



Older people

Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia

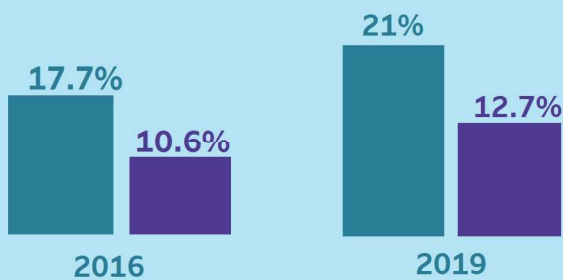
Those aged **70 and over** continue to be the age group most likely to **drink daily** in 2019.^[3]



In 2019, people aged **50–59** were most likely to **smoke daily** (15.9%).^[3]



Proportion of daily smokers aged **50–59** and **60–69** has increased.^[3]



1 in 4 people aged 55–64 and **1 in 5** aged 75+ consumed more than **10 standard drinks** in the last week in 2020–21.^[4]



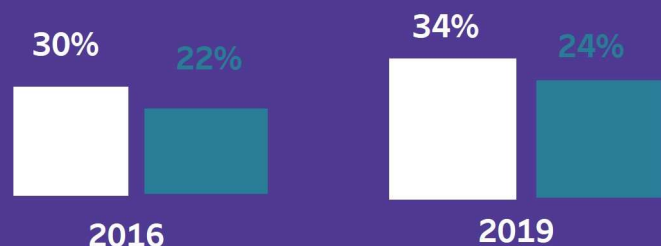
People in older age groups are the least likely to have intentions to quit smoking—**46%** of current smokers aged 70 and over **did not plan to quit smoking** in 2019.^[3]

In 2019, the **main reason** older smokers gave for **not wanting to quit** was because they enjoy it (ranging from 59% for those aged 50–59 to 69% for those aged 60–69).^[3]

The two **most commonly used drugs** by older people in 2019 were **cannabis** and **pharmaceutical drugs** when used for non-medical purposes. ^[3]



There was a greater proportion of **males** and **females** aged 60 or older who had used illicit drugs in their lifetime in 2019 than in 2016.^[3]

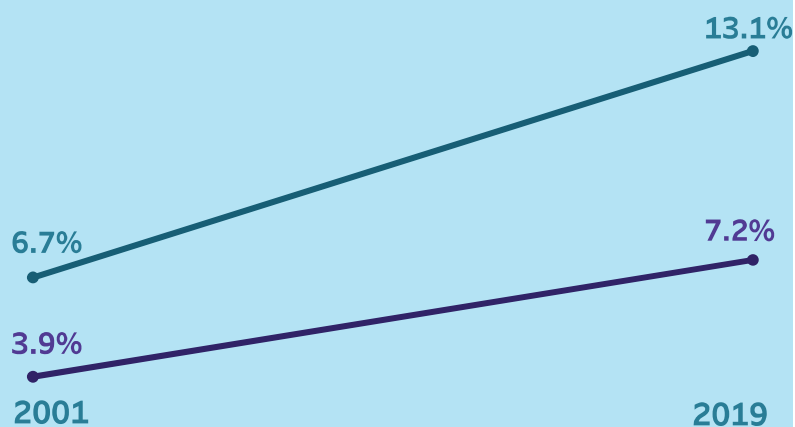




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Recent use of any illicit drug has increased among people **50–59** and **60+**. [3]



A **higher proportion** of people who recently used **illicit drugs** were **aged 50 and over** in 2019 (23%) than in 2001 (11%), suggesting an ageing cohort of illicit drug users.[3]

In 2021–22, **11%** of clients **seeking treatment** for their own alcohol or other drug use were **aged 50–59** and **5.2%** were **aged 60 and over**. [5]

In 2021, **30%** of **drug-induced deaths** were in people aged **55 years and over**. [2]



In 2018, **tobacco use** was the **leading risk factor** for burden of disease for males aged 65–84 and females aged 45–84. [1]



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References

National Drug Strategy Household Survey findings relate to people aged 14 or older unless specified. An adult is a person aged 18 or older. New Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol were released in December 2020. Data for alcohol risk in this fact sheet are measured against the 2009 guidelines, reflecting the time period in which the data were collected and are not comparable with the 2020 guidelines.[3]

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2021) Australian Burden of Disease Study: Impact and causes of illness and death in Australia 2018, AIHW, Australian Government. doi:10.25816/5ps1-j259
2. ABS 2022. Causes of death, 2021. ABS cat. no. 3303.0. Canberra: ABS, accessed 7 November 2022.
3. AIHW 2020. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019. Drug statistics series no. 32. Cat. no. PHE 270. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 16 July 2020.
4. ABS 2021. Alcohol Consumption: 2020–21 Financial Year. Canberra: ABS. Viewed 25 March 2022.
5. AIHW 2023. Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia: Early Insights report 2021–22. Cat. no. HSE 242. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 14 April 2023.

Source: Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in Australia
(<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia>).