



National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019—Queensland

The consumption of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is a major cause of preventable disease and illness in Australia and varies by region. This fact sheet summarises the results from the 2019 National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS) on tobacco, alcohol and other drug use in Queensland. Data are presented for people aged 14 and over. Comparisons with prevalence estimates for other states and territories should only be considered using the age-standardised results available in the online supplementary tables. See [technical notes](#) for definitions of smokers, e-cigarettes, alcohol risk guidelines and illicit drug use.

Quick facts

In Queensland in 2019, among people aged 14 and over:

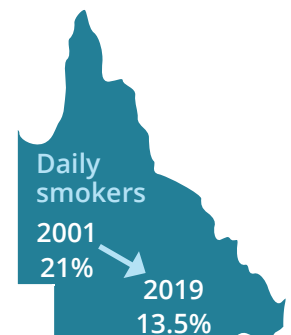
- **1 in 7** smoked tobacco daily
- **1 in 4** consumed 5 or more drinks in one sitting (at least monthly)
- **1 in 6** used an illicit drug in the past 12 months
- more than **half** supported testing of drugs/pills at designated sites.

What is the National Drug Strategy Household Survey?

The survey collects information from teenagers and adults across Australia. It asks what they think about tobacco, alcohol and other drugs; and about their use of these drugs. Researchers and policymakers use the results to better understand the issues surrounding tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. The 2019 survey was the 13th iteration of the survey since it began in 1985. The survey has been conducted every 3 years since 1995.

How many people smoke tobacco daily?

The proportion of daily smokers in Queensland fell by about one-third between 2001 and 2019 (from 21% to 13.5%) (Table S.5). This equates to about 600,000 people smoking daily in 2019. The proportion of daily smokers in Queensland was higher than the national average (11.0%).

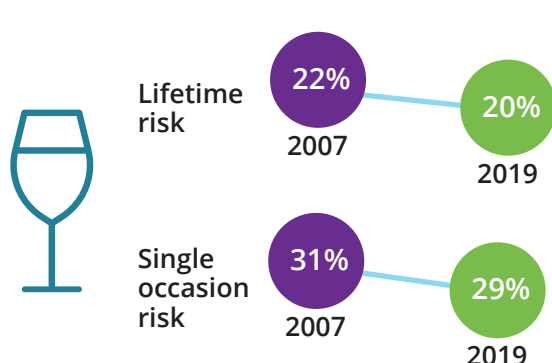


More people are using e-cigarettes

In 2019, more people had used e-cigarettes in their lifetime (12.1%, up from 9.8% in 2016) and currently used e-cigarettes (2.9%, up from 1.3%) (Table S.10). Among smokers, current use of e-cigarettes rose from 3.6% in 2016 to 10.8% in 2019. (Table S.11).

How many people drink alcohol?

About 4 in 5 (81%) people had consumed alcohol in the previous 12 months. There were no changes in the proportions of people drinking daily, weekly, monthly or less often than monthly, or in the proportion of ex-drinkers between 2016 and 2019 (Table S.12). Overall, the proportion of people drinking daily in Queensland in 2019 was higher than the national average (6.5% compared with 5.4%).



Most people in Queensland drank alcohol at levels that did not exceed the lifetime risk and single occasion risk (at least monthly) guidelines for reducing the health risks from drinking alcohol. However, the proportion exceeding the lifetime risk guidelines was higher than the national average (20% compared with 16.8%) as was the proportion exceeding the single occasion risk guidelines (29% compared with 25%). There has been little change in these proportions in Queensland since 2007 (tables S.21 and S.22).

How has illicit drug use changed?

In 2019, about 1 in 6 (16.9%) people in Queensland had used an illicit drug in the past 12 months ('recent use')—a similar proportion to 2016 (16.8%) but an increase from 2007 (13.7%) (Table S.2). Between 2016 and 2019, the recent use of cocaine increased (from 2.1% to 3.6%) and the recent use of pain-killers and opioids for non-medical purposes decreased (from 4.1% to 2.7%) (Table S.29).

Cannabis is the most commonly used illicit drug and this has not changed over time; but the types of other illicit drugs used in the previous 12 months have varied over time (Table 1).

Table 1: Top 5 illicit drugs used in the previous 12 months, people aged 14 and over, 2001, 2016 and 2019

	2001	2016	2019
1	Cannabis (12.7%)	Cannabis (11.9%)	Cannabis (12.8%)
2	Meth/amphetamine ^(a) (2.9%)	Cocaine (2.1%)	Cocaine (3.6%)
3	Ecstasy (1.7%)	Ecstasy (2.1%)	Ecstasy (2.6%)
4	Tranquillisers/sleeping pills ^(a) (1.2%)	Meth/amphetamine ^(a) (1.5%)	Tranquillisers/sleeping pills ^(a) (1.5%)
5	Hallucinogens (0.8%)	Tranquillisers/sleeping pills ^(a) (1.3%)	Hallucinogens (1.3%)


(a) For non-medical purposes.


Note: Pain-killers and opioids have been excluded from the above table as there are no comparable data available for 2001 due to the changes that were made to the questionnaire in 2016.


At what age do people start smoking tobacco, drinking alcohol and using illicit drugs?

In 2019, the average age at which people first (Table S.31):

 smoked a full cigarette was 16.2 years

 tried drinking alcohol was 17.0 years

 tried an illicit drug excluding pharmaceuticals was 18.7 years

 tried an illicit drug, including pharmaceuticals for non-medical purposes was 19.4 years.

How many people were victims of alcohol and drug-related incidents?

In 2019, people in Queensland were about twice as likely to be a victim of an alcohol-related incident as a drug-related incident (21% compared with 9.2%) (tables S.50 and S.51). This pattern was evident for:

- verbal abuse (17.8% compared with 7.4%)
- physical abuse (5.0% compared with 2.2%)
- put in fear (10.8% compared with 5.5%).

How has support for harm-minimisation measures changed?

Support for measures related to restriction of e-cigarette use has grown since 2016, while support for measures such as increasing tax on tobacco and the stricter penalties for sale or supply to minors has declined (Table S.46).

Generally, people in Queensland were less likely to support measures to reduce alcohol-related harm, especially if they involved stricter restrictions on pubs, clubs and licensed venues, than they were in 2016. For example, 3 in 10 (31%) people supported reducing trading hours for pubs and clubs in 2019 compared with 4 in 10 (40%) in 2016 (Table S.47).

Two questions about policy measures related to illicit drugs and harm minimisation were added to the 2019 NDSHS:

- more than **1 in 2 (55%)** people supported allowing drug users to test their pills/drugs at designated sites to inform them of the purity and the substances the drug contained
- about **2 in 5 (43%)** people supported supervised drug consumption facilities/rooms (Table S.48).

Where can I get more information?

For more information, including the full report, factsheets, technical notes and supplementary tables, see <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/illicit-use-of-drugs/national-drug-strategy-household-survey-2019>