

2011 Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation

ANNUAL ALCOHOL POLL: Snapshot

Community attitudes on alcohol and energy drinks

KEY FINDINGS

- 75% of Australians do not think it is okay to mix alcohol with energy drinks, and 59% support a ban on pre-mixed alcohol and energy drinks.
- The perception that it is not okay to mix alcohol and energy drinks and that pre-mixed alcohol and energy drinks should be banned is highest among people with children aged 13-17, Baby Boomers, non-drinkers and people earning under \$40,000.
- Australians believe that the key problems associated with consuming alcohol containing energy drinks are the risk of heart palpitations (67%) and that it masks the effects of being intoxicated (53%).

Australians were asked three questions about the practice of mixing alcohol and energy drinks and their awareness of the potential harms that can result consuming these products.

Mixing Alcohol and Energy Drinks

The majority of Australians (75%) do not think it is okay to mix alcohol with energy drinks, 13% think that it is okay and 12% are unsure. The majority of Australians (59%) support a ban of pre-mixed caffeinated alcoholic energy drinks, 25% believe they should not be banned and 16% are unsure.

Analysis of demographic data and consumption trends revealed that people who are most likely to state it is not okay to mix alcohol and energy drinks, are also more likely to support a ban of pre-mixed alcohol and energy drinks. This was observed among people with children, Baby Boomers, non-drinkers, and people earning under \$40,000.

Gen Y are least likely to think it is not okay to mix alcohol and energy drinks (53%) and are least likely to support a ban of pre-mixed alcohol and energy drinks (40%).

Awareness of the risks associated with consuming alcohol and energy drinks

People believe that the key problems associated with consuming alcohol containing energy drinks are the risk of heart palpitations (67%) and that it masks the effects of being intoxicated (53%). People are less likely to associate consuming alcohol and energy drinks with people being more likely to drink and drive (38%) and developing problematic drinking patterns (35%). 15% of people are unsure of the effects of consuming alcohol mixed with energy drinks.

About the Polling

The Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (AER Foundation) conducts annual nation-wide polling to assess community attitudes and behaviours relating to alcohol. The 2011 poll included three questions about alcohol and energy drinks, focussing on whether people believe it's okay to mix alcohol and energy drinks, their support for banning pre-mixed products and their awareness of the potential harms of consuming these products. The questions were:

- Do you think it's okay for alcohol to be mixed with energy drinks?
- Do you think that pre-mixed caffeinated alcoholic energy drinks should be banned?
- As far as you are aware, what are the effects of consuming alcohol mixed with energy drinks?
 - It masks the effects of being intoxicated
 - People are more likely to drink and drive
 - Heart palpitations
 - People are more likely to develop problematic drinking patterns
 - Don't know

The Approach

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 14 January and was completed on Monday 17 January 2011. The sample was 1,009 respondents from across the country, aged 18 years and older distributed throughout Australia.

The questionnaire was designed by Galaxy Research in consultation with the AER Foundation. 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.