



Foundation for Alcohol
Research & Education

Media Release

ALCOHOL POLL: TANKED, TROUBLED, BUT EAGER FOR REFORM

18 April 2013: Australians are drinking to get drunk in greater numbers and feeling guilty afterwards, but remain overwhelmingly in favour of fixing our collective national hangover.

This year's Annual Alcohol Poll found that in 2013, 40 per cent or 4.5 million Australians drank to get drunk, 31 per cent or 3.5 million Australians felt guilty after drinking, and an overwhelming majority of Australians (74%) believe more must be done to address alcohol-related harms.

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education's (FARE) *Annual Alcohol Poll: Attitudes and Behaviours*, paints a comprehensive picture of the nation's relationship with alcohol, assessing attitudes to alcohol, revealing alcohol consumption trends, and measuring support for a range of alcohol policies.

Conducted by Galaxy Research, and now in its fourth year, Australia's most comprehensive alcohol Poll has expanded to include questions regarding social media interaction, preloading, parents alcohol consumption, as well as national voting intentions.

While the Poll showed an overall decline in the numbers of Australians drinking, a number of other indicators highlight that Australians continue to drink to excess.

This year's Poll also included selected Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) questions which revealed that 23 per cent of Australian drinkers had not been able to stop drinking once they started and 26 per cent couldn't remember what had happened the night before.

FARE Chief Executive, Michael Thorn says this year's expanded poll reveals some telling insights but the same worrying trends.

"With millions of Australians continuing to drink to excess, the 2013 Annual Poll provides further evidence of the failure of government to introduce effective alcohol reform policies. Governments around the country seem unwilling to take action, yet this Poll again makes clear that Australians recognise that alcohol use results in devastating harms, and overwhelmingly demand our politicians to take meaningful steps to reduce the carnage," Mr Thorn said.

60 per cent of Australian drinkers continue to prefer drinking alcohol at home, while an examination of preloading found more than half of all drinkers (57%) consume alcohol before going out to a club or pub.

Almost one in five Australians (18%) indicated they feel uncomfortable in a pub or club without an alcoholic beverage in their hand; an indication of the social pressures to drink.

For the first time, the Annual Alcohol Poll also asked drinkers if they ever regretted communicating via the phone or internet while drunk. Almost one third (32%) of drinkers regretted phoning, texting, emailing or posting on social media, with Gen Y (47%) the most likely to regret doing so.

The Poll examined parents' alcohol consumption practices, finding that 79 per cent of parents and guardians of children under 18 years of age consume alcohol around their children, while 13 per cent of Australians admitted to knowingly providing alcohol to a person under 18 years of age.

The Poll found that Australians again overwhelmingly support the introduction of health information labels on alcohol products (61%) as well as a ban on alcohol advertising on weekends and weekdays before 8:30pm (64%).

The Poll also examined voting intentions, finding that a majority of all voters believe that Australia has a problem with excess drinking or alcohol abuse (Greens 83%, ALP, 78% and Coalition 72%), and a majority of all voters believe more needs to be done to reduce the harms caused by alcohol (ALP 77%, Greens 76%, and Coalition 73%).

Mr Thorn says data on voting intentions provides a loud and clear message ahead of this year's Federal election.

"There's a continuing problem with alcohol misuse in this country; this poll alone points to 32 per cent of Australians affected by alcohol related violence. In this election year, I call on the Commonwealth Government to take decisive action by phasing out alcohol sponsorship of cultural and sporting events, introducing a mandatory pregnancy warning label for alcohol, and implementing a National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Action Plan," Mr Thorn said.

Key Findings:

- 75% of people believe that Australia has a problem with excess drinking or alcohol abuse.
- 78% believe that alcohol-related problems in Australia will either get worse or remain the same over the next five to 10 years.
- 77% of Australians consume alcohol. 50% consume three or more standard drinks on a typical occasion, 47% will consume one or two standard drinks and a further 3% cannot state with certainty how much they typically consume.
- The majority of Australian drinkers (71%) are comfortable with the amount of alcohol they consume, 22% sometimes feel they have too much to drink and 6% admit to being uncomfortable.
- 18% of Australians have been asked questions by their doctor about their alcohol consumption in the previous 12 months.
- The majority of Australians (61%) believe that health information labels should be placed on alcohol products.
- 69% of Australians believe that alcohol advertising and promotions influence the behaviour of people under 18 years.
- 64% of Australians support a ban on alcohol advertising on weekdays and weekends before 8.30pm.

Michael Thorn is available for interview.

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Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is an independent, charitable organisation working to prevent the harmful use of alcohol in Australia. Since 2001, FARE has invested over \$115 million in research and community projects to minimise the impact of alcohol misuse on Australians. Through its national grants program and commissioned research, FARE has established itself as a leading voice on alcohol and other drugs issues. FARE works with community groups, all levels of government, police, emergency workers, research institutions and the private sector to address alcohol-related problems. For further information visit FARE's website: www.fare.org.au