

2013 Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education Annual Alcohol Poll Snapshot: New South Wales



Key Findings

- The majority of NSW adults believe that Australia has a problem with excess drinking or alcohol abuse (75%), with 77% believing that alcohol-related problems will either remain the same or get worse over the next five to ten years.
- Drinkers in NSW are more likely than the average Australian to consume alcohol in a pub, club or bar (22% compared to 17%) and less likely than the average Australian to drink in a private setting (69% compared to 75%).
- In the previous year, one in five (20%) drinkers in NSW found that they were not able to stop drinking once they had started, almost a third (32%) had a feeling of guilt and remorse after drinking, and one in four (25%) were unable to remember what happened the night before because of drinking.
- NSW adults are less likely than adults in other states and territories to be aware of the *Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol* (47% compared to the national average of 52%).

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. The Polling examined community attitudes towards alcohol in Australia, alcohol consumption patterns, and perspectives on alcohol-related policies. This report contains previously unreleased data on 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 (75%), and that alcohol-related problems will either remain the same or get worse over the next five to ten years (77%). The three alcohol-related problems that people in NSW are most concerned about are road traffic accidents (79%), violence (79%), and child abuse and neglect (70%).

The majority of NSW adults (76%) believe that more needs to be done in Australia to reduce the harm caused by alcohol-related illness, injury, death and related issues. The majority also believe that alcohol companies (68%), pubs and clubs (61%) and governments (58%) are not doing enough to address alcohol misuse in Australia.

Alcohol is perceived as being the area the government is working the least in to reduce harms. Only 3% of NSW adults nominated alcohol as the area government is working the most in to reduce harms, when compared to fast food (5%), gambling (10%) and tobacco (53%). The remaining 14% of NSW adults believe that the government is not working to reduce the risk of harms in any of these areas, while 15% are unsure.

Alcohol consumption

Over 3.7 million adults (78%) in NSW consume alcohol. Of these, 25% or 969,000 people consume alcohol at least three times a week.

The majority (55%) of NSW drinkers consume one or two standard drinks on a typical occasion, compared to 43% who drink three or more standard drinks on a typical occasion and a further 1% who are unsure. The proportion of people in NSW consuming three or more standard drinks on a typical occasion is significantly below the national average of 50%. Over one-third (36%) of NSW drinkers (or almost 1.4 million people) drink to get drunk.

	NSW (%)	National Average (%)
Consume alcohol	78	77
Consume one or two standard drinks on a typical occasion	55	47
Consume three or more standard drinks on a typical occasion	43	50
Drink to get drunk	36	40

More than half (59%) of NSW drinkers consume alcohol before going to a pub, club or bar, a behaviour known as 'preloading'. Of these, 30% consume about the same amount of alcohol or more before going out than while they're out. NSW drinkers who preload are primarily motivated by saving money (45%), followed by socialising (39%) and relaxation (31%).

In the previous year, one in five (20%) NSW drinkers found that they were not able to stop drinking once they had started, 32% had a feeling of guilt and remorse after drinking, and 25% were unable to remember what happened the night before because of drinking.

Almost one third (30%) of adult drinkers in NSW regret some form of communication (phone call, text message, posting a comment or photo on social media) while drunk.

One in six (16%) NSW drinkers have consumed alcoholic energy drinks, which equates to 617,000 people. The majority (58%) do so once a month or less, 23% do so two or three times a month and 19% do so at least once a week.

NSW drinkers are more likely than the average Australian drinker to consume alcohol in a pub, club or bar (22% compared to 17% respectively) and less likely than the average Australian drinker to consume alcohol in a private setting (69% compared to 75% respectively), whether in their own home or at a friend's home.

The majority (40%) of NSW drinkers mainly purchase their alcohol from a liquor chain store, followed by a bottle shop connected to a supermarket (28%), an independent bottle shop (13%), a supermarket (9%), a pub or club (3%), online/mail order (3%), cellar door (1%) and somewhere else (1%), with 1% stating none of the above.

NSW drinkers spend on average \$30.13 per week on their own alcohol consumption. This is similar to the national average weekly spend of \$30.45.

Almost 1.5 million or 31% of NSW adults have been affected by alcohol-related violence. Almost one in five (18%) or 867,000 people in NSW have been victims of alcohol-related violence and 20% (or



946,000) have had a friend or family member affected by alcohol related violence.

Awareness of the risks associated with alcohol misuse

Just under half (47%) of NSW adults are aware of the *Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol* (the Guidelines). This is the lowest level of awareness of all the states and territories, with the national average being 52%.

Of those who indicated that they had some awareness of the Guidelines, 39% correctly identified that the recommended number of standard drinks a person can consume to minimise long-term risks of alcohol-related harms is two. Only 4% correctly identified that the maximum number of standard drinks a person can have in one sitting to minimise short-term risk is four.

Perspectives on alcohol-related policies

When asked what time they thought pubs, clubs and bars should close, 79% of NSW adults selected 3am or earlier, of which 46% selected midnight or 11pm and 33% selected between 1am and 3am. Only 8% supported venues being open for 24 hours, while 11% were unsure.

More than half (58%) of NSW adults believe that health information labels should be placed on alcohol products.

The majority (66%) of NSW adults support a ban of alcohol advertising on television before 8.30pm.

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 Tuesday 15 January 2013 and was completed on Friday 18 January 2013. The survey sample comprised 1,533 respondents aged 18 years and older distributed throughout Australia. This paper provides an overview of the findings from NSW, where the sample size was 405 residents. The ACT is included in the NSW data.

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.



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 Organization's *Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol* [1] for addressing alcohol-related harms through population-based strategies, problem-directed policies, and direct interventions.

If you would like to contribute to FARE's important work, call us on (02) 6122 8600 or email fare@fare.org.au. All donations to FARE over \$2 are tax deductible.

[1] World Health Organization (WHO). (2010). *Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

ISBN: 978-0-9923025-8-0

PO Box 19
Deakin West ACT 2600

Level 1, 40 Thesiger Court
Deakin ACT 2600

www.fare.org.au