# The range and magnitude of alcohol's harm to others

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## Summary

This study represents a sustained and comprehensive effort to quantify alcohols harm to others. It draws on and analyses a wide variety of existing and newly developed data, including a national survey of more than 2,600 Australians aged 18 or older conducted in 2008. The study also reports for the first time on the previously largely hidden financial costs of alcohol abuse on others, including family members of drinkers, friends, workmates, and strangers. Previous estimates have focused mainly on the drinkers themselves and the direct costs to society.

The cost of alcohol abuse is emotional and relational as well as financial. Heavy drinkers have cost those around them more than $14 billion in out-of-pocket expenses, forgone wages and productivity, and more than $6 billion in intangible costs. Each year more than 70,000 Australians are the victims of alcohol-related assaults and, of those, 24,000 experience the assault as domestic violence. In addition, almost 20,000 children across Australia are victims of substantiated alcohol-related child abuse.

## Outcomes

According to the report, almost three-quarters of all adults in Australia were negatively affected over a one-year period by someone elses' drinking, in ways ranging from minor annoyance to physical violence or death.

The study concludes that the overall tangible and intangible costs to Australia of alcohol abuse could be double the previous estimates if the additional impact that heavy drinkers have on others around them is taken into account, particularly in areas such as out-of-pocket expenses, lost time, forgone wages and productivity.

## Related content

[The hidden harm: Alcohol’s impact on children and families (2015)](https://fare.org.au/the-hidden-harm-alcohols-impact-on-children-and-families/)

[Beyond the drinker: Longitudinal patterns in alcohol's harm to others (2015)](https://fare.org.au/beyond-the-drinker-longitudinal-patterns-in-alcohols-harm-to-others/)

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