

Australian alcohol consumption trends



DrinkWise.

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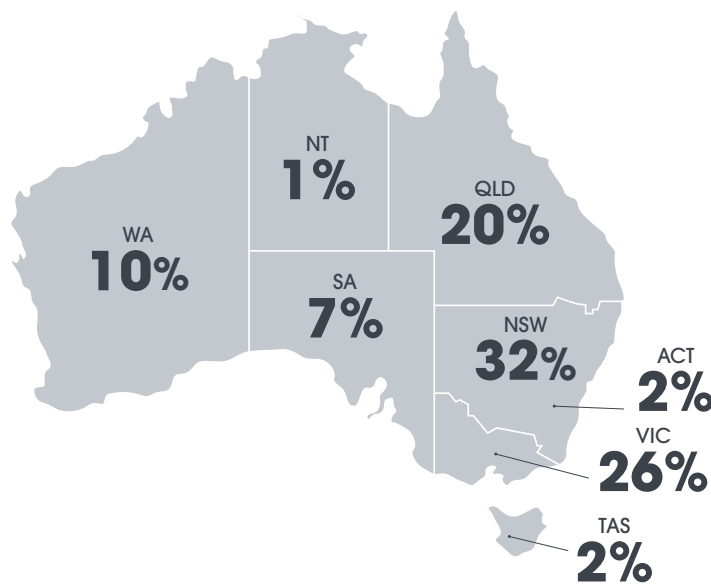
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The research

The aim of the research is to understand why Australians drink the way they do and what has changed since previous years in terms of the tensions, pressures and influences on drinking behaviours.

- The survey covered:**
- self-reported alcohol consumption (quantity and frequency, events and triggers, moderation behaviours)
 - attitudes and beliefs relating to drinking and the drinking culture
 - awareness of alcohol risks
 - familiarity with guidelines and sources of information.

Gender responses



Age group



Born in Australia



A snapshot

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Australians are drinking at less risky levels compared to 15 years ago. We are seeing this shift in drinking trends with Australians reducing the amount of excessive drinking across the week and in a day. However, while males were more likely to be exceeding the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines compared to females across all age groups in 2024, almost a quarter (23%) of females aged 18-24 are drinking in excess, which is up from 19% in 2018.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL ALCOHOL GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 1: HEALTHY ADULTS

Drink no more than 10 standard drinks a **week**



AND no more than 4 standard drinks on **any one day**



to reduce the risk of harm from alcohol. The less you drink, the lower your risk of harm.

For more information on the Guidelines please visit www.nhmrc.gov.au/alcohol



NUMBER OF MODERATE DRINKERS

57%

drink within the guidelines
of no more than four standard
drinks per day and 10
standard drinks per week

–
Up from 53% in 2007



DRINKING TO EXCESS

26%

exceed the guidelines of
no more than 4
standard drinks per day and
10 standard drinks per week

–
Down from 39% in 2007



SINGLE OCCASION RISKY DRINKERS

(over 4 standard drinks
per day)

15%

drink within the guidelines
of no more than 4
standard drinks per day

–
Down from 22% in 2007



DAILY DRINKING

5%

drink daily

–
Down from 10% in 2007



WEEKLY RISKY DRINKING

(over 10 standard drinks
per week)

20%

drink over 10 standard
drinks per week

–
Down from 33% in 2007

How Australians drink

Alcohol quantity consumed across a typical week

The majority of Australians are not drinking throughout the work week.

	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
5+ drinks	3%	4%	5%	5%	12%	15%	6%
3-4 drinks	4%	4%	6%	6%	12%	16%	7%
Up to 2 drinks	14%	14%	16%	17%	38%	49%	25%
No Alcohol	79%	79%	73%	72%	38%	20%	62%

Total across the week
(averaged across drinkers):
7.5 standard drinks

Average per day across the week:
2.4 standard drinks

Proportion drinking a **maximum**
of no more than four on any one
day (non-risky consumption):
82%

The quality of the alcohol drink is more important than the quantity.



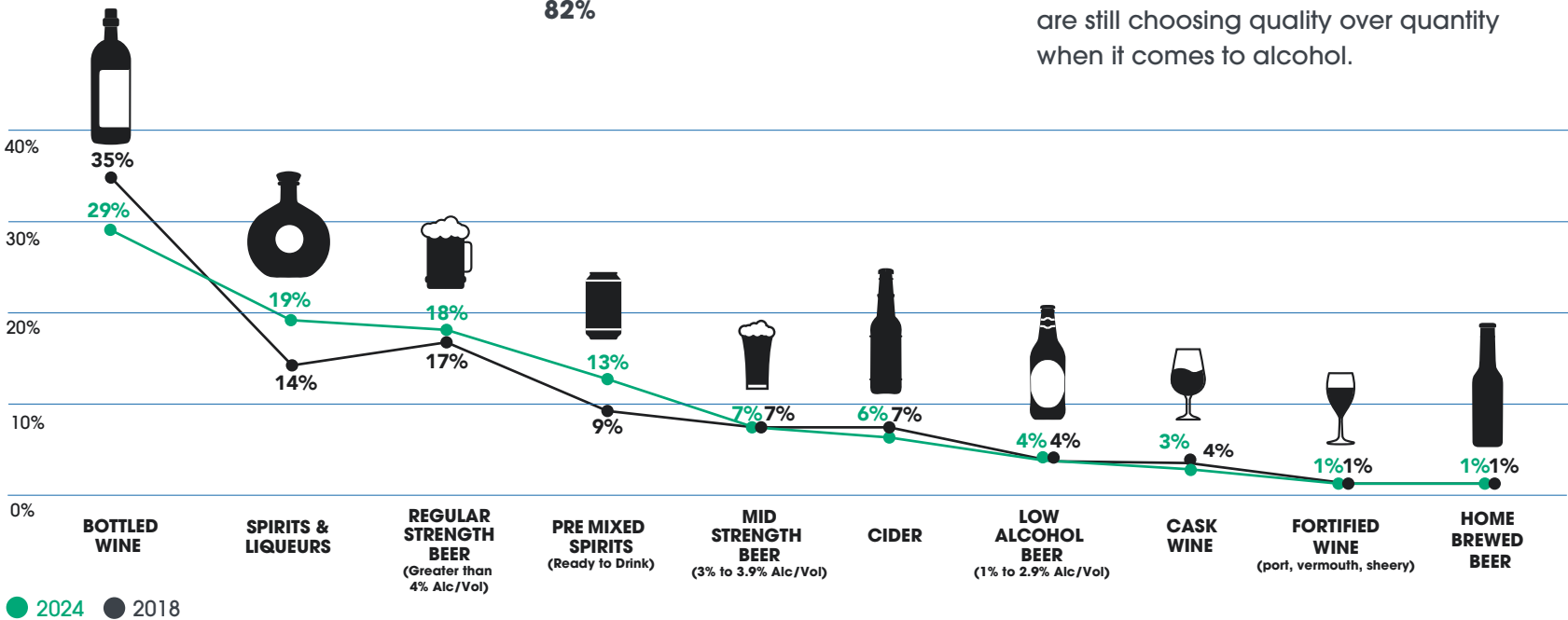
Even if the price of alcohol went up it wouldn't change how much they drink.



Attitudes are changing, with cost as an increasing factor in decision making of alcohol purchases. However, Australians are still choosing quality over quantity when it comes to alcohol.

What Australians drink most

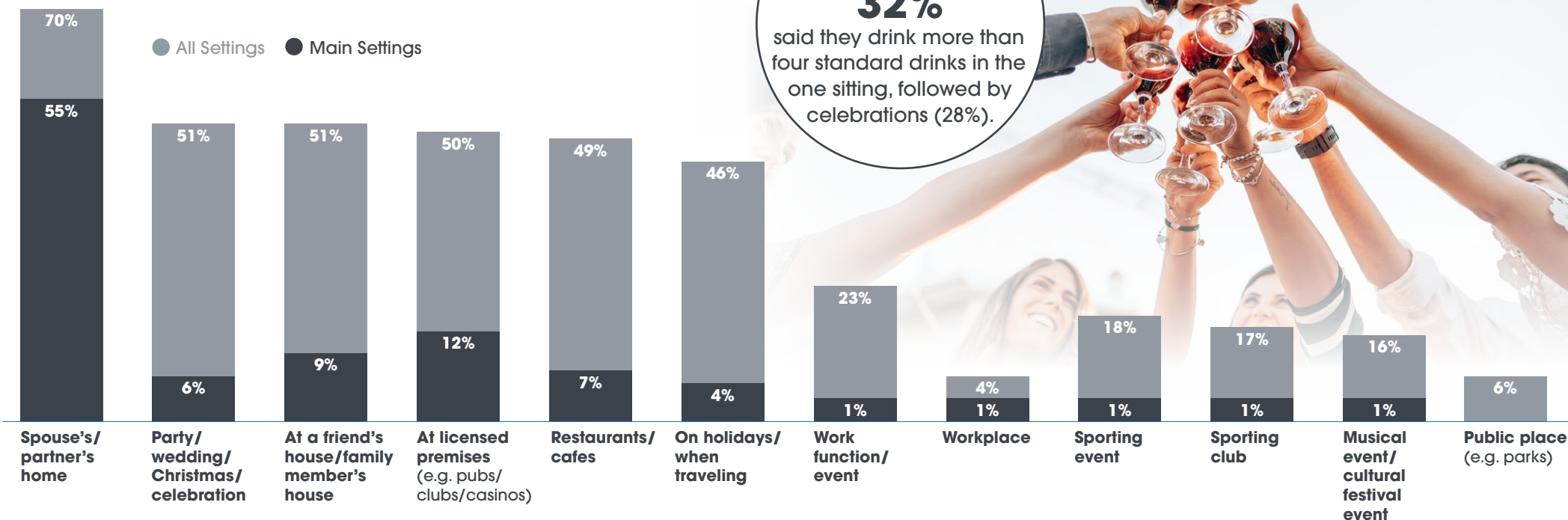
It's clear that our tastes are changing. Australians are drinking less wine and slightly more spirits and pre-mixed spirits. Our taste for beer and cider remain similar.



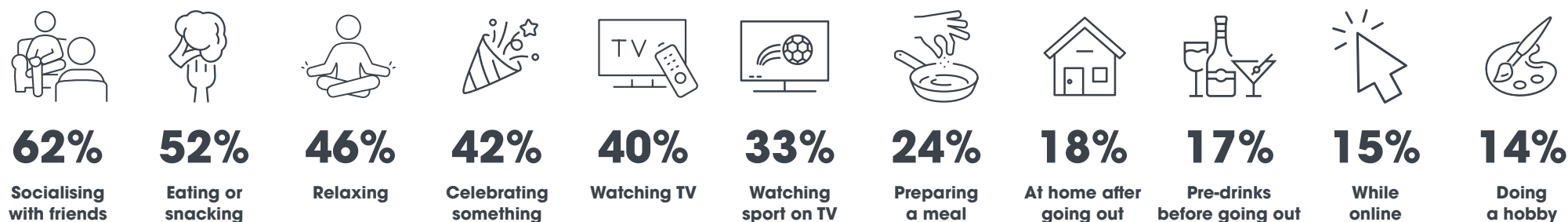
How Australians drink

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Settings when drinking alcohol



Main activity while drinking alcohol in home settings



Young adults aged 18-24 were more likely to mention 'pre-drinks before going out' as an in-home activity (36% versus 17% for the total sample). Males were more likely to said they drink alcohol at home while watching sport on TV (44% compared to 21% among females).

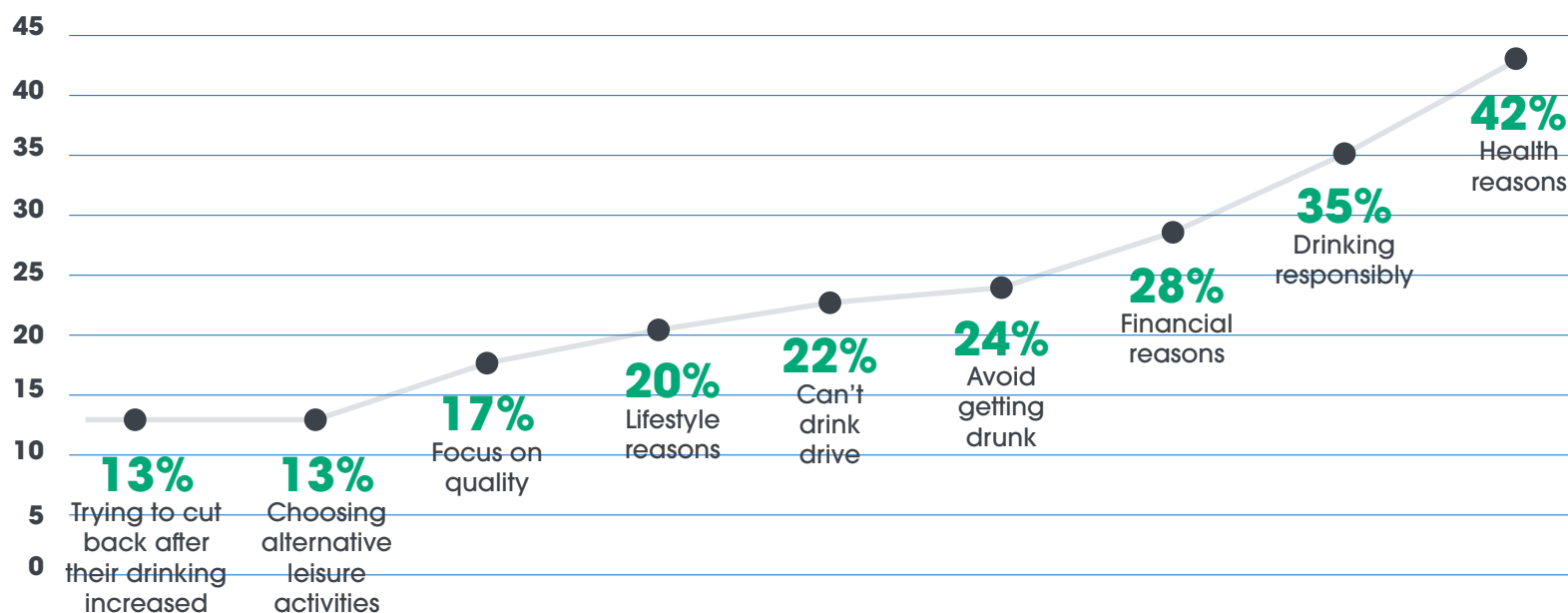
Why Australians drink

More people are cutting back (59% vs 43% in 2018) and an additional 7% have stopped drinking alcohol entirely. However, 9% of consumers are drinking more at some point.

Why Australians drink more

Top reasons for increasing intake in past 12 months	Moderate drinkers	Risky drinkers
More stress in life	24%	40%
Social reasons (new friends, more outgoing)	16%	11%
Taste enjoyment (found a new wine/beer/spirit)	18%	6%
Became old enough to drink (turned 18)	12%	9%

Why Australians drink less



59%

of drinkers said they have cut back on their alcohol consumption in some way in the past 12 months (up from 43% in 2018).

26%

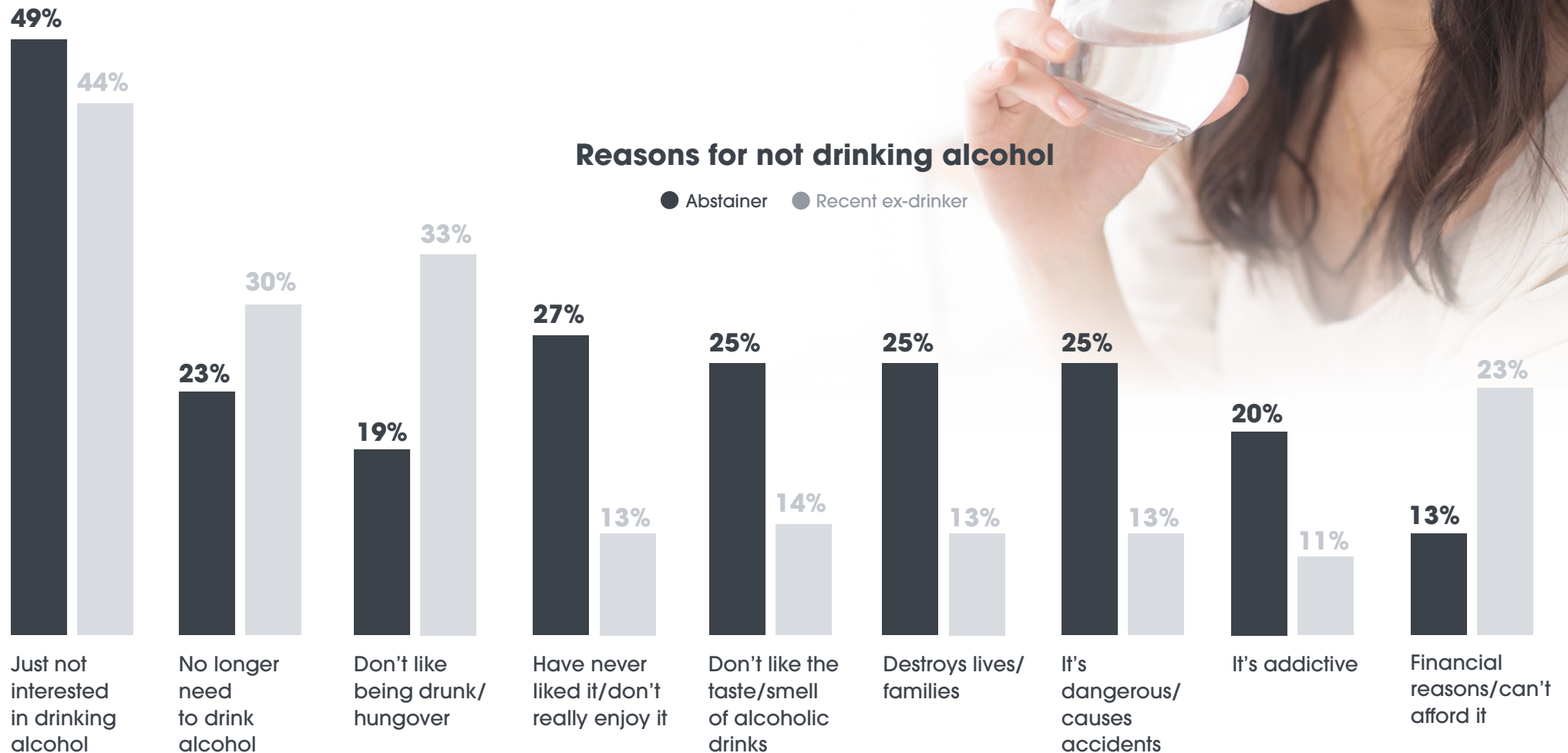
of drinkers said their mental health has been negatively impacted by their alcohol consumption.



Why Australians don't drink

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Almost one in five Australians said they don't drink. Almost half of abstainers don't drink because they are not interested. A third of people who stopped drinking alcohol in the past 12 months (recent ex-drinkers) said it was because they don't like being drunk or hungover.



Perceptions of risk

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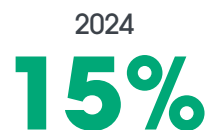
Excessive alcohol consumption is a bigger health issue than illegal drugs



The increase in vaping is a bigger health issue than excessive alcohol consumption.



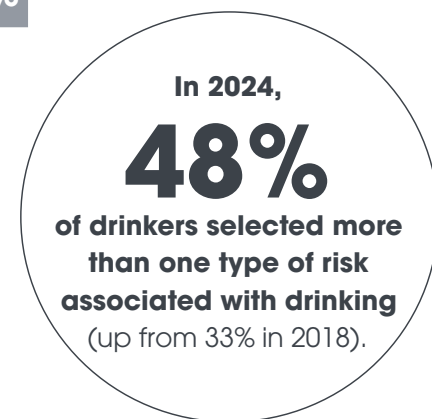
Confused about whether drinking alcohol is good for their health or not.



Young adults aged 18-24 were more likely to agree that the increase in vaping is a bigger health issue than excessive alcohol consumption, in line with the prevalence of vaping among this demographic.

Main risks of drinking

- Affecting their long-term health
- Affecting their short-term health
- Being unable to function the next day
- Making a fool of themselves
- Personal wellbeing (eg. relationships/mental health)
- Throwing up/vomiting
- Drink driving
- Becoming dependent on alcohol
- Getting into a car with a driver who is intoxicated
- Drunk texting
- Damaging friendship
- Drunk posting on social media
- Losing personal property
- Being verbally abusive and/or getting into physical fights
- Risky or unprotected sex



Towards a culture of moderation

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There has been a shift towards drinking in moderation, with the vast majority of people saying they always or mostly engage in one or more behaviours that help them moderate their consumption.

DrinkWise contributes towards this culture of moderation by providing consumers with tips to moderate if they choose to drink alcohol (e.g. encouraging people to keep track of how many drinks they have had) so that people feel empowered to cut back or limit their alcohol consumption.

57%
of drinkers said they always or mostly call it a night when drinking.

96%
of drinkers said they always/mostly engage in one or more moderation behaviours (Net)



89%
of drinkers said they limited the number of drinks they had when they were driving home.

69%
of drinkers said they keep track of how many drinks they have had.

68%
of drinkers said they make a point of eating while consuming alcohol.

62%
of drinkers said they refuse an alcoholic drink when offered because they really don't want it.

57%
of drinkers said after having one or more alcoholic drinks, they consciously decide not to have another one (e.g. call it a night/stop drinking).

52%
of drinkers said make sure they drink water while consuming alcohol.

26%
of drinkers said they diluted their drink with ice, water, soda water, mineral water, soft drink, or fruit juice in order to reduce alcohol content.

14%
of drinkers said they only drink low-alcohol or zero beverages.

14%
of drinkers said they alternate alcoholic drinks with zero alcohol drinks.

47%
of drinkers said they always, mostly or sometimes use low alcoholic or zero alcohol beverages to moderate their alcohol consumption.

Reasons for calling it a night

53%
of drinkers said when they have already had the number of drinks they usually have.

45%
of drinkers said when they need to drive afterwards/the next day.

35%
of drinkers said when they feel like they have had too much alcohol.

31%
of drinkers said when they know they need to be fresh/feel good the next day.

27%
of drinkers said when they are tired or getting sleepy.

11%
of drinkers said when they need to look after someone else who has had too much to drink.

8%
of drinkers said when everyone else is ready to call it a night.

4%
of drinkers said when there's no more alcohol left.

2%
of drinkers said when last drinks are called.

3%
of drinkers said when they have run out of money for alcohol.

Attitudes towards drinking

Over the years, Australians are adopting a more moderate way of consuming alcohol, viewing alcohol as part of socialising and moments of celebration.

91%

of Australians said it's important to drink in moderation.

78%

of Australians said having a few drinks with mates is a great Australian tradition.

43%

of Australians said the way Australians drink is improving.

54%

of Australians said happy hours and long lunches are a thing of the past.

49%

of Australians said socialising with mates is easier when alcohol is involved.

70%

of Australians said drinking alcohol goes hand in hand with celebrating events.

38%

of Australians said they are influenced to drink when they see others around them drinking.

18%

of Australians said their friends would judge them if they turned down an alcoholic drink.

62%

of Australians said they wouldn't feel self-conscious if they had a zero alcohol or lower strength alcoholic beverage when others are drinking alcohol.

42%

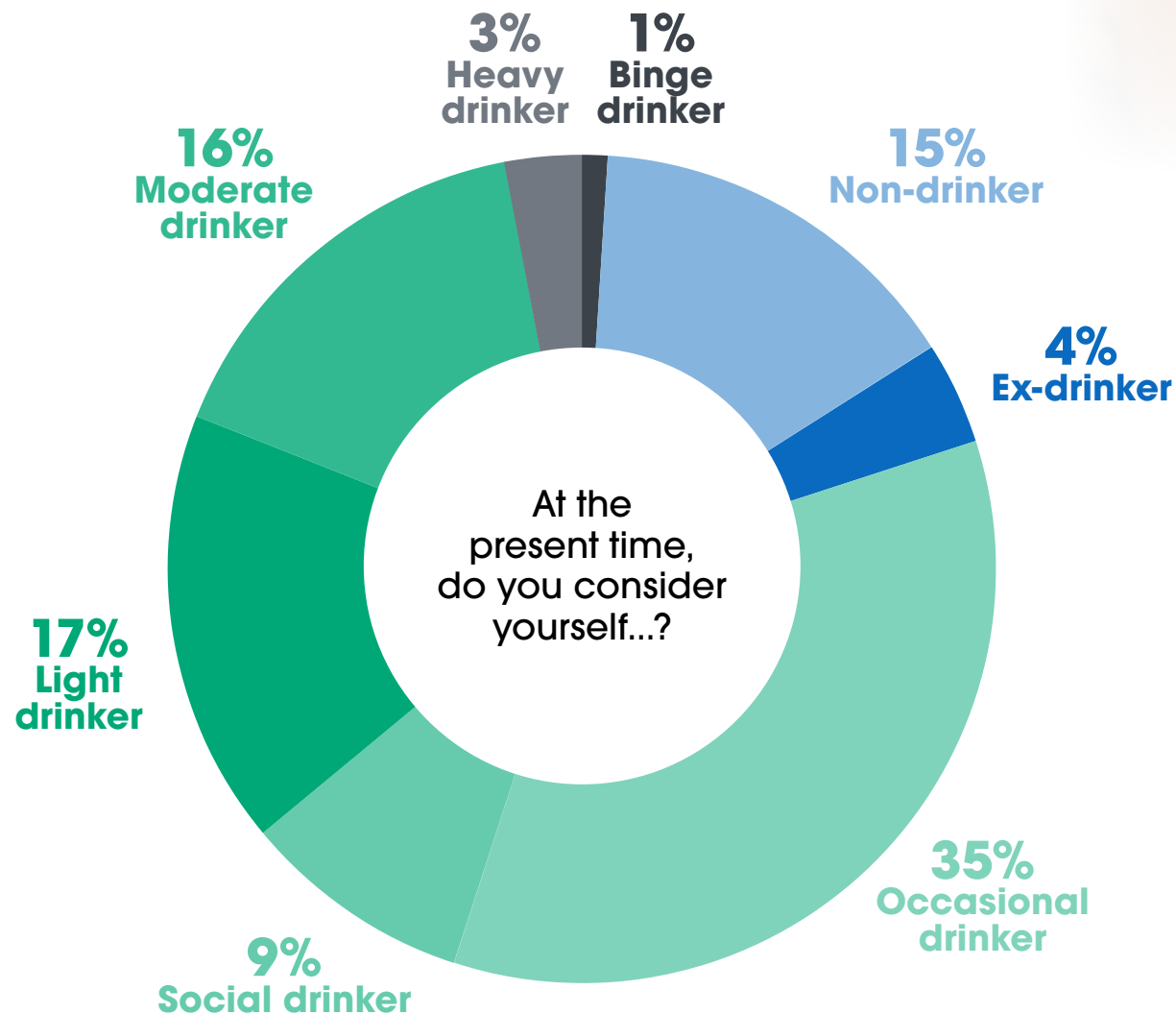
of Australians said the town/local pub is the best place to socialise and catch-up with people in their area.

51%

of Australians said drinking alcohol is less appealing to young people now compared with their parent's generation.

Profiles of drinkers

Over a third of Australians view themselves as an 'occasional drinker' and most in this category are drinking within the guidelines (83%).



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For 1 in 2 Australians, alcohol is included in their lifestyle choices. At the same time, 9 in 10 said they could live without alcohol if they had to.

Relationship with alcohol

49%

said that consuming alcohol is part of how they live their life.

Females were less likely to said that consuming alcohol is part of how they live their life (43% versus 55% among males).

90%

said they could live without alcohol if they had to.

Females were more likely to said they could live without alcohol if they had to (92% versus 88% among males).

Underage drinking and parental supply

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The younger people start their first drink, the more likely they are to drink at risky levels later in life.

69%

of those who drink at risky levels said they started drinking before they were 18 years old.

Among those aged 18-24

48%

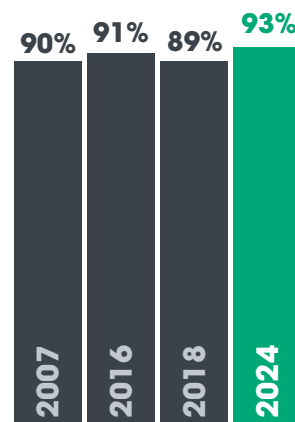
said their parent(s)/guardian(s) allowed them to drink alcohol at home when they were under 18.

28%

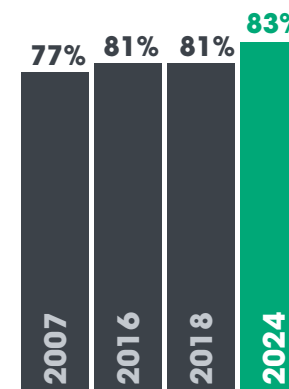
said their parent(s)/guardian(s) provided alcohol for them to take to parties when they were under 18.

Of those 18-24 year olds who drink at risky levels, **43% said their parents provided alcohol** for them to take to parties when they were 18 (vs **25% who said their parents didn't provide alcohol**).

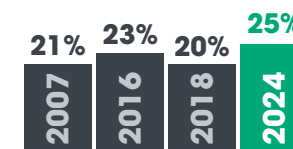
Of those who drink at risky levels, **36% said their parents allowed them to drink** at home before they were 18 years old (vs **25% of those whose parents did not allow them to drink at home**).



It's important to drink sensibly around those who are underage.



Kids under 18 should not drink alcohol.



It's acceptable for under 18s to be allowed to drink at parties.

Our research shows that 43% of young adults (18-24 years) whose parents gave them alcohol when they were underage to take to parties reported drinking at risky levels, compared to only 25% of those whose parents did not give them alcohol to take to parties when they were underage.

Of 18-24 year olds consuming alcohol at risky levels:

36%

said their parents allowed them to drink at home when under 18 years of age.

43%

said their parents provided them with alcohol to take to parties before 18 years of age.

Drinking in workplaces

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When employers pay for drinks at work events, employees are more likely to be drinking at risky levels.

25%

of drinkers said they drink alcohol at their workplace and/or at work events.

50%

said their workplace supplies or pays for the alcohol available.

Workplaces supply of alcoholic beverages

Among those who drink alcohol in a work setting and said their workplace supplies or pays for the alcohol available, 35% said they tend to drink more than four standard drinks in this setting – significantly higher than 23% among those who said alcohol is not supplied by the workplace.

Of those who said that their workplace paid for the alcohol

35%

tend to consume more than four standard drinks where alcohol is supplied or paid for.

Of those who said they paid for their own alcohol

23%

tend to consume more than four standard drinks in a work setting where alcohol is not supplied or paid for.



Support services

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The majority of people said they would consider using support services if they or someone they knew needed it. DrinkWise is doing more in this space given that males are less likely to seek the support and a third of people said they don't know where to find the support.

Awareness and use of support services



73%

of Australians know where to seek support if they become concerned about their own or someone else's drinking.

This proportion was lower among those born overseas (67% versus 75% for those born in Australia).



59%

of current drinkers would consider using a support service to help reduce their alcohol consumption if they needed.*

This proportion was higher among females (63%) versus males (56%). *No significant difference by drinking behaviour/drinker status.



68%

of Australians would recommend an alcohol support service to someone who they thought might need it.

This proportion was also higher among females (70%) versus males (66%). It was also higher among those who consumed alcohol within the Australian government guidelines in the past 12 months (71%).



Knowledge of standard drinks



83%

of people said they are confident they know what a standard drink is.

However, confidence does not equate to knowledge or translate into behaviours. Those drinking at risky levels were just as likely as moderate drinkers to express confidence around standard drink knowledge.

Over half of Australians said they were unsure or didn't know there were national guidelines for alcohol consumption.

11%

know what is in the guidelines and what it means for them.

34%

are familiar with some parts of the guidelines.

43%

know there are guidelines but are not sure what they are.

12%

didn't know there were guidelines.

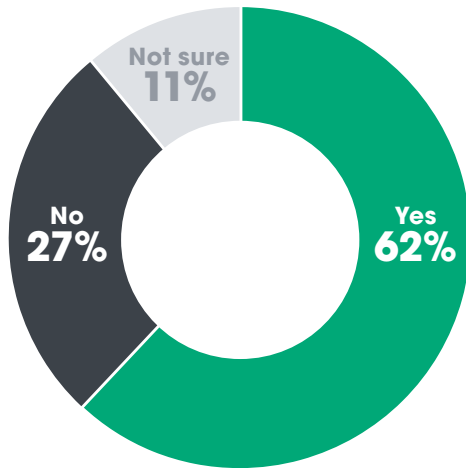
Knowing the guidelines is important as people tended to drink at riskier levels when they incorrectly overestimated the amount that is recommended by the guidelines. 78% of those who drank at risky levels incorrectly believed that the limit for drinking in a day was more than four standard drinks, compared with 45% of those who drank at non-risky levels.

Perceptions of risky consumption quantity	Moderate drinkers	Risky drinkers
Up to 2 standard drinks	12%	3%
3 – 4 standard drinks	43%	19%
Total of up to 4 standard drinks	55%	22%
Total of more than 4 standard drinks	45%	78%
Average number of standard drinks believed to be the threshold	4.7	7.5

Risky drinkers were more likely to overestimate the government single occasion (daily maximum) guidelines.

Cultural change

15



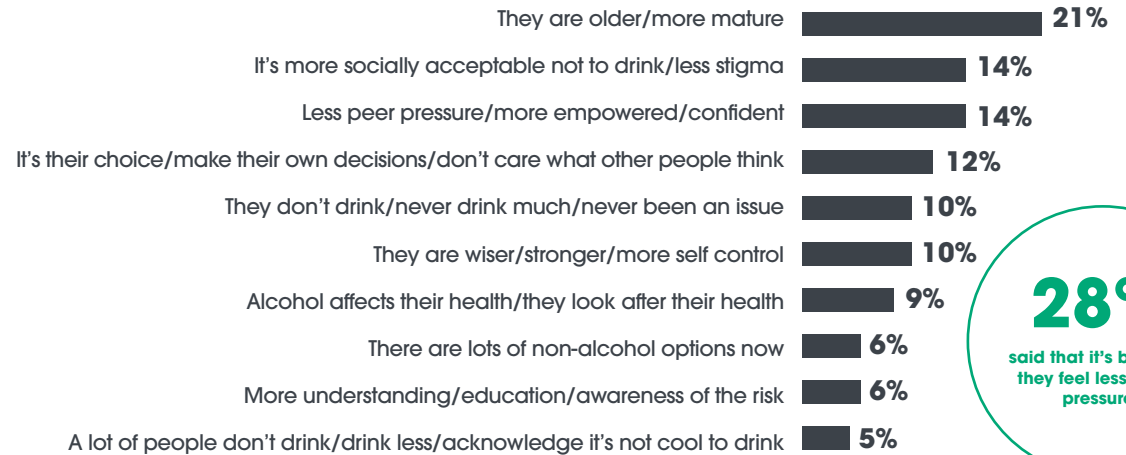
62%

said they feel more empowered to choose not to drink alcohol these days compared to 10 years ago.

27%

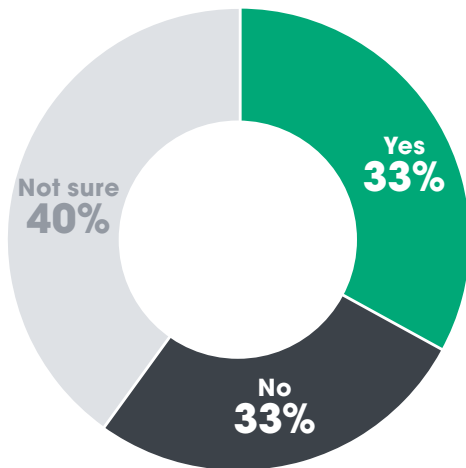
Nearly half of those who said **No**, explain that it's because they've never felt pressured and they've always felt empowered to not drink.

Reasons for feeling more empowered



28%

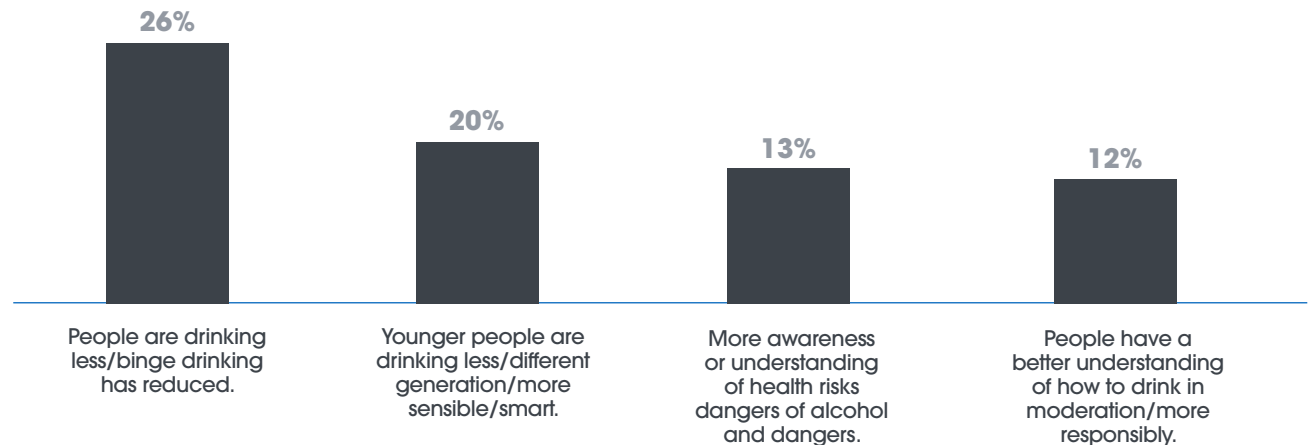
said that it's because they feel less social pressure.



33%

think the culture around alcohol is changing for the better in Australia.

Why Yes?

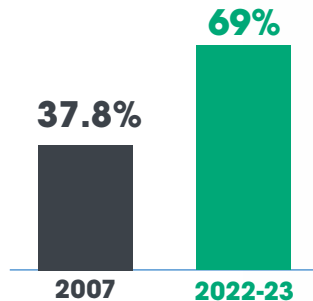


Cultural change

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The following information was presented to respondents in the survey.

Recent research has revealed that drinking among underage teenagers is declining in Australia – 37.8% of underage teens did not consume alcohol in 2007 compared with 69% in 2022-23.



Respondents were asked to indicate if knowing this changes their perspective on whether and how the culture around alcohol is changing in Australia.

Of those who did not think the culture was changing for the better,

49%

changed their mind

once informed of the changing culture among teenage drinking.



DrinkWise.