic products.
- Many zero alcohol products are manufactured by large alcohol brands, which means that zero alcohol products can create alcohol brand familiarity among young people.
- Alcohol companies that produce zero alcohol products say that these products are not intended for use by children and young people.

Proposed guidance – people who are pregnant or planning pregnancy.

- It is important that good alternatives to alcoholic products are available to support alcohol-free pregnancies.
- Any amount of alcohol can harm a developing baby, so women who are pregnant or planning pregnancy have the right to be well-informed about the alcohol content of products when deciding what to use.
- Some ‘zero’ alcohol products can still contain up to 1.15% ABV. Take a close look at the label – ignore the marketing spin on the front and look at the standard drinks information. If a product contains any amount of alcohol, we recommend avoiding it if you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy.

Proposed guidance – people with lived and living experience of alcohol dependence.

- Evidence is mixed and continuing to develop.
- There doesn't appear to be one approach suitable for all people with a lived or living experience of alcohol dependence.
- Consideration about zero alcohol products should be done on an individual basis.
- Given that the taste of zero alcohol products is designed to replicate the taste of alcoholic products, there is a risk that these products could provide unhelpful cues for people with a goal of not using alcohol.

Next steps.

- Your feedback is welcome.
- We will be seeking feedback from the sector.
- Monitor new evidence.
- Amend guidance as necessary.
- Publish research examining themes in zero alcohol product marketing.
- Progress Cancer Council's alcohol prevention policy.

Cancer Council recommends the introduction of a comprehensive and robust national regulatory framework with a legislative basis that effectively minimises community exposure to alcohol marketing, that includes:

- Federal legislation addressing alcohol advertising, promotion and sponsorship, that applies to traditional media platforms and new and emerging forms of media, including social media; incorporates regulation of low and zero alcohol products and includes monitoring and enforcement by independent regulators, with appropriate penalties and mechanisms to address non-compliance.



Thank you.

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