

2012 Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education Annual Alcohol Poll: Attitudes and Behaviours



Foundation for Alcohol
Research & Education

Community Attitudes and Behaviours: New South Wales

Key Findings

- The majority (80%) of NSW adults believe that Australia has a problem with excess drinking or alcohol abuse, and 76% believe that alcohol-related problems will remain the same or worsen over the next five to ten years.
- The majority of NSW adults (77%) believe that more needs to be done to reduce the harms caused by alcohol-related illness, injury, death and related issues. Most perceive that alcohol companies (72%), pubs and clubs (63%) and governments (56%) are not doing enough to address these problems.
- Almost 1.5 million NSW drinkers (37%) consume alcohol with the intention of getting drunk.
- 692,000 NSW drinkers (17%) have consumed alcoholic energy drinks.
- Almost 1.7 million or 34% of NSW adults have been affected by alcohol-related violence.
- Over one quarter of NSW adults (29%) believe that there are too many alcohol outlets in their area.
- NSW drinkers are more likely than Australian drinkers as a whole to consume alcohol in licensed venues (31% compared to 24%).

About the Polling

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) commissioned Galaxy Research to carry out nation-wide polling to explore community attitudes and behaviours relating to alcohol. Of particular interest to this analysis were attitudes to alcohol in Australia, alcohol consumption patterns, knowledge of the *Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol*, experiences of alcohol-related violence, and perspectives on alcohol-related policies. This report contains previously unreleased data which is specific to New South Wales (NSW) residents.

Findings

Attitudes towards alcohol in Australia

The majority of NSW adults believe that Australia has a problem with excess drinking or alcohol abuse (80%), and that alcohol-related problems will either remain the same or get worse over the next five to ten years (76%).

The majority of NSW adults (77%) believe that more needs to be done to reduce the harm caused by alcohol-related illness, injury, death and related issues. The majority also believe that alcohol companies (72%), pubs and clubs (63%) and governments (56%) are not doing enough to address alcohol misuse in Australia.

The three alcohol-related problems that people in NSW are most concerned about are road traffic accidents (80%), violence (75%) and child abuse and neglect (66%). The table below provides a detailed breakdown of the alcohol-related problems that adults in NSW are concerned about.

	Total (%)
Road traffic accidents	80
Violence	75
Child abuse and neglect	66
Health problems	64
Harm to unborn babies from exposure to alcohol in utero	58
Crime	56
Excessive noise around pubs and clubs	28
Lost productivity	27
None of the above	2

The alcohol industry was selected as doing the least to address the harms that result from their product. Only 7% of NSW adults nominated the alcohol industry as the industry working the most to address the potential harms of their products, when compared to the gambling industry (10%), the tobacco industry (16%), and the fast food industry (20%). 32% of people believe that none of the industries are working to reduce the potential harms from their products and 15% are unsure.

Alcohol consumption

Almost 4 million adults (81%) in NSW drink alcohol. Of these, almost one-third (30% or over 1.2 million people) drink alcohol at least three times a week.

While the majority (52%) of NSW drinkers drink one to two standard drinks on a typical occasion, 45% will drink three standard drinks or more, and a further 3% cannot state with certainty how much they typically consume. Over half a million (563,000 or 14%) NSW adults consume more than six standard drinks on a typical occasion.

Almost 1.5 million (37%) NSW drinkers drink alcohol to get drunk, with 12% doing so at least once a week and 8% doing so at least once a month, but less than once a week. People who reported drinking to get drunk were asked further questions about their perception of drunkenness. Slurring speech or losing balance was chosen most as an indicator of drunkenness (44%), followed by starting to feel relaxed (32%), being over the legal blood alcohol limit to drive (18%), vomiting (4%) and passing out (3%).

16% of NSW drinkers stated that someone else had expressed concern about their drinking. Of these, the majority (73%) said that a family member had expressed concern, followed by a friend (24%), another relative (15%), a health professional (12%), a work colleague (8%) and someone else (2%).

17% of NSW drinkers have consumed alcoholic energy drinks, which equates to 692,000 people. The majority of people who consume alcoholic energy drinks do so once a month or less (69%), 13% consume them two to three times a month and 18% consume them once a week or more.

When it comes to purchasing alcohol, NSW drinkers are most likely to consider taste (71%) followed by price (52%) and brand (36%).



Awareness of the Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol

60% of NSW adults are aware of the Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol (the Guidelines), but relatively few (12%) are aware of the content.

Of the people who stated that they were aware of the Guidelines, 34% correctly identified that the recommended number of standard drinks a person can consume in a day to minimise long-term risk of alcohol-related harms is two. 14% overestimated the number of standard drinks that could be consumed to minimise long-term harms, and 33% did not know.

When asked to estimate the recommended number of standard drinks a person can consume in a single session to minimise short-term risk of alcohol-related harms, 12% correctly identified that it was four standard drinks. 5% overestimated the number of standard drinks that could be consumed to minimise short-term harms, and 34% did not know.

Experiences of alcohol-related violence

Almost 1.7 million or 34% of NSW adults have been affected by alcohol-related violence. Of these people, 14% (or 713,000 people) who have been victims of alcohol-related violence and 23% (or about 1.16 million people) who have had a family member or friend affected.

Perspectives on outlet density

The majority of people in NSW (57%) believe that there are about the right number of alcohol outlets in their area, whereas 29% believe there are too many. Only 4% of people believe there are too few outlets in their area and 9% are not sure.

Differences between NSW and all Australia

Generally, the attitudes and behaviours regarding alcohol are similar between NSW and all Australians. However, there are two key differences. NSW drinkers are more likely than the national average to consume alcohol outside the home, whether it be at a pub or club (21% compared to 17%) or at a restaurant (10% compared to 7%). NSW adults are also more likely than Australian adults as a whole to believe that it is harmful to give alcohol to anyone under the age of 18 (85% compared to 80%).

The Approach

Galaxy Research was commissioned by FARE to conduct the annual study into attitudes and behaviours of Australians in regards to alcohol. This study was conducted online among members of a permission-based panel. The sample was selected from the panel members with quotas applied to ensure that the sample reflected the current population.

Fieldwork commenced on Friday 13 January 2012 and was completed on Tuesday 17 January 2012. The survey sample comprised 362 respondents aged 18 years and older distributed throughout NSW and the ACT.

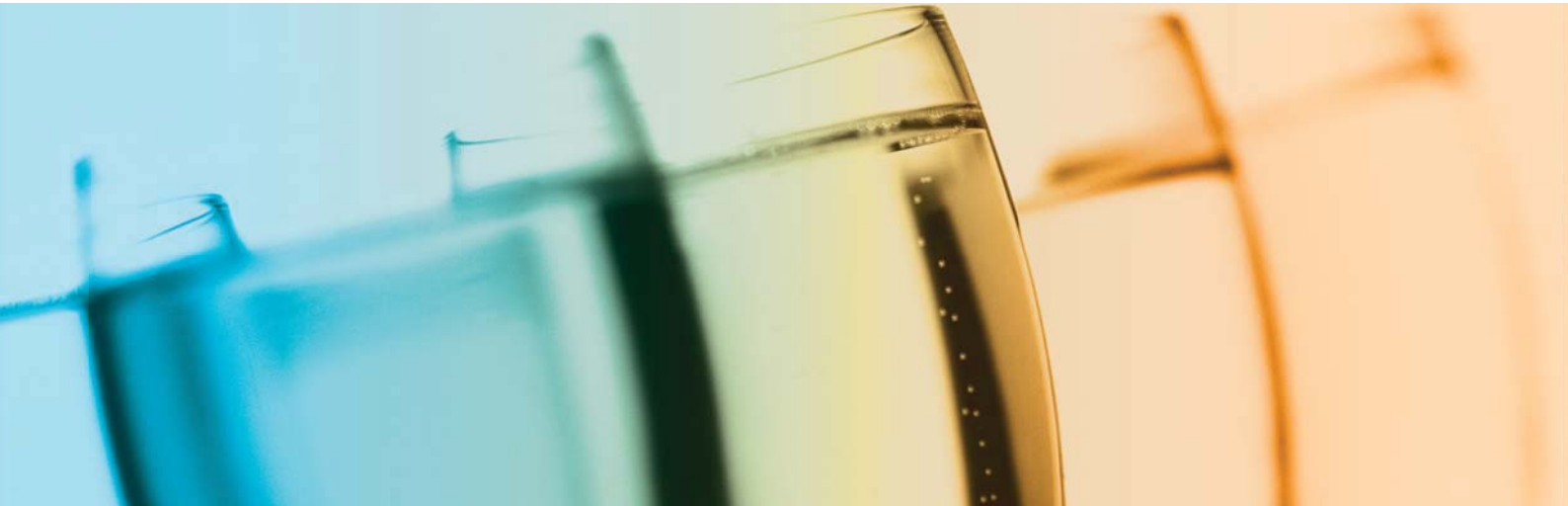
The questionnaire was designed by Galaxy Research in consultation with FARE. The questionnaire was transferred into Quest format in order to be hosted online. For each question, the respondent had to click on the response which represented their answer.

Following the collection of data, the results were weighted by age, gender and region to reflect the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) population estimates.

For the purposes of this analysis, only NSW data was analysed to determine attitudes and behaviours around alcohol for NSW adults. The ACT is included in the NSW data.



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About the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is an independent charitable organisation working to prevent the harmful use of alcohol in Australia. Our mission is to help Australia change the way it drinks by:

- helping communities to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms;
- building the case for alcohol policy reform; and
- engaging Australians in conversations about our drinking culture.

Over the last ten years FARE has invested more than \$115 million, helped 750 organisations and funded over 1,400 projects addressing the harms caused by alcohol misuse.

FARE is guided by the World Health Organisation's *Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol* for addressing alcohol-related harms through population-based strategies, problem-directed policies, and direct interventions.

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