



New Study into Alcohol Abuse Exposes ‘Beer-Binge’ as Real Problem

Australians who consume alcohol at dangerous levels drink eight times more beer than any other alcoholic product, according to a major research report released today.

The study, produced by Roy Morgan Research and released to DSICA, exposes beer as the dominant drink of choice among Australians considered heavy drinkers (consuming more than 100 drinks per month). ***See attached key findings.***

“Beer accounts for three in four alcoholic drinks (74%) consumed by Australians who drink at risky and dangerous levels,” said Stephen Riden, Information and Research Manager, Distilled Spirits Industry Council of Australia (DSICA).

“The Government’s 70% tax hike on RTDs was sold to the community as its strategy to curb binge-drinking among young women. This research is an important insight into the real problem our community faces – that of young adult men drinking at alarmingly dangerous levels. It’s not RTDs they are getting drunk on – it’s beer.”

The research, which is part of a continuous national survey into the behaviour of more than 50,000 Australians per year over the past six years, reveals that beer consumption, in heavy drinkers, has increased among men aged 18-24 years – up from 68 beers to 76 beers each month – over the last two years.

“Australians rightly want a solution to problem drinking and we urge the Government to realise that they need to look at all the issues, starting with the beer-binge problem,” Mr Riden said.

To download a copy of the Roy Morgan Single Source study into alcohol consumption patterns in Australia visit: <http://www.dsica.com.au/sections/media/pub.html>

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Key Study Findings:

- A projected 1.8 million Australians consume more than 100 alcoholic drinks over a four week period (ie, heavy drinkers prone to abuse and even dependence). This pattern of alcohol consumption has remained relatively unchanged over the last four years.
- Men aged over 40 years account for half of all heavy drinkers, while men aged 30-40 years are the next largest group. The number of heavy drinking men aged 18-24 years is increasing over time.
- Beer continues to be the greatest contributor to unhealthy rates of alcohol consumption. Beer 'share of throat' within heavy drinkers has moved from 72% in 2004 to 74% in 2007.
- Among heavy drinking males aged 18-24 years, beer now accounts for 76% of all drinks consumed and is on the increase.
- Growth in the number of heavy drinking Australians aged 18-24 years is being driven by men. The number of young women who drink more than 100 drinks over a four week period is in significant decline.
- The imported beer segment is growing at a rate five times faster than any other segment of the Australian alcohol market.
- While the presence of beer in the repertoire of heavy drinkers is increasing over time, the presence of spirits and wine is decreasing. In 2007, RTDs accounted for only 7% of all drinks consumed by heavy drinkers – down from 8% in 2006.
- Growth in the volume of alcohol consumed as an RTD is being driven by men and women aged over 40 years consuming dark-spirit based pre-mixes.
- Over the last two years, RTD consumption by males aged 18-24 years has decreased from 18 drinks to 10 drinks over a four week period.
- Sales of light-spirit based RTDs are in significant decline. Nearly all brands in this segment demonstrate short-lived appeal.

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