

# Poll snapshot: Health warnings on alcoholic products

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## Key findings

This national poll asked Australians about their support for health warnings on alcoholic products.

Key findings include:

- » The majority (78.0%) of Australians support the introduction of health warnings on the labels of alcoholic products.
- » Among Australians who supported the introduction of health warnings, a majority of people supported warnings about liver disease (91.2%), poor mental health (68.7%), alcohol poisoning (68.3%), heart disease (61.9%) and cancer (54.5%).

## About the polling

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) commissioned Pure Profile to conduct polling of Australians. The polling was conducted online between 14 June 18 June 2023. The sample comprised 1,004 people aged 18 years and over, residing in Australia. The sample is nationally representative for age, gender and jurisdiction.

## Background

We all want our families and communities to be healthy, safe and well and free from the harms caused by alcoholic products.

However, alcoholic products cause significant harm to Australians, with one person dying every 90 minutes and one person being hospitalised every three minutes because of alcohol.<sup>1</sup> Alcohol causes more than 200 diseases and injuries and leads to preventable hospitalisations and deaths.<sup>2</sup> Alcoholic products also cause harm to the broader community, with 10 million Australians harmed annually.<sup>3</sup>

When it comes to the total health burden in Australia, alcohol is responsible for 4.9% of all cancers, 4.0% of all cardiovascular diseases, 14.9% of all injuries, and 19.2% of all chronic liver disease.<sup>4</sup>

Alcohol is associated with, and can contribute to, mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety. People with a mental health condition are more likely to drink alcohol at high risk levels.<sup>5</sup> Mental health conditions and substance use disorders are prevalent in Australian society, together accounting for 12% of the burden of disease in Australia.<sup>6</sup>

Concerningly, there are indicators that alcohol harm is increasing, with alcohol-induced deaths at the highest reported rate in 10 years<sup>7</sup> and deaths from alcohol-related injuries having more than doubled over the past 10 years.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, the number of Australians reaching out to alcohol treatment services is at its highest in a decade, with almost half (49%) of all alcohol and other drug treatment episodes involving alcohol as a drug of concern.<sup>9</sup>

It doesn't have to be this way. Governments across Australia can take action to ensure common sense measures are put in place so that families and communities are safe. Health warnings are one of these measures.



- 1 National Drug Research Institute (2018). National Alcohol Indicators: Bulletin 16. Retrieved 27/09/2023 from: [NDRI - National Alcohol Indicators Project \(NAIP\) \(curtin.edu.au\)](#)
- 2 Rehm J, Gmel GE, Gmel G, Hasan OSM, Imtiaz S, Popova S, Probst C, Roerecke M, Room R, Samokhvalov AV, Shield KD, Shuper PA. (2017). The relationship between different dimensions of alcohol use and the burden of disease—An update. *Addiction* 112(6):968–1001. Doi: [10.1111/add.13757](#)
- 3 Laslett A-M, Room R, Kuntsche S, et al (2023). Alcohol's harm to others in 2021: who bears the burden? *Addiction* 118(9):1726–1738. Doi: [10.1111/add.16205](#)
- 4 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023). Alcohol, tobacco & other drugs in Australia. Table S1.8: Burden attributable to alcohol use, by linked disease and sex, 2018. Retrieved 27/09/2023 from: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/82b91a50-ce92-4303-8a76-970e6482331d/aihw-phe-221-impacts-APRIL-2023.xlsx.aspx>
- 5 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2020). National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019. Drug Statistics series no. 32. PHE 270. Canberra AIHW.
- 6 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022). Australian Burden of Disease Study 2022. [Australian Burden of Disease Study 2022 \(aihw.gov.au\)](#)
- 7 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023). Causes of Death. Table 13.11: Alcohol-induced deaths, Number of deaths and Age-standardised death rates, 2013–2022. Causes of Death, Australia, 2022 | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)
- 8 This relates to the time period 2010–2020 which is the latest data available.
- 9 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023). Alcohol, tobacco & other drugs in Australia. Table B15: Age-standardised rates (per 100,000) of alcohol-related injury deaths, by sex, Australians 15 and over, 2010–11 to 2019–20. [Alcohol-related injury: hospitalisations and deaths, 2019–20, Data - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](#)
- 9 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023). Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia annual report. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol-other-drug-treatment-services/alcohol-other-drug-treatment-services-australia/contents/about>

## Health warnings

Australians were asked whether they support the introduction of health warnings on the labels of alcoholic products, and which harms from alcohol should be included in a warning.

The majority (78.0%; Table 1) of Australians support the introduction of health warnings on the labels of alcoholic products.

**Table 1. Support for health warnings (N = 1004)**

	N	%
Yes	783	78.0
No	105	10.5
Maybe	116	11.6

Levels of support were similar when looking only at those people who had an alcoholic drink in the past 12 months (Table 2).

**Table 2. Support for health warnings among people who had an alcoholic drink in last 12 months (N = 862)**

	N	%
Yes	663	76.9
No	94	10.9
Maybe	105	12.2

Among Australians who supported the introduction of health warnings, there was strong support for warnings about specific harms from alcohol (Table 3), including significant support (91.2%) for warnings about liver disease. A majority of people also supported warnings about poor mental health (68.7%), alcohol poisoning (68.3%), heart disease (61.9%) and cancer (54.5%). Just under half (47.8%) supported warnings about injury.

**Table 3. Support for content of health warnings among those who supported health warnings (N = 783)**

	N	%
Liver disease	714	91.2
Cancer	427	54.5
Heart disease	485	61.9
Poor mental health	538	68.7
Injury	374	47.8
Alcohol poisoning	535	68.3



## Further information

For information about the short and long term health impacts of alcohol, visit: [fare.org.au/resources/alcohol-effects/](https://fare.org.au/resources/alcohol-effects/)

## About FARE

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is the leading not-for-profit organisation working towards an Australia free from alcohol harms. We approach this through developing evidence-informed policy, enabling people-powered advocacy and delivering health promotion programs.

FARE has been working with communities across the country to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians for 20 years. To learn more about us and our work visit [fare.org.au](https://fare.org.au).

