

4 Alcohol

Overview

Alcohol is second only to tobacco as the major cause of drug-related mortality in Australia. In 1997 approximately 3,700 deaths (or 16% of all drug-related deaths) were attributable to excessive use of alcohol (see Chapter 8).

In terms of overall burden of disease, Mathers et al. (1999) estimated that the harm associated with alcohol consumption accounted for 4.9% of the total burden of disease in Australia in 1996. However, low to moderate consumption can protect against certain diseases, resulting in approximately 2.8% of the total burden being averted. Hence the net harm associated with alcohol use is estimated at around 2.2% of the total burden of disease.

On average in 1996–97, each Australian consumed 7.6 litres of pure alcohol, comprising 95 litres of beer, 19 litres of wine and 1.3 litres of pure alcohol from spirits (Table 4.1). This placed Australia 20th in world ranking of pure alcohol consumption per capita (Table 4.3).

Results from the 1998 NDSHS indicate that 59% of males and 39% of females drink alcoholic beverages at least once a week (Table 4.5). Of the persons that had consumed alcohol in the past year, 14% of males and 6% of females drink every day (Table 4.6). Further, at least 8% of male current drinkers and 4% of female drinkers usually drink at levels considered hazardous or harmful to health (Table 4.8).

On average each Australian spent \$717 on alcohol in 1996–97 (Table 4.10). Total government revenue from the consumption of alcoholic beverages is estimated at \$1.8 billion dollars for 1997–98 (Table 4.11).

Apparent consumption

Per capita consumption trends

Alcohol consumption per capita has been relatively stable over the past five years at around 7.6 litres of pure alcohol per person. This followed a peak in the 1980s, largely due to a peak in beer consumption during this period (Table 4.1). In 1997, every Australian on average consumed 95 litres of beer, 19 litres of wine and 1.3 litres of pure alcohol from spirits.

Table 4.1: Apparent per capita^(a) consumption of alcoholic beverages, Australia, 1910–11 to 1996–97

Year ended 30 June	Type of beverage				Total
	Beer	Table, sparkling & carbonated wines	Fortified, flavoured wines & vermouth	Spirits	
	(litres ^(b))				
1911	56.4	n.a.	n.a.	2.2	..
1921	55.8	n.a.	n.a.	0.9	..
1931	36.8	n.a.	n.a.	0.5	..
1941	61.8	n.a.	n.a.	0.6	..
1951	89.8	6.9 ^(c)	(d)	0.8	5.8
1961	102.6	1.4	3.7	0.8	6.6
1971	126.5	4.5	4.2	1.0	8.4
1981	129.3	14.5	3.7	1.1	9.7
1990 ^(e)	113.9	16.2	2.2	1.3	8.5
1991 ^(e)	110.6	15.8	2.1	1.2	8.2
1992 ^(e)	104.0	16.7	2.0	1.1	7.8
1993 ^(e)	99.5	16.4	1.9	1.2	7.6
1994	98.0	16.8	1.8	1.4	7.8
1995	96.8	16.4	2.1	1.3	7.7
1996	95.3	16.2	2.1	1.4	7.6
1997	94.7	17.3	1.7	1.3	7.6

(a) Total Australian population.

(b) Beer and wine shown as litres of beverage, spirits and total as litres of pure alcohol.

(c) Includes 'Fortified, flavoured wines & vermouth'.

(d) Included in 'Table, sparkling and carbonated wines'.

(e) Data have been revised since previous publication.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Cat. No. 4306.0.

Using persons aged 18 and over as the base, there has been a general decline in the per capita consumption of alcohol over the last eight years, from 11.5 litres of pure alcohol per person to 10.1 litres (Table 4.2). A large part of this decline is attributable to the reduction in beer consumption—particularly regular strength beer—which has changed from 129 litres per person aged 18 years or more to 94 litres per person (Figure 4.1). Consumption of wine, on a per capita basis, has been virtually unchanged in the period 1989–90 to 1996–97.

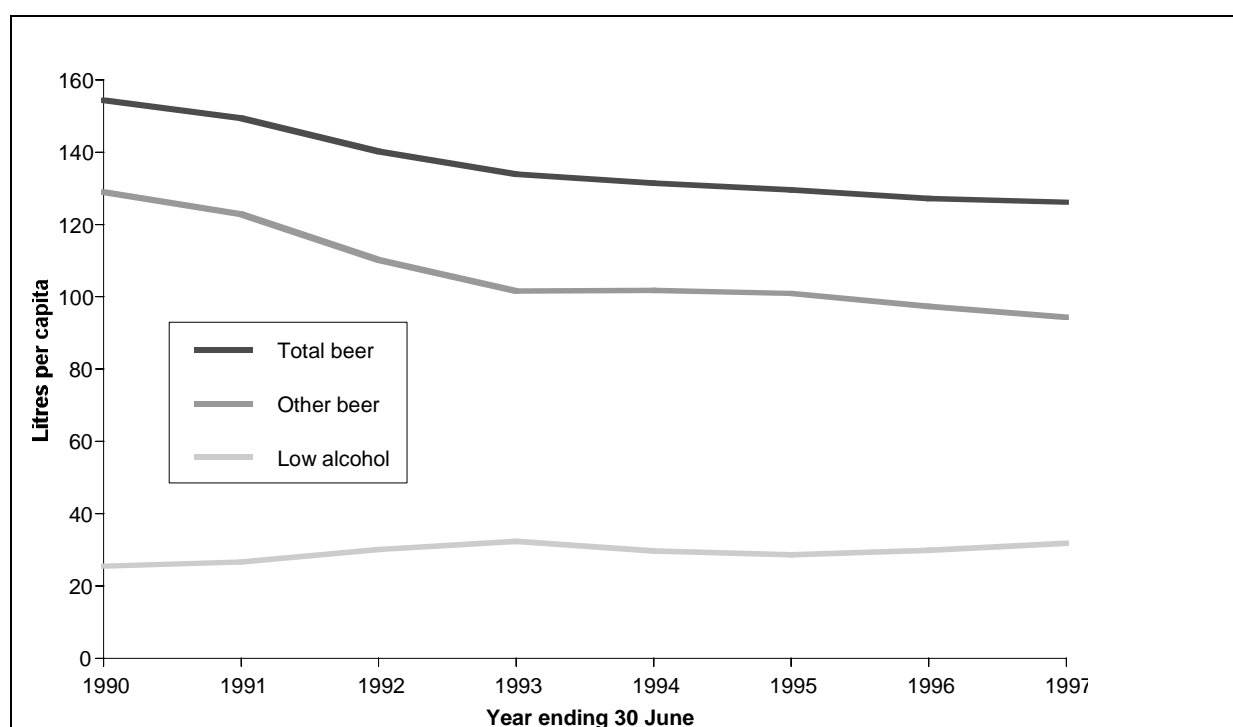
Table 4.2: Apparent per capita consumption of alcoholic beverages, persons aged 18 years and over, Australia, 1989–90 to 1996–97

Alcoholic beverage	Year ended 30 June							
	1990 ^(a)	1991 ^(a)	1992 ^(a)	1993 ^(a)	1994	1995	1996	1997
	(litres ^(b))							
Beer								
Low alcohol	25.4	26.6	30.1	32.4	29.7	28.6	29.9	31.8
Other beer	128.9	122.8	110.1	101.5	101.7	100.9	97.3	94.3
<i>Total beer</i>	<i>154.3</i>	<i>149.4</i>	<i>140.2</i>	<i>133.9</i>	<i>131.4</i>	<i>129.5</i>	<i>127.2</i>	<i>126.1</i>
Wine								
Table, sparkling & carbonated	22.0	21.3	22.5	22.1	22.5	21.9	21.5	23.0
Fortified, flavoured wines & vermouth	3.1	2.8	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.3
<i>Total wine</i>	<i>25.1</i>	<i>24.2</i>	<i>25.3</i>	<i>24.6</i>	<i>25.0</i>	<i>24.6</i>	<i>24.4</i>	<i>25.3</i>
Spirits	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.7
Total alcohol	11.5	11.0	10.5	10.2	10.5	10.2	10.2	10.1

(a) Data have been revised since previous publication.

(b) Beer and wine shown as litres of beverage, spirits and total as litres of pure alcohol.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Cat. No. 4306.0.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Cat. No. 4306.0.

Figure 4.1: Apparent per capita consumption of beer, persons aged 18 years and over, Australia, 1990 to 1997

International comparisons

On the 1996 international league table of per capita consumption of pure alcohol, Australia ranked 20th with 7.5 litres of pure alcohol per person. This compared with the top-ranked Luxembourg at 11.8 litres per person and 50th-ranked Thailand on 0.7 litres per person (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Per capita consumption of alcoholic beverages, selected countries,^(a) 1996^(b)

Rank	Total pure alcohol ^(c)		Beer		Wine		Spirits (pure alcohol)	
	Country	Litres	Country	Litres	Country	Litres	Country	Litres
1	Luxembourg	11.8	Czech Republic	160.0	Portugal	60.6	Russia	5.3
2	Portugal	11.2	Republic of Ireland	142.5	France	60.0	Romania	4.0
3	France	11.1	Germany	134.5	Luxembourg	58.0	Slovak Republic	4.0
4	Czech Republic	10.1	Denmark	117.6	Italy	55.0	Cyprus	3.4
5	Denmark	10.0	Austria	116.0	Switzerland	43.3	Poland	3.3
6	Germany	9.8	Luxembourg	109.0	Argentina	42.3	China	3.0
7	Austria	9.8	United Kingdom	102.3	Greece	34.0	Hungary	3.0
8	Hungary	9.5	Belgium	102.0	Uruguay	32.0	Greece	2.7
9	Switzerland	9.3	Australia	95.4	Austria	31.5	Bulgaria	2.5
10	Spain	9.3	New Zealand	93.9	Spain	30.3	France	2.4
11	Slovak Republic	9.2	Slovak Republic	90.2	Hungary	30.0	Spain	2.4
12	Republic of Ireland	9.1	Netherlands	83.7	Denmark	28.3	Japan	2.2
13	Belgium	9.0	USA	83.5	Belgium	25.0	Germany	2.1
14	Greece	8.7	Finland	82.1	Romania	23.3	Finland	2.0
15	Romania	8.7	Hungary	79.4	Germany	22.8	USA	1.9
16	Italy	8.2	Venezuela	75.0	Bulgaria	21.7	Cuba	1.8
17	Netherlands	8.0	Canada	67.5	Australia	18.2	Netherlands	1.8
18	Bulgaria	7.8	Spain	64.7	Netherlands	17.1	Canada	1.7
19	United Kingdom	7.6	Portugal	61.9	Czech Republic	16.9	Estonia	1.7
20	Australia	7.5	Switzerland	60.2	New Zealand	16.6	Republic of Ireland	1.7
21	Cyprus	7.5	Sweden	59.1	Chile	15.8	Venezuela	1.7
22	New Zealand	6.8	Colombia	56.4	Republic of Ireland	15.0	Czech Republic	1.7
23	Argentina	6.8	South Africa	55.6	Slovak Republic	13.4	Colombia	1.6
24	Finland	6.7	Japan	54.0	Sweden	13.3	Luxembourg	1.6
25	USA	6.6	Mexico	53.4	United Kingdom	13.1	Austria	1.5
26	Japan	6.6	Bulgaria	53.3	Cyprus	12.8	Iceland	1.5
27	Russia	6.2	Norway	52.6	South Africa	9.0	Switzerland	1.5
28	Uruguay	6.2	Cyprus	50.9	Canada	7.9	Chile	1.4
29	Poland	6.2	Brazil	40.8	Finland	7.6	United Kingdom	1.4
30	Canada	6.0	Poland	40.7	Norway	7.6	Australia	1.4
31	Venezuela	5.5	France	39.6	USA	7.3	Brazil	1.2
32	Chile	5.0	Greece	39.0	Poland	6.9	Sweden	1.2
33	Sweden	4.9	Romania	38.0	Iceland	5.1	New Zealand	1.2
34	South Africa	4.9	Paraguay	37.5	Israel	3.1	Denmark	1.1
35	Colombia	4.5	Chile	33.9	Tunisia	2.5	Belgium	1.1
36	Norway	4.0	Iceland	32.5	Brazil	1.9	South Africa	1.0
37	Iceland	3.7	Argentina	29.3	Paraguay	1.8	Uruguay	1.0
38	China	3.7	Uruguay	27.0	Morocco	1.5	Italy	0.9
39	Brazil	3.5	Taiwan	24.1	Russia	1.5	Norway	0.8
40	Mexico	3.4	Italy	24.0	Cuba	1.4	Portugal	0.8
41	Cuba	2.7	Peru	21.0	Estonia	1.3	Mexico	0.7
42	Taiwan	2.7	Singapore	20.6	Ukraine	1.3	Ukraine	0.7
43	Estonia	2.3	Cuba	15.5	Japan	1.0	Singapore	0.5
44	Paraguay	2.1	Russia	15.2	Peru	0.9	Argentina	0.3
45	Singapore	1.6	China	13.1	Singapore	0.8	Taiwan	0.3
46	Peru	1.2	Israel	11.5	Turkey	0.6	Turkey	0.3
47	Ukraine	1.0	Turkey	11.4	Algeria	0.5	India	0.2
48	Israel	0.9	Thailand	11.0	Taiwan	0.5	Malaysia	0.1
49	Turkey	0.9	Malaysia	9.5	Colombia	0.4	Thailand	0.1
50	Thailand	0.7	Estonia	5.4	Venezuela	0.3	Vietnam	0.0

(a) Top 50 ranked countries based on per capita consumption of total pure alcohol.

(b) Calendar year for all countries except Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Taiwan.

(c) As published: conversion factors from wine and beer not known for individual countries.

Source: NTC Publications, 1997.

Australia was ranked 9th on per capita consumption of beer (95 litres per person), compared with the Czech Republic on top at 160 litres per person. On wine and spirits consumption, Australia was ranked 17th and 30th respectively.

Patterns of use

National trends

Using data from the NDSHS series, the proportion of adult current drinkers (aged 14 years or more) that regularly drink alcoholic beverages has remained fairly stable between 1991 and 1998 at around 59% (Table 4.4). Similarly, the rate of occasional drinking (one to three times a month) has fluctuated around 21% of the adult population, with 18% drinking less often.

Table 4.4: Alcohol patterns of use, Australia, 1991 to 1998

Frequency of drinking	1991	1993	1995	1998
	(per cent)			
Regularly drink				
Every day	11	10	11	10
4–6 days a week	11	11	10	13
2–3 days a week	22	22	16	19
One day a week	17	17	17	17
<i>Total regular</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>59</i>
Occasionally drink				
2–3 days a month	11	13	13	12
One day a month	8	8	10	8
<i>Total occasional</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>20</i>
Less often	17	16	20	19
No longer drink	3	2	3	3

Note: Base is respondents who had tried alcohol in past year.

Sources: National Campaign Against Drug Abuse Household Survey 1991, National Drug Strategy Household Survey 1993, National Drug Strategy Household Survey 1995, National Drug Strategy Household Survey 1998.

In 1998, 10% of current drinkers had alcoholic beverages every day—virtually unchanged across the period—while 13% drank four to six days a week, up slightly from an average of 11% over the previous three survey periods.

Summary of recent use

Focussing on 1998 results, 59% of males aged 14 years and over and 39% of females reported being current regular drinkers (that is, at least weekly, Table 4.5). Only 7% of males and 12% of females had never consumed a full glass of alcohol. The prevalence of regular drinking was highest in the 30–39 years age group for males (65%) and females (44%). The 14–19 years group had the lowest prevalence of regular drinking for both males and females (33% and 27% respectively). Understandably, this age group had the highest proportion of non-drinkers, 22% for males and 25% for females.

Table 4.5: Alcohol use summary, Australia, 1998

Alcohol use	Age group						Total
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+	
	(per cent)						
	Males						
Current regular drinker (at least weekly)	33	63	65	63	62	59	59
Current occasional drinker (<weekly)	37	26	24	23	25	20	25
Ex-drinker	8	6	8	8	10	13	9
Never consumed a full glass of alcohol	22	5	3	6	4	8	7
	Females						
Current regular drinker (at least weekly)	27	40	44	43	37	34	39
Current occasional drinker (<weekly)	44	44	41	39	42	26	39
Ex-drinker	5	9	9	10	14	16	11
Never consumed a full glass of alcohol	25	6	6	8	7	24	12

Source: National Drug Strategy Household Survey 1998.

Frequency of drinking

Again using 1998 results, with the base being only those who had tried alcohol in the past year, 68% of males and 48% of females reported being regular drinkers, with 14% of males and 6% of females drinking every day (Table 4.6). A further 17% of males and 24% of females drank 1–3 days a month.

Persons aged 60 years or more were more likely than any other age group to drink every day (31% of males and 18% of females).

Table 4.6: Frequency of alcohol consumption, Australia, 1998

Frequency of drinking	Age group						Total
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+	
(per cent)							
Males							
Regularly drink							
Every day	1	6	9	13	23	31	14
4–6 days a week	5	13	18	21	17	15	16
2–3 days a week	15	29	26	19	20	20	22
One day a week	24	22	19	18	9	7	17
<i>Total regular</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>68</i>
Occasionally drink							
2–3 days a month	14	15	11	9	10	6	11
One day a month	10	4	5	8	7	7	6
<i>Total occasional</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>17</i>
Less often	27	10	11	10	12	13	12
No longer drink	5	2	1	3	2	2	2
Females							
Regularly drink							
Every day	—	2	4	7	8	18	6
4–6 days a week	2	6	9	14	15	10	10
2–3 days a week	10	19	19	15	12	13	15
One day a week	25	19	19	16	12	14	17
<i>Total regular</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>48</i>
Occasionally drink							
2–3 days a month	20	18	14	9	13	10	14
One day a month	13	10	10	9	11	9	10
<i>Total occasional</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>24</i>
Less often	26	22	23	30	28	25	25
No longer drink	4	4	3	1	2	2	3

Note: Base is respondents who had tried alcohol in past year.

Source: National Drug Strategy Household Survey 1998.

Perceived risk

The National Health and Medical Research Council recommends low-risk drinking to be not more than four standard drinks per day for males and not more than two standard drinks for females, complemented by two alcohol-free days each week and abstinence during pregnancy (NHMRC 1992).

Respondents in the 1998 NDSHS were asked to identify the number of standard drinks that can be consumed each day before a person's health is affected. Around 56% of respondents correctly identified recommended low-risk drinking for males and 47% correctly identified low-risk for females (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Perceived risk^(a) to male and female health from alcohol, Australia, 1998

Number of standard drinks	Male health		Female health	
	Proportion responding ^(b) (per cent)	NHMRC risk level	Proportion responding ^(b) (per cent)	NHMRC risk level
None	2	low risk	2	low risk
1–2 drinks	21	low risk	45	low risk
3–4 drinks	33	low risk	25	hazardous
5–6 drinks	16	hazardous	7	harmful
7–8 drinks	4	harmful	2	harmful
9–12 drinks	6	harmful	2	harmful
13 or more drinks	2	harmful	1	harmful
Don't know/not stated	16		16	
	(drinks)		(drinks)	
Mean	4		3	
Median	3		2	

(a) Based on NHMRC guidelines for responsible drinking.

(b) Response to question 'How many standard drinks to you think an adult male (female) could drink every day before their health would be affected?'.
(b)

Sources: National Drug Strategy Household Survey 1998; NHMRC 1992.

Using the survey data it is difficult to relate reported drinking patterns with the guidelines, mainly because the combination of quantity and frequency can only be inferred, and the guidelines themselves are unclear as to whether, say, 28 drinks one day per week represents the same risk as 4 drinks every day of each week.

In the table opposite, consumption patterns are shown in terms of frequency by quantity (Table 4.8). Despite the qualification above, we can be confident that based on the survey results at least 8% of males and 4% of females (aged 14 years or more) are drinking at hazardous or harmful levels.

Table 4.8: Quantity of alcohol consumed by frequency of consumption, proportion of recent drinkers aged 14 years and over, by sex, Australia, 1998

Frequency	Quantity (standard drinks)				Total
	1–2	3–4	5–6	7 or more	
(per cent)					
Males					
Every day	4.4	5.3	2.7	2.0	14.5
4–6 days/week	4.8	5.8	3.1	3.0	16.7
2–3 days/week	6.3	7.1	3.7	5.8	22.9
1 day/week	3.3	5.9	3.0	4.0	16.3
Less often	17.4	6.4	2.5	3.3	29.6
Total	36.3	30.5	15.1	18.2	100.0
Females					
Every day	3.7	1.8	0.8	0.2	6.5
4–6 days/week	6.2	3.3	0.5	0.3	10.3
2–3 days/week	8.6	4.4	1.3	2.0	16.3
1 day/week	8.3	4.3	2.5	2.4	17.4
Less often	35.5	8.5	3.4	2.2	49.6
Total	62.4	22.2	8.4	7.0	100.0
Persons					
Every day	4.1	3.6	1.8	1.1	10.7
4–6 days/week	5.5	4.6	1.9	1.7	13.6
2–3 days/week	7.4	5.8	2.5	4.0	19.8
1 day/week	5.7	5.1	2.8	3.2	16.8
Less often	26.0	7.4	2.9	2.8	39.1
Total	48.7	26.6	11.9	12.8	100.0

Note: Base equals recent alcohol drinkers.

Source: National Drug Strategy Household Survey 1998.

Actions taken to reduce alcohol intake

Based on 1998 survey respondents who were current drinkers, 52% of males and 59% of females did not take any actions to reduce alcohol intake in the previous 12 months (Table 4.9). The most common action taken was to reduce the amount of alcohol drunk at any one time (30% for males and 28% females). Another common action was reducing the number of times that alcohol was drunk (28% for males and 27% for females), followed by switching to lower-alcohol drinks.

The age group most likely to not take any action to reduce alcohol intake was 14–19 years for both males and females, while the age group most likely to take action was 40–49 years for males and 20–29 years for females.

Table 4.9: Actions taken to reduce alcohol intake, Australia, 1998

Action taken	Age group						Total
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+	
(per cent)							
Males							
Reduced the amount of alcohol drunk at any one time	17	33	28	35	32	30	30
Reduced the number of times alcohol was drunk	22	38	32	27	23	22	28
Switched to more low-alcohol drinks	6	9	14	19	17	19	14
None of the above	68	49	53	48	51	52	52
Females							
Reduced the amount of alcohol drunk at any one time	21	36	27	26	29	26	28
Reduced the number of times alcohol was drunk	26	39	25	20	22	26	27
Switched to more low-alcohol drinks	6	7	9	5	11	8	7
None of the above	65	50	63	63	61	55	59

Note: Base is respondents who had tried alcohol in past year and who still drink.

Source: National Drug Strategy Household Survey 1998.

Economics

Per capita expenditure

Alcohol consumption directly cost each Australian \$717 on average in 1996–97 (Table 4.10). This level of personal expenditure has remained fairly static—in constant price terms—over the period since 1989–90. In 1996–97, the per capita expenditure on alcohol represented 3.7% of total per capita expenditure.

Table 4.10: Per capita private final consumption on alcohol, Australia, 1989–90 to 1996–97

Measure	Year ending 30 June							
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Constant 1989–90 prices								
\$ per capita	551	546	535	526	547	570	570	548
% total expenditure	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.7
Current prices								
\$ per capita	551	585	594	598	644	695	728	717
% total expenditure	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.1

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Cat. No. 5206.0.

Government revenue

There are four main sources of government revenue related to the consumption of alcohol: excise on domestic goods, customs duty on imported commodities, sales tax, and State Business Franchise fees. On 5 August 1997 the High Court determined that State Business Franchise fees are an excise and cannot be imposed by the States and Territories. From 7 August 1997, the Federal Government collected an equivalent amount as excise, on behalf of the States and Territories. Information on sales tax is not available at the commodity level.

In the context of these qualifications, net government revenue associated with alcohol was almost \$1.8 billion in 1997–98, comprising \$1.0 billion dollars from excise duties and \$0.7 billion from customs duty, most of which was paid on spirits (Table 4.11). The largest gain in government revenue over the period 1991–92 to 1997–98 was in customs duty on beer (94%),

followed by customs duty on spirits (61%). Due to changes in the structure and rates of customs duty on wine, there has been an overall decline in revenue from this source (-29% over the period).

Table 4.11: Government revenue from excise, customs clearances, and State Business Franchise fees related to the sale of alcohol, Australia, 1991-92 to 1997-98

Duty and commodity	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
	(\$m)						
Excise							
Beer	803.8	770.2	814.2	804.8	864.4	869.7	882.1
Spirits ^(a)	166.8	164.2	177.7	191.0	200.9	162.8	141.9
<i>Total excise</i>	<i>970.6</i>	<i>934.4</i>	<i>992.0</i>	<i>995.8</i>	<i>1,065.3</i>	<i>1,032.5</i>	<i>1,024.0</i>
Customs							
Beer	5.9	6.6	5.4	7.3	7.1	9.3	11.5
Wine ^(b)	5.4	5.4	4.5	5.3	4.1	2.9	3.9
Spirits	445.9	479.6	525.6	528.8	565.3	645.1	716.8
<i>Total customs</i>	<i>457.2</i>	<i>491.6</i>	<i>535.5</i>	<i>541.3</i>	<i>576.5</i>	<i>657.3</i>	<i>732.1</i>
State Business Franchise fees	615.0	630.0	661.0	685.0	735.0	774.0	^(c)
Total	2,042.8	2,056.0	2,188.5	2,222.1	2,376.9	2,463.9	1,756.2 ^(c)

(a) There was a decrease in excise duty for spirits in 1996-97 due to a policy change which treated imported spirits for mixed drinks as customisable rather than excisable.

(b) There has been a gradual reduction in, and changes to the structure of, the customs duty on wine across the period 1994-95 to 1997-98.

(c) On 5 August 1997 the High Court determined that State Business Franchise fees are an excise and cannot be imposed by the States and Territories. Effective from 7 August 1997, the Commonwealth is collecting the tax on behalf of the States and Territories as an equivalent amount of additional sales tax.

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics/Customs, unpublished data; Australian Bureau of Statistics Cat. No. 5506.0.

Costs of alcohol abuse

Alcohol abuse is estimated to have cost Australian society \$145 million in direct health care costs in 1992, and \$767 million in road accident costs (Collins & Lapsley 1996).

Support for measures to reduce alcohol consumption

The NDSHS asked respondents to indicate their support for a range of policy measures to reduce alcohol consumption. Using 1998 results, only those policy options which did not directly affect the availability of alcohol were supported by a majority of Australians (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12: Support for measures to reduce alcohol consumption, Australia, 1998

Measure	Age group						Total
	14–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+	
	(per cent)						
	Males						
Increasing the price of alcohol	20	13	17	20	19	27	19
Reducing the number of outlets that sell alcohol	19	16	23	29	37	40	27
Reducing the trading hours, for all pubs and clubs	19	17	27	34	36	44	30
Raising the legal drinking age	18	25	36	41	46	43	36
Increasing the number of alcohol-free public events	43	46	62	65	71	70	60
Increasing the number of alcohol-free zones or dry areas	44	52	66	71	75	72	64
Stricter enforcement of the law against serving customers who are drunk	65	71	83	90	93	89	82
Serving only low-alcohol drinks, such as low-alcohol beer at sporting events or venues	45	47	62	73	75	79	64
Limiting advertising for alcohol on TV until after 9.30 p.m.	43	55	69	68	75	79	66
Banning alcohol sponsorship of sporting events	23	25	34	37	44	54	37
More severe legal penalties for drivers who are drunk	84	85	80	86	81	89	85
	Females						
Increasing the price of alcohol	25	23	29	39	41	42	33
Reducing the number of outlets that sell alcohol	24	27	36	46	50	56	41
Reducing the trading hours, for all pubs and clubs	21	22	37	47	43	60	40
Raising the legal drinking age	18	37	50	48	53	61	47
Increasing the number of alcohol-free public events	51	60	75	82	83	79	73
Increasing the number of alcohol-free zones or dry areas	55	64	77	82	78	76	73
Stricter enforcement of the law against serving customers who are drunk	78	86	91	91	95	94	90
Serving only low-alcohol drinks, such as low-alcohol beer at sporting events or venues	60	65	77	88	85	85	78
Limiting advertising for alcohol on TV until after 9.30 p.m.	55	72	84	87	85	82	79
Banning alcohol sponsorship of sporting events	35	38	53	60	64	61	53
More severe legal penalties for drivers who are drunk	87	91	94	95	96	94	93

Source: National Drug Strategy Household Survey 1998.

The measure with the greatest support was more severe legal penalties for drivers who are drunk (supported by 85% of males and 93% of females). The measure with the least support was increasing the price of alcohol (19% for males and 33% for females). This was particularly poorly supported by persons aged 20–29 years. Across all policy measures, support generally increased with age, with females being more supportive than males.