

2019 **NSW** **POLL**

PERSPECTIVES ON ALCOHOL



fare



KEY FINDINGS

The majority (76%) of NSW adults believe more needs to be done to prevent alcohol harm.

41% of adults had been a victim, or have a family member or friend who has been a victim, of alcohol-related violence, with the majority (51%) of 18–24 year olds having experienced alcohol-related violence themselves or through a family member or friend.

NSW residents support a number of policies to reduce alcohol harm including introducing a closing time for pubs, clubs and bars of no later than 3am (84%), with the greatest support coming from young people aged 18–34 years old (90%).

In NSW, the number of drinkers drinking to get drunk has increased significantly since 2014, from 36% to 50% in 2019.

42% of NSW residents now consider the city or centre of town to be safe on a Saturday night, up from 25% in 2014.

Only 56% of NSW adults are aware of the NHMRC guidelines. Of those aware of their existence, only 28% can correctly identify the maximum number of drinks a person can have per day to minimise long-term risks, and only 8% can correctly identify the maximum number of drinks a person can have to minimise short-term risks in one drinking session.

ABOUT THE POLLING

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) commissioned YouGov Galaxy to undertake polling of New South Wales (NSW) residents to gain an understanding on their perspectives on alcohol policies.

This study was conducted online among members of a permission-based panel. The sample was selected from the panel members and had quotas applied to it, in order to ensure that it reflected the current population statistics. Fieldwork commenced on Tuesday 8 January 2019 and was completed on Friday 18 January 2019. The survey sample comprised of 350 respondents aged 18 years and older currently residing in NSW.

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. Note totals may not add to 100% in the tables due to rounding.

2019 is the tenth consecutive year of the Poll. Ten consecutive years of polling has enabled FARE to monitor patterns and trends in the areas of alcohol consumption, attitudes towards drinking, awareness and experience of harm, as well as emerging alcohol policy issues.

FINDINGS



NEW SOUTH WALES ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Half (50%) of NSW drinkers consume alcohol with the intention of getting drunk.

The following table provides an overview of the frequency NSW drinkers reported drinking to get drunk between 2011 and 2019. While some fluctuations have occurred, an overall increase in the proportion of NSW drinkers who consume alcohol to get drunk has been observed since this question was first asked in 2011 (36%).

	2011 (%)	2012 (%)	2013 (%)	2014 (%)	2015 (%)	2016 (%)	2017 (%)	2018 (%)	2019 (%)
At least twice a week	4	6	2	5	3	3	5	6	8
Once a week	8	7	9	7	6	6	7	10	10
At least once a month	7	8	5	6	8	10	10	16	11
Less than once a month	18	17	20	18	16	15	20	15	21
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>50</i>
No, never	64	63	64	64	67	66	58	53	51

Almost nine in ten (88%) NSW drinkers consider themselves a responsible drinker, while 8% do not and 4% were unsure.

'Responsible drinker' data was analysed against 'drinking to get drunk' data to determine the relationship between these two variables. This analysis found that 79% of NSW drinkers who consume alcohol to get drunk consider themselves a responsible drinker.

When asked whether their consumption has changed from 12 months ago, 30% indicated there has been no perceivable change in drinking habits over the past year, 35% have reduced their alcohol intake or given up in the past 12 months, 18% have increased their alcohol intake, 16% do not drink and 1% are unsure.

The following table provides an overview of the reasons why people increased their consumption of alcohol over the past 12 months.

	2010 (%)	2017 (%)	2019 (%)
I needed to drink to feel happier/ I have been feeling depressed or upset	15	25	44
I have been socialising more or going out more to pubs and clubs, etc.	37	45	41
I am under more stress than I used to be	41	26	33
My circumstances have changed	17	20	25
My friends or family are drinking more	28	21	20
I have more money than I used to so I can afford to drink more alcohol	8	20	20
No particular reason	23	9	6
Other	0	2	0

Note that people were able to select more than one response. Therefore, the total may exceed 100%.

The following table provides an overview of the reasons why people decreased their consumption of alcohol over the past 12 months.

	2012 (%)	2017 (%)	2019 (%)
I want to improve my health	50	46	51
My social environment has changed and that used to influence how much I drank	20	18	27↑
Financial reasons – I can't afford to drink as much	20	21	23
A weight concern	28	25	21
My alcohol intake was having too much impact on my life	13	13	17
I am under pressure from others to reduce my drinking (family, friends or employer)	8	3	5
No particular reason	22	25	16
Other	15	11	5
None of the above	2	5	5

↑↓ denotes a significant change from the previous year's results (applied to 2019 data only).

Note that people were able to select more than one response. Therefore, the total may exceed 100%.

EXPERIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING OF ALCOHOL HARM

The majority (76%) of NSW adults believe more needs to be done to prevent alcohol harm.

More than 4 in 10 adults (41%) have been affected by alcohol-related violence. 22% have been victims of alcohol-related violence, and 26% have had a family member or friend be a victim of alcohol-related violence.

The following table provides an overview of experiences of alcohol-related violence by age.

	TOTAL (%)	18-24 (%)	25-34 (%)	35-49 (%)	50+ (%)
Have been a victim of alcohol-related violence	22	27	22	26	15
Have had a family member or friend be a victim of alcohol-related violence	26	33	26	22	27
Either of the above	48	60	48	48	42
Neither of the above	59	49	55	60	65

Note that people were able to select more than one response. Therefore, the total may exceed 100%.

56% of NSW adults indicate that they are aware of the Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol (the Guidelines), but fewer than one in five (19%) are aware of the content.

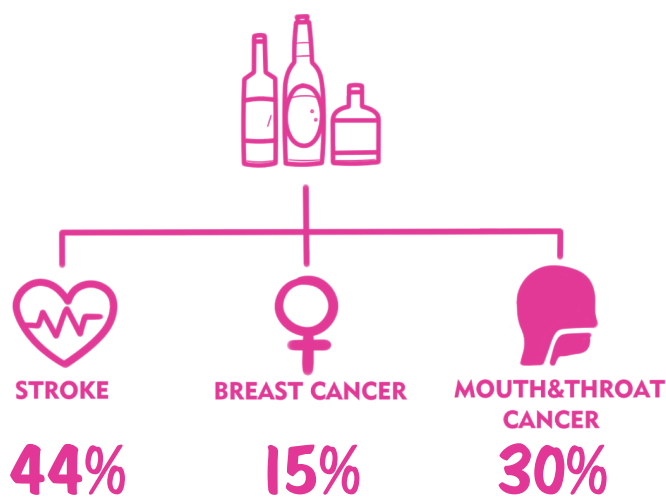
Of the people who had some awareness of the Guidelines, only 8% know that the maximum number of drinks a person can have to minimise short-term risks (e.g. violence and blackouts) is four standard drinks in one session. The majority (69%) of people made incorrect estimates and 23% do not know.

Of the people who indicated an awareness of the Guidelines, 28% can correctly identify that the maximum number of drinks a person can have to minimise long-term risks (e.g. cancer and diabetes) is two standard drinks in one day. Almost half (44%) made incorrect estimates and 27% do not know.



Fewer than a third of NSW adults are aware of the link between alcohol use and mouth and throat cancer (30%) and breast cancer (15%).

The following table provides an overview of NSW adults' perceptions of the link between alcohol use and various long-term health conditions by age.



	TOTAL (%)	18-24 (%)	25-34 (%)	35-49 (%)	50+ (%)
Cirrhosis of the liver	75	55	58	82	89
Liver cancer	71	62	68	74	73
Heart disease	55	43	46	64	58
Stroke	44	29	37	55	43
Mouth and throat cancer	30	25	19	35	35
Breast cancer	15	17	9	18	14
None of the above	4	6	5	3	4

Note that people were able to select more than one response. Therefore, the total may exceed 100%.

PERSPECTIVES ON ALCOHOL-RELATED POLICIES

The majority of NSW residents support the continuation of the NSW Government's late-night measures to reduce alcohol-related violence, including a 3am last drinks (84%) and a 1.30am lockout in the Sydney CBD Entertainment Precinct (55% support for a 1am lockout).

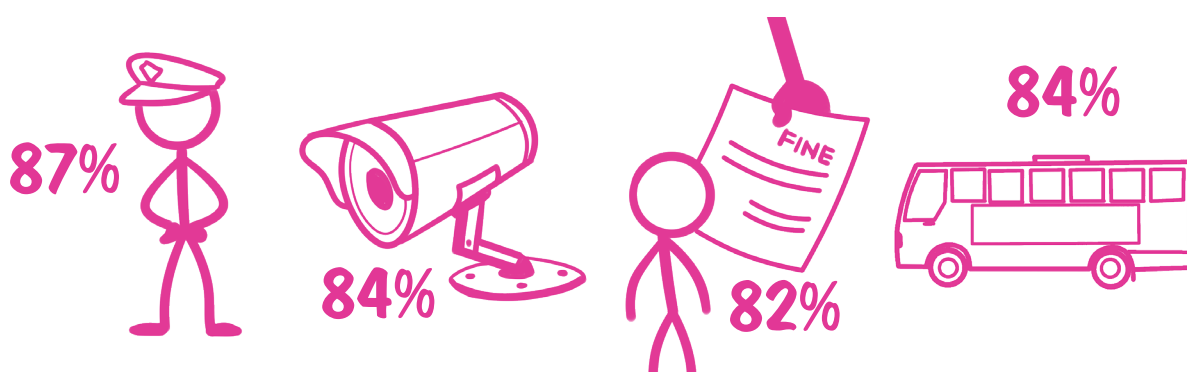
Support for a closing time of no later than 3am has increased since 2014 (71%). Support for early closing times is highest among the younger cohorts with 90% of 18-34 years supporting a closing time for pubs, clubs and bars of no later than 3am, compared to 78% of 35-49 and 83% of 50+ year olds. The table below provides an overview of NSW residents' support for a closing time for pubs, clubs and bars of no later than 3am by age.

	TOTAL (%)	18-24 (%)	25-34 (%)	35-49 (%)	50+ (%)
11pm	13	11	14	9	17
Midnight	24	17	26	19	31
1am	20	17	19	22	22
2am	12	26	15	8	6
3am	15	19	16	20	7
<i>Subtotal</i>	84	90	90	78	83
They should be open 24 hours	12	7	6	18	11
Don't know	5	5	4	4	7

Note that people were able to select more than one response. Therefore, the total may exceed 100%.

The majority of NSW residents also support the introduction of 13 alcohol policies proposed to reduce violence, with support for each of these measures ranging from 55% to 87%. The table below provides an overview of NSW residents' support for alcohol-related policies to reduce violence.

	SUPPORT (%)	DO NOT SUPPORT (%)	DON'T KNOW (%)
Increasing police numbers at times and places where alcohol-related violence is greater	87	6	7
A closing time for pubs, clubs and bars of no later than 3am	84	12	5
Closed-circuit television (CCTV) in and around licensed venues	84	8	8
More public transport options in areas where there are pubs, clubs and bars	84	9	8
Increasing penalties for people involved in alcohol-related violence	82	10	8
Introducing identification (ID) scanners	73	16	11
Stopping the sale of alcohol 30 minutes before closing time	71	19	10
Not allowing alcohol to be sold for less than \$1 per standard drink	64	25	12
Placing a limit of four drinks on the number of drinks a person can purchase at one time after 10pm	63	27	9
Stopping the sale of alcohol and energy drinks after midnight	56	33	12
Stopping the sale of shots after 10pm	56	34	11
Introducing a 1am lockout for pubs, clubs and bars	55	35	10



The majority of NSW residents also support introducing a minimum price for alcohol (53%) and believe there are places where outdoor alcohol advertising should be banned (81%), such as public transport (52%) and sports grounds (55%).

PERSPECTIVES ON COMMUNITY SAFETY

42% of NSW residents now consider the city or centre of town to be safe on a Saturday night, up from 25% in 2014. The table below provides an overview of NSW residents' perceptions of safety, between 2014 and 2019.

	2014 (%)	2016 (%)	2019 (%)
Very safe	2	2	6
Safe	23	29	36
Unsafe	40	42	36
Very unsafe	25	18	13
Don't know	9	9	10

NSW residents who indicated that the city or centre of town was unsafe were then asked what factors make it unsafe. The vast majority (80%) indicated that people affected by alcohol make the city or town unsafe. This is greater than those who selected people affected by drugs (78%) and threatening behaviour (72%) as factors that make the city or centre of town unsafe. The table below provides an overview of responses for NSW residents who indicated that they believe the city or centre of town is unsafe on a Saturday night, between 2014 to 2019.

	2014 (%)	2016 (%)	2019 (%)
People affected by alcohol	93	88	80
People affected by drugs	79	80	78
Threatening behaviour	79	74	72
Large groups of people	53	55	57
Poor lighting	38	39	41
Other	5	6	3

Note that people were able to select more than one response. Therefore, the total may exceed 100%.

**STOPPING
HARM**
CAUSED BY
ALCOHOL