



## National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019—Victoria

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 Victoria. 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 Victoria in 2019, among people aged 14 and over:

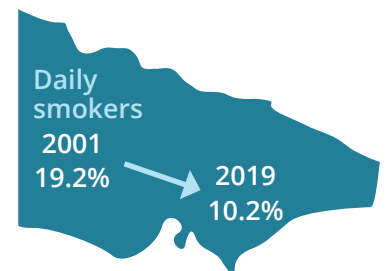
- just over **1 in 10** smoked tobacco daily
- **1 in 4** consumed 5 or more drinks in one sitting (at least monthly)
- **1 in 6** used an illicit drug in the past 12 months
- nearly **3 in 5** supported testing of drugs/pills at designated sites.

### 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 Victoria almost halved between 2001 and 2019 (from 19.2% to 10.2%) (Table S.5). This equates to about 600,000 people smoking daily in 2019 (Table S.7). The proportion has fallen over the last 3 years (11.7% in 2016), but the decline was not statistically significant.

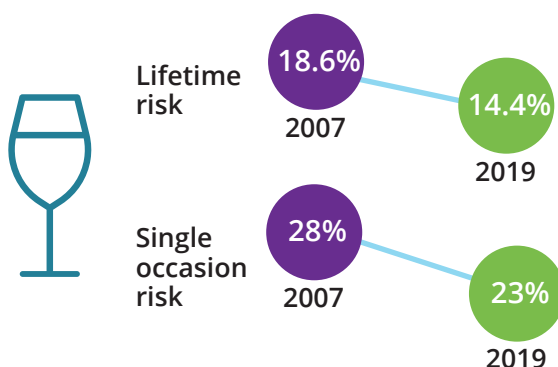


### More people are using e-cigarettes

In 2019, more people had used e-cigarettes in their lifetime (11.7%, up from 8.3% in 2016) and currently used e-cigarettes (2.4%, up from 0.9%) (Table S.10). Among smokers, current use of e-cigarettes rose from 3.9% in 2016 to 8.7% in 2019. (Table S.11).

### How many people drink alcohol?

About 3 in 4 (76%) people had consumed alcohol in the previous 12 months (Table S.29). There was no change in the proportion drinking daily or weekly between 2016 and 2019. However, the proportion of ex-drinkers increased from 7.0% to 8.8% (Table S.12). Overall, the proportion of people drinking daily in Victoria was lower than the national average (4.3% compared with 5.4%).

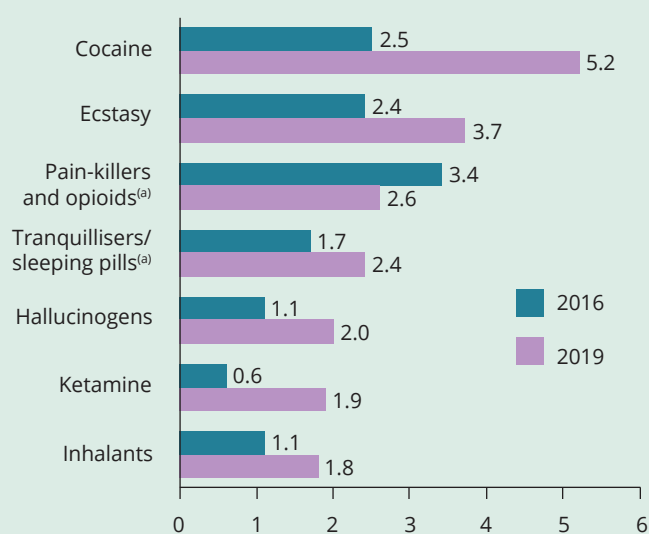


Most people in Victoria drank alcohol at levels that did not exceed the lifetime risk and single occasion risk (drinking at least monthly) guidelines for reducing the health risks from drinking alcohol. While the proportion of people exceeding either guideline was similar in 2016 and 2019, both have declined since 2007 (tables S.21 and S.22). The proportion of Victorians exceeding the lifetime risk guideline was lower than the national average (14.4% compared with 16.8%).

## How has illicit drug use changed?

In 2019, about 1 in 6 (17.1%) people in Victoria had used an illicit drug in the past 12 months ('recent use')—an increase from 2016 (15.0%) (Table S.23). Recent use of a number of illicit drugs changed between 2016 and 2019 (Figure 1). Recent use of a number of illicit drugs was also higher than the national average: ecstasy, cocaine, inhalants, ketamine and tranquillisers/sleeping pills used for non-medical purposes.

**Figure 1: Recent use of illicit drugs in Victoria that changed between 2016 and 2019, people aged 14 and over**



(a) For non-medical purposes.

Source: Table S.29.

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

In 2019, the average age at which people first:



smoked a full cigarette was 16.8 years



tried drinking alcohol was 17.2 years



tried an illicit drug excluding pharmaceuticals was 19.5 years



used a pharmaceutical for non-medical purposes was 25.3 years (Table S.31).

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

In 2019, people in Victoria were about 1.8 times as likely to be a victim of an alcohol-related incident as an illicit drug-related incident (22% compared with 12.3%) (tables S.50 and S.51). The proportion of people who were victims of illicit drug-related incidents increased from 10.1% in 2016 (Table S.50)—this reflected an increase in:

- verbal abuse (from 7.2% to 8.7%)
- physical abuse (from 1.6% to 2.3%)
- put in fear (from 7.1% to 8.7%).

## How has support for harm-minimisation measures changed?

Support for measures related to the restriction of e-cigarette use in public places (69%) and prohibiting their sale to people aged under 18 (79%) has grown since 2016, while support for making it harder to buy in tobacco shops has declined to 61% (Table S.46).

Generally, people in Victoria 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, almost 1 in 3 (32%) 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:

- nearly **3 in 5 (57%)** 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 **half (48%)** of 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>