# Examining Australia’s heaviest drinkers

## Researchers

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## Summary

This study was undertaken by FARE’s research partner the Centre for Alcohol Policy and Research (CAPR) at La Trobe University and examines the distribution of alcohol consumption in Australia, identifying the top 10% of Australia’s heaviest drinkers and examining their sociodemographic characteristics, alcohol consumption and purchasing practices.

Data came from the *2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey* and the *2013 International Alcohol Control Study* with the heaviest drinking 10% of Australia’s population identified through estimates of annual alcohol consumption. Logistic regression was then used to assess the factors that distinguished these heaviest drinkers from the rest of the drinking population.

## Key findings

Australian alcohol consumption is heavily skewed. Alcohol consumption practices appear to differentiate the heaviest drinkers from others more clearly than sociodemographic factors. This report found:

1. The heaviest drinking 10% of Australia’s population consumed 54.4% of all alcohol consumed.
2. These heavy drinkers were more likely to be men who live in regional and remote areas.
3. Heavy drinkers were more likely to drink cask wine and full-strength beer and to purchase cheaper alcohol than other drinkers.

The findings of the study have been published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health.

## Implications for public health

Public health interventions that reduce drinking among the heaviest 10% of drinkers in Australia have the potential to markedly reduce per-capita consumption and reduce alcohol-related harm.

Interventions that reduced this consumption would likely produce significant improvements in public health. The findings in this report suggest that interventions targeting cheaper alcohol may be effective with this group and provide further evidence that price-related interventions such as volumetric taxation or minimum unit pricing are worth exploring.

[view the report](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/CAPR_study_Examining_Australias_heaviest_drinkers_journal_article_180419.pdf)

[view the media release](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Media-Release-New-study-into-Australias-heaviest-drinkers-validates-control-of-cheap-alcohol.pdf)