



National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019—Tasmania

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 Tasmania. Data are presented for people aged 14 and over. Statistically significant differences are difficult to detect for smaller jurisdictions such as Tasmania. Sometimes, even large apparent differences may not be statistically significant. This is particularly the case in breakdowns of small populations because the small sample size means that there is not enough power to identify even large differences as statistically significant. See [technical notes](#) for further information and definitions of smokers, e-cigarettes, alcohol risk guidelines and illicit drug use.

Quick facts

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

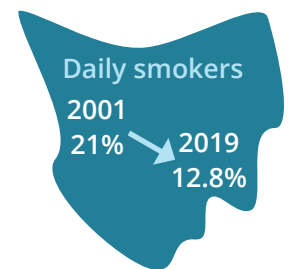
- **1 in 8** smoked tobacco daily
- **1 in 4** consumed 5 or more drinks in one sitting (at least monthly)
- **1 in 6** used an illicit drug in the past 12 months
- more than **half** supported testing of drugs/pills at designated sites.

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 Tasmania fell by about one-third between 2001 and 2019 (21% to 12.8%). This equates to about 60,000 people smoking daily in 2019. The proportion has fallen over the last 3 years (16.0% in 2016), but the decline was not statistically significant (Table S.5). In 2019, there were fewer current smokers in Tasmania compared with 2016 (14.1% compared with 18.8%) (Table S.29).



More people are using e-cigarettes

In 2019, there was a small, but non-significant increase in the proportion of people that had used e-cigarettes in their lifetime (10.3%, up from 7.2% in 2016) (Table S.10). Among smokers, the lifetime use of e-cigarettes increased by a small but non-significant amount from 27% in 2016 to 30% in 2019 (Table S.11).

How many people drink alcohol?

About 4 in 5 (83%) people had consumed alcohol in the previous 12 months (Table S.29). There were no statistically significant changes in the proportion of people drinking daily, weekly, monthly or less than monthly, or in the proportion of ex-drinkers, between 2016 and 2019 (Table S.12).



Most people in Tasmania drank alcohol at levels that do not exceed the lifetime risk and single occasion risk (at least monthly) guidelines for reducing the health risks from drinking alcohol. While the proportion exceeding either guideline did not change significantly between 2016 and 2019, both have declined since 2007 (tables S.21 and S.22).

How has illicit drug use changed?

In 2019, about 1 in 6 (16.5%) people in Tasmania had used an illicit drug in the previous 12 months ('recent use')—similar to 2016 (17.4%). No clear trend is evident since 2001, with the rate of illicit drug use in the previous 12 months remaining similar over this period (it was 14.4% in 2001). (Table S.23). Recent use of cocaine by people in Tasmania was lower than the national average (4.2% compared with 1.6%, the estimate for Tasmania has a relative standard error between 25% and 50% and should be interpreted with caution) (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). In 2019, pain-killers and opioids used for non-medical purposes (2.5%) were the second most commonly used illicit drug in the previous 12 months after cannabis (Table S.29).

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 (11.9%)	Cannabis (12.4%)	Cannabis (12.6%)
2	Meth/amphetamine ^(a) (2.1%)	Tranquillisers/sleeping pills ^(a) (2.9%)	Ecstasy (*2.4%)
3	Hallucinogens (*1.0%)	Hallucinogens (*2.2%)	Cocaine (*1.6%)
4	Injected drugs (*1.0%)	Meth/amphetamine ^(a) (*2.1%)	Tranquillisers/sleeping pills ^(a) (*1.3%)
5	Tranquillisers/sleeping pills ^(a) (*1.0%)	Ecstasy (*2.0%)	Methadone/Buprenorphine ^(a) (*0.9%)





* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

(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 16.4 years
-  tried drinking alcohol was 16.9 years
-  tried an illicit drug excluding pharmaceuticals was 19.7 years
-  tried an illicit drug, including pharmaceuticals for non-medical purposes was 20.7 years.

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

In 2019, people in Tasmania were about twice as likely to be a victim of an alcohol-related incident as a drug-related incident (21% compared with 9.5%) (tables S.50 and S.51). This pattern was evident for:

- verbal abuse (16.9% compared with 7.6%)
- physical abuse (5.1% compared with 2.2%)
- put in fear (10.2% compared with 6.3%).

How has support for harm-minimisation measures changed?

Support for measures to reduce tobacco-related harm remained high in 2019. Stricter enforcement of law against supplying minors (85%) had the most support and making it harder to buy in tobacco shops (60%) had the least support (Table S.46).

Generally, people in Tasmania were less likely to support measures to reduce alcohol-related harm if these involved stricter restrictions on pubs, clubs and licensed venues than they were in 2016. For example, 3 in 10 (30%) people supported reducing trading hours for pubs and clubs in 2019 compared with 4 in 10 (41%) 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 (44%)** 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>