

4 Community support for drug-related policy

Survey respondents were asked to indicate how strongly they would support or oppose specific policies, using a 5-point scale (strongly support, support, neither support nor oppose, oppose, and strongly oppose). Respondents also had the option of indicating that they did not know enough about the policy to give or withhold support. For the purposes of this chapter, responses of 'support' or 'strongly support' are taken as support for specific policies, and 'Don't know enough to say' are excluded from the analyses. The survey questions were expressed in terms of reducing problems associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana/cannabis and heroin.

Tobacco

Between 2004 and 2007, public support increased for the majority of measures to reduce the problems associated with tobacco (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Support^(a) for tobacco measures: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

| Measure | Males | | Females | | Persons | |
|---|------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | 2004 | 2007 | 2004 | 2007 | 2004 | 2007 |
| | (per cent) | | | | | |
| Banning smoking in the workplace | 79.6 | 79.6 | 85.0 | 84.3 | 82.3 | 82.0 |
| Banning smoking in pubs/clubs | 65.6 | 74.9 # | 70.4 | 79.0 # | 68.1 | 77.0 # |
| Increasing tax on tobacco products to pay for health education | 61.8 | 65.1 # | 67.0 | 69.1 # | 64.5 | 67.1 # |
| Increasing tax on tobacco products to contribute to treatment costs | 64.9 | 66.9 # | 69.2 | 70.2 | 67.1 | 68.6 # |
| Increasing tax on tobacco products to discourage smoking | 60.3 | 63.7 # | 66.1 | 67.6 | 63.3 | 65.7 # |
| Making it harder to buy tobacco in shops | 60.9 | 64.4 # | 66.2 | 68.4 # | 63.6 | 66.4 # |
| Stricter enforcement of law against supplying to minors | 87.9 | 88.5 | 91.1 | 91.5 | 89.6 | 90.1 |
| Stricter penalties for sale or supply of tobacco products to minors | 85.4 | 85.7 | 88.9 | 89.3 | 87.2 | 87.5 |
| Bans on point of sale advertising and display of tobacco products | 66.8 | 71.4 # | 73.0 | 75.8 # | 70.0 | 73.6 # |
| Implementing a licensing scheme for tobacco retailers | 68.5 | 69.4 | 72.0 | 73.7 # | 70.3 | 71.6 # |

(a) Support or strongly support (calculations based on responses of 'strongly support', 'support', 'neither support nor oppose', 'oppose' and 'strongly oppose').

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed $\alpha = 0.05$).

- As was the case in 2004, the greatest level of support for tobacco interventions in 2007 was for 'Stricter enforcement of laws against supplying tobacco products to minors'. Of Australians aged 14 years or older nine in ten (90.1%) supported this measure.

- Again, as was the case in 2004, the lowest level of support was for 'Increasing tax on tobacco products to discourage smoking' (65.7% in 2007).

Alcohol

Support for possible measures to reduce the problems associated with alcohol increased between 2004 and 2007 for all but a few of the surveyed measures (Table 4.2). Where support fell the fall was not significant.

Table 4.2: Support^(a) for alcohol measures: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

| Measure | Males | | Females | | Persons | |
|--|------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | 2004 | 2007 | 2004 | 2007 | 2004 | 2007 |
| | (per cent) | | | | | |
| Increasing the price of alcohol | 16.1 | 20.5 # | 25.5 | 27.7 # | 20.9 | 24.1 # |
| Reducing the number of outlets that sell alcohol | 22.7 | 27.9 # | 34.2 | 36.3 # | 28.5 | 32.2 # |
| Reducing trading hours for pubs and clubs | 27.3 | 35.4 # | 36.6 | 42.4 # | 32.0 | 38.9 # |
| Raising the legal drinking age | 35.4 | 42.5 # | 45.9 | 50.0 # | 40.7 | 46.3 # |
| Increasing the number of alcohol-free public events | 56.9 | 56.4 | 69.5 | 68.3 | 63.3 | 62.5 |
| Increasing the number of alcohol-free dry zones | 59.1 | 58.9 | 67.4 | 67.0 | 63.3 | 62.5 |
| Serving only low-alcohol beverages at sporting events | 53.8 | 54.5 | 67.2 | 65.5 # | 60.6 | 60.1 |
| Limiting TV advertising until after 9.30 p.m. | 66.3 | 67.2 | 76.3 | 77.0 | 71.4 | 72.2 |
| Banning alcohol sponsorship of sporting events | 37.8 | 41.7 # | 54.1 | 55.2 | 46.1 | 48.5 # |
| More severe penalties for drink driving | 80.4 | 81.5 | 91.1 | 91.0 | 85.9 | 86.3 |
| Stricter laws against serving drunk customers | 79.9 | 79.9 | 87.7 | 86.8 | 83.8 | 83.3 |
| Restricting late night trading of alcohol | 45.5 | 54.0 # | 58.1 | 61.9 # | 51.9 | 58.0 # |
| Strict monitoring of late night licensed premises | 68.4 | 72.4 # | 75.7 | 77.9 # | 72.1 | 75.2 # |
| Increasing the size of standard drink labels on alcohol containers | 60.3 | 60.7 | 72.4 | 70.7 # | 66.4 | 65.8 |
| Adding national drinking guidelines to alcohol containers | 63.9 | 66.1 # | 75.7 | 75.7 | 69.9 | 70.9 |
| Increasing tax on alcohol to pay for health, education and treatment of alcohol-related problems | 31.5 | 35.5 # | 45.5 | 47.0 | 38.6 | 41.3 # |

(a) Support or strongly support (calculations based on responses of 'strongly support', 'support', 'neither support nor oppose', 'oppose' and 'strongly oppose').

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed $\alpha = 0.05$).

- As seen for tobacco, in general there was greater support for enforcement measures than for bans and taxation increases.
- There was an increase in 'Restricting late night trading of alcohol' from 51.9% in 2004 to 58.0% in 2007.
- Without exception, females were more likely to support these measures than were males.

Marijuana/cannabis

Support for two measures relating to marijuana use in medical settings remained relatively unchanged between 2004 and 2007 (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Support^(a) for marijuana/cannabis measures: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

| Measure | Males | | Females | | Persons | |
|--|------------|------|---------|------|---------|------|
| | 2004 | 2007 | 2004 | 2007 | 2004 | 2007 |
| | (per cent) | | | | | |
| A change in legislation permitting the use of marijuana for medical purposes | 66.6 | 68.0 | 68.5 | 69.2 | 67.5 | 68.6 |
| A clinical trial for people to use marijuana to treat medical conditions | 72.6 | 72.6 | 74.5 | 74.6 | 73.5 | 73.6 |

(a) Support or strongly support (calculations based on responses of 'strongly support', 'support', 'neither support nor oppose', 'oppose' and 'strongly oppose').

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed $\alpha = 0.05$).

- Two-thirds (68.6%) of respondents supported 'A change in legislation permitting the use of marijuana for medical purposes' and almost three-quarters (73.6%) supported 'A clinical trial for people to use marijuana to treat medical conditions'.
- Females were slightly more likely than males to support either of these measures.

Heroin

Support for measures relating to the use of heroin increased between 2004 and 2007, for every measure surveyed (Table 4.4). By contrast support had fallen for every one of these measures between 2001 and 2004.

Table 4.4: Support^(a) for heroin measures: proportion of the population aged 14 years or older, by sex, Australia, 2004, 2007

| Measure | Males | | Females | | Persons | |
|---|------------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | 2004 | 2007 | 2004 | 2007 | 2004 | 2007 |
| | (per cent) | | | | | |
| Needle and syringe programs | 52.9 | 63.7 # | 56.2 | 70.2 # | 54.6 | 67.0 # |
| Methadone maintenance programs | 55.9 | 64.9 # | 60.1 | 70.5 # | 58.0 | 67.7 # |
| Treatment with drugs other than methadone | 58.4 | 66.2 # | 59.9 | 70.9 # | 59.1 | 68.5 # |
| Regulated injecting rooms | 39.4 | 47.7 # | 40.3 | 52.1 # | 39.8 | 49.9 # |
| Trial of prescribed heroin | 27.6 | 32.2 # | 24.0 | 33.6 # | 25.8 | 32.9 # |
| Rapid detoxification therapy | 72.7 | 76.8 # | 74.1 | 80.9 # | 73.4 | 78.8 # |
| Use of Naltrexone | 69.2 | 73.5 # | 66.8 | 76.0 # | 68.0 | 74.7 # |

(a) Support or strongly support (calculations based on responses of 'strongly support', 'support', 'neither support nor oppose', 'oppose' and 'strongly oppose').

Difference between 2004 result and 2007 result is statistically significantly (2-tailed $\alpha = 0.05$).

- In both 2004 and 2007, support was strongest for measures relating to detoxification (73.4% and 78.8% respectively) and use of Naltrexone (68.0% and 74.7%).
- In 2007, support was higher among females than males for every measure surveyed.