

Government survey confirms improvement in Australian drinking culture - we're more mature and responsible in how we drink

28 September 2017

[Results released today](#) by the **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare** (AIHW) mirror those highlighted by DrinkWise last month in its *Australian Drinking Habits* Research Report showing that the Australian drinking culture continues to improve.

The additional release of data from the comprehensive study of more than 20,000 Australians shows that the drinking culture in Australia has continued to improve since 2013 with:

- **Australians drinking less often** - with daily drinking continuing to decline and undertaken by a very small minority of Australians (less than 6%) and those drinking on a weekly basis also decreasing - with just over a third of the population (35.8%) doing so;
- **Australians taking active steps to reduce their alcohol consumption** (50%) with many attributing this to taking better care of their health;
- **The strong majority of Australians (83%) drinking within government risk guidelines** - with 60% consuming less than two standard drinks on an occasion they have a drink and 22.9% not drinking at all;
- **Australians less likely to engage in risky activities while under the influence of alcohol** - such as driving a motor vehicle (down from 12.2% to 9.9%);
- **Young adult Australians reducing excessive drinking** - with excess drinking continuing to decline among 18-24 year olds (now 42% compared to 47% in 2013), and a rise in more moderate drinking - with 63% now drinking less than two standard drinks per day on average;
- **More Australian women abstaining from alcohol while pregnant** - with 56% abstaining, increasing from 53%; and
- **Drinking by underage Australians continues to decline** - with the vast majority now abstaining from alcohol (82% compared to 72%).

DrinkWise CEO, John Scott, said these results are indicative of a continually improving drinking culture that is now more defined by moderation than excess.

“We’ve come a long way over the last decade. We’re seeing significant generational change in the way Australians are drinking - particularly through the dramatic fall in underage drinking rates.”

DrinkWise.

“There are multiple reasons why these trends and changes in behaviour have emerged, as evidenced by [our recent report](#) - but the role of education in helping Australians make wiser choices around alcohol cannot be denied.”

“As a society, we are now more aware of the dangers of drinking while pregnant, parents know that they shouldn’t be supplying their underage children with alcohol and the broader population recognise that whilst having a drink can be an enjoyable part of a meal or socialising with friends and family - it’s ultimately about moderation and being responsible around alcohol.”

“These improvements have come at a time when DrinkWise has been at the forefront of harm minimisation approaches aimed at reducing alcohol related harm in society. Through our campaigns and education activities we’ve been educating all Australians - from young adults through to grandparents of the importance of moderation around alcohol”.

Mr Scott indicated that while the trend is moving in the right direction, the rate of improvement is not consistent across all age groups, gender and geographic locations.

“There is doubtless room for further improvement - and this provides a great challenge for organisations like ours, governments and other bodies with a genuine desire to improve the drinking culture, to work together to support individuals, families and communities to make healthier choices when it comes to alcohol.

For more information contact DrinkWise: info@drinkwise.org.au | 03 9682 8641

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DrinkWise Australia is an evidence-based social change organisation dedicated to changing the Australian drinking culture to one that is safer and healthier. We do this through national information and education campaigns, partnerships with community leaders and organisations, and the development of practical strategies and resources that better support the community in relation to the responsible use of alcohol. DrinkWise Australia is funded through voluntary industry contributions across the alcohol sector, and has previously been in receipt of funding from both Coalition and Labor governments.