

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



Community attitudes on alcohol by voting intentions

Key Findings

- A majority of voters for each of the parties see alcohol as a problem in Australia and support policies such as placing health information labels on alcohol products, and banning alcohol advertising on television before 8.30pm.
- Green voters consider alcohol to be the most harmful drug (37%), ahead of illicit substances (30%) and tobacco (29%).
- Coalition voters (86%) are more likely than ALP (77%) and Green voters (73%) to believe that alcohol-related problems will remain the same or get worse over the next five to 10 years.
- Green (75%) and ALP voters (71%) are more likely than Coalition voters (63%) to believe that alcohol companies are not doing enough to address alcohol-related harms.
- Green voters report experiencing higher levels of alcohol-related violence than ALP and Coalition voters, both directly (27%) and indirectly (29%).

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, experiences of alcohol-related violence, and perspectives on alcohol-related policies.

Findings

Attitudes towards alcohol in Australia

Most harmful drug for Australians

Australians perceive illicit substances as the most harmful drug in Australia (46%) followed by alcohol (30%) and tobacco (21%). However, the exception to this is Green voters, who are more likely to consider alcohol the most harmful drug (37%), followed by illicit substances (30%) and tobacco (29%). The following table provides an overview of community perceptions of the most harmful drug in Australia, grouped by voting intention.



	Australians (%)	ALP (%)	Coalition (%)	Green (%)
Illicit drugs	46	45	48	30
Alcohol	30	26	31	37
Tobacco	21	26	18	29
Don't know	4	3	3	4

Biggest health threat to Australians

Obesity is perceived to be the biggest health threat to Australians (54%), followed by alcohol (17%), tobacco (16%) and diabetes (8%). The following table provides an overview of community perceptions of the biggest health threat to Australians, grouped by voting intention.

	Australians (%)	ALP (%)	Coalition (%)	Green (%)
Obesity	54	56	57	50
Alcohol	17	14	18	23
Tobacco	16	18	13	16
Diabetes	8	8	9	8
Don't know	5	5	3	4

Australia's problem with alcohol

The majority of Australians (76%) believe that Australia has a problem with alcohol. This view is held by 75% of Coalition voters, 79% of ALP voters, and 81% of Green voters.

Worsening of alcohol-related problems in Australia

A majority of Australians (79%) believe that alcohol-related problems in Australia will either get worse or remain the same over the next five to 10 years. Coalition voters (86%) are more likely than ALP (77%) and Green voters (73%) to believe this.

Actions to address alcohol-related harms

A majority of Australians (75%) think that more needs to be done to reduce the harm caused by alcohol-related illness, injury, death and related issues. 77% of Coalition and ALP voters and 71% of Green voters believe this.

Over half of all Australians believe that governments (54%), alcohol companies (68%) and clubs and pubs (64%) are not doing enough to address alcohol-related harms. Green (75%) and ALP voters (71%) are more likely than Coalition voters (63%) to believe that alcohol companies are not doing enough.

Perceptions of the industry doing the most to reduce potential harms from their product

According to the vast majority of Australians, the alcohol industry (when compared to the fast food, tobacco, and gambling industries) is the least likely to be doing the most to reduce the potential harms from their products. Only 5% of Coalition and ALP voters and 6% of Green voters nominated the alcohol industry as the industry working hardest to reduce the potential harms from their product.

Experiences of alcohol-related violence

The Poll found that 14% of Australians have been victims of alcohol-related violence and 22% have had a family member or friend affected. Green voters are particularly likely to have been affected by violence, with 27% having been a victim (compared to 16% of ALP voters and 7% of Coalition voters) and 29% who have had a family member or friend be the victim of alcohol-related violence (compared to 21% of ALP voters and 18% of Coalition voters).

Perspectives on alcohol-related policies

Australians were asked to provide their opinion on a range of alcohol-related policies including alcohol labelling, advertising restrictions and alcohol taxation. The Poll found that:

- A majority of Australians (68%) believe that alcohol advertising and promotion influences the behaviour of people under 18 years. This view is shared among all voters, with a majority of Coalition (72%), ALP (69%) and Green voters (64%) believing this.
- The majority of Australians support health information labels on alcohol products (61%). This view is shared across all voters, with a majority of Green (67%) Coalition (60%) and ALP voters (64%) supporting this measure.
- The majority of Australians support banning alcohol advertising on television before 8.30 pm (64%). This view is shared among all voters, with a majority of Green (67%), Coalition (65%) and ALP voters (62%) supporting this measure.
- 39% of Australians support an increase in tax to pay for health, education and treatment of alcohol problems. Green (47%) and ALP voters (43%) are more likely than Coalition voters (36%) to support a tax increase for this purpose.

The following table provides an overview of community support for various alcohol-related policies, grouped by voting intention.

	Australians (%)	ALP (%)	Coalition (%)	Green (%)
Ban alcohol advertising on television before 8.30 pm	64	62	65	67
Health information labels should be placed on alcohol products	61	64	60	67
Increase tax to pay for health, education and treatment of alcohol problems	39	43	36	47

The Approach

This study was conducted online with 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 1,041 respondents aged 18 years and older, distributed throughout Australia.

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



Foundation for Alcohol
Research & Education



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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