Alcohol Cultures Framework
A FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION ON DRINKING CULTURES

SOCIETAL
Examples of factors that influence the way people drink and the risk of harm
Affordability
Access
Availability
Marketing and commodification
Societal systems and structures
Social position
Cultural expectations on gender and masculinity
National culture and identity

The role of whole-of-population controls is significant and efforts to improve national and state alcohol regulation should continue to be a priority. This framework acknowledges the influence of societal drivers and reinforces the strong existing evidence base for alcohol regulation reform, but its emphasis lies in exploring the setting and subculture frames for intervention. Importantly, cultural change and regulation are allies and should not be viewed as alternatives.

SETTING
Examples of factors that influence the way people drink and the risk of harm
Availability and the role of alcohol
Layout and design of the drinking environment
Social context of the setting
Link between alcohol and the setting
Formal rules and enforcement
Settings-based advertising and promotions
Subcultures that own/operate within the setting
Role models, positive or negative influences
Expectations about behaviour while drinking
Acceptability of intoxication
Peer influence and social pressure

SUBCULTURE
Examples of factors that influence the way people drink and the risk of harm
Shared social customs
Use-values
Role models, positive or negative influences
Modes of social control
Cultural meanings of drunkenness
Peer influence and social pressure
Misperceptions around drinking
Acceptability of intoxication
Social norms
Gendered norms (e.g. masculinity)
Technology

FAMILY AND INDIVIDUAL
Examples of factors that influence the way people drink and the risk of harm
Biological factors (e.g. age, sex)
Personal values
Intergenerational factors
Role models positive or negative influences
Priorities and responsibilities
Religion and spiritual beliefs
Own health wellbeing and resilience
Physical and psychotropic responses to alcohol
Isolation or lack of personal interactions/social connectedness

PROGRAM PLANNING CHECKLIST
The following elements could be considered when planning to influence alcohol cultures:

- Target subpopulations that engage in risky drinking practices, e.g. a specific occupational group that drinks heavily together, or tertiary students who drink heavily together to celebrate.
- Consider social position and the impact that proposed interventions may have on different population groups.
- Address structural and social factors that drive culture and behaviours, rather than behaviours only.
- Understand the frames for intervention by investigating the factors that socially shape the way people drink and asking critical questions about alcohol culture.
- Seek allies for change or champions to drive and model culture shifts within the target group.
- Co-design strategies with the targeted subpopulation and continually seek their input, and communicate findings with the group.
- Implement a flexible approach that allows adjustments as learnings emerge from the program.
- Work closely with other agencies on coordinated programs where regulation and programmatic efforts are mutually reinforcing.
- Plan for innovation and sustainability when designing and delivering strategies, acknowledging that alcohol culture change is a slow process.
- Evaluate strategies using the example questions outlined in this Framework as a starting point and share learnings.