

**Fw: FARE ANNUAL ALCOHOL POLL [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]**

Jake Matthews to: Colleen Krestensen, Rebecca Drew, Bronwen Dowse

19/04/2013 10:32

---

UNCLASSIFIED

FYI

the Brewers commissioned some analysis of the FARE poll, attached, which they will be using to inform ministerial correspondence on the issue. It is worth a read if you have time.

Jake

---

Jake Matthews  
Director  
Alcohol Policy & Programs Section  
(02) 6289 1875

----- Forwarded by Jake Matthews/PHD/Health on 19/04/2013 10:30 -----

From: Denita Wawn <Denita.Wawn@brewers.org.au>  
To: "Jake Matthews (Jake.Matthews@health.gov.au)" <Jake.Matthews@health.gov.au>,  
Date: 19/04/2013 10:08  
Subject: FARE ANNUAL ALCOHOL POLL [SEC=No Protective Marking]

---

Hi

Hope all well

Thought you may be interested in the attached document which is an analysis undertaken of the FARE Alcohol Poll yesterday.

We will be formally writing to the Minister today to outline our view of the poll and will be utilising this analysis.

Cheers

Denita Wawn  
Chief Executive Officer  
Brewers Association of Australia & New Zealand Inc.



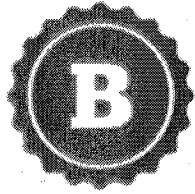
**BREWERS**  
ASSOCIATION

T: 61 (0)2 6295 7199  
M: 61 (0)416 145 233  
Email: [denita.wawn@brewers.org.au](mailto:denita.wawn@brewers.org.au)  
Website: [brewers.org.au](http://brewers.org.au)  
Post: PO Box 4021, Manuka, ACT, 2603  
Street: 1/27 Murray Cres, Manuka, ACT



Brewers Response to FARE Annual Alcohol Poll - 19 April 2013.docx

UNCLASSIFIED



**BREWERS  
ASSOCIATION**

19 April 2013

## **Brewers Response to FARE Alcohol Poll**

The 2013 FARE Annual Alcohol Poll released today reinforces existing evidence that the vast majority of alcohol consumers drink responsibly but once again FARE is seeking to demonise ordinary Australians rather than focusing on the minority that misuse alcohol.

To assist those who misuse alcohol we need to adopt evidence based targeted interventions that go to the root of the problem. We need to focus our existing resources to deliver programmes that make a difference to those who misuse alcohol. It would be great if FARE could return to its original mandate and use the \$36 million of beer drinkers money at its disposal to fund worthwhile initiatives rather than producing more research which FARE tries to utilise to justify that beer drinkers should pay more.

The Brewers Association is concerned with the veracity of the data as the report does not contain the poll questionnaire and ask such raises more questions than answers.

Below is an analysis of the poll undertaken by consultants on behalf of the Brewers Association.

### **Analysis of FARE Annual Alcohol Poll**

#### **Issues with FARE's Reporting of the Data**

The general press release alludes to an endemic problem which is far from the reality evident in the full data, and seeks to paint what is very occasional behaviour as widespread and pervasive among "millions of Australians". For example, FARE highlights how in 2013:

- "40% drank to get drunk and 31% felt guilty afterwards"
- "23% Australian drinkers "had not been able to stop drinking once they started and 26% couldn't remember what had happened the night before"

However, the data shows that of the minority 40% of drinkers who say that on occasions they drink to get drunk, many (29%) do so very infrequently, about once a month or less, and of those who have experienced remorse, only 3% do so on a weekly basis – hardly endemic! What is more, while 77% of Australian adults consume alcohol, the vast majority of drinkers only consumes alcohol 2 days per week or less (73%) and never drinks to get drunk (60%). All these patterns of actual widespread moderation have remained consistent in the last 3 years.

Of the minority who had been unable to stop drinking, only 4% do so on a weekly basis. And of those who were unable to remember the night before, only 1% experience this weekly.

FARE also reports that "an examination of preloading found more than half of all drinkers (57%) consume alcohol before going out", however the data reveals that once again this is a less than common occurrence: 43% of drinkers never do so or don't bother to go out to pubs or clubs or bars, and another 43% drink beforehand only rarely or sometimes.

Indeed, the data mostly reveals a nation of moderate drinkers, acting responsibly and teaching their children to act responsibly (see alternate reading below). However, FARE seeks to paint a nation out of control, and tar all Australians with the behaviour of a problematic minority.

In the full report, it is hard to judge the veracity of the data results as the responses are not accompanied by the questions – this itself should be cause for concern about the reported results. Only by seeing how questions were asked can the balance of the responses and impartiality of the survey be confirmed.

### **Alternative Reading of the Data**

The number one health concern in Australia related to lifestyle factors continues to be obesity, with more people concerned about "poor diet" (31%) and "lack of physical exercise" (23%), than tobacco (21%) or alcohol (21%). This is consistent with 2012 despite changing the style of question, when 54% of people felt "obesity" was the biggest health threat compared to only 17% of people seeing alcohol as the biggest threat and only 16% seeing tobacco as the biggest threat. Indeed, it is interesting that the poll has chosen to ask the question differently in 2013, presumably because they didn't get the result they wanted in 2012.

In terms of the most harmful drugs, most people see illicit substances as most harmful (47%), compared to alcohol (31%) and tobacco (18%).

There is a widespread perception that Australia has a problem with excess drinking or alcohol abuse, with 75% of people agreeing with this premise. However, this would appear to be mostly due to adverse media images of alcohol in society, and much less about personal experience. Key indicators of this disconnect include:

- Alcohol is consumed by 77% of Australians (down from 81% in 2012), the vast majority of which consume alcohol on only 2 days or less per week (73%) and never drink to get drunk or only get drunk about once a month or less (89%).

- Many drinkers (47%) only have one to two standard drinks on a typical occasion, and most drinkers typically consume alcohol at home (60%). Accordingly, the majority of drinkers (71%) are comfortable with the amount of alcohol they consume, and most people (47%) who go to pubs, clubs or bars at least occasionally are always or usually comfortable not drinking alcohol in those settings.
- While 35% of Australians who drink have seen no change in their alcohol consumption over the past year, 31% have reduced their consumption or given up altogether – 3 times the number (11%) who has increased consumption. This pattern has remained consistent since 2010.
- Most drinkers (83%) have never had anyone express concern about their drinking.
- Most people are aware of the harmful effects of alcohol, and this perhaps is a key factor in the widespread moderation. For example, most people know that drinking alcohol while pregnant (78%) or while breastfeeding (74%) can be harmful to the developing foetus or baby, and 65% believe pregnant women should not consume any alcohol. Furthermore, 70% believe it is harmful to give alcohol to anyone under the age of 18 years.
- Among parents or guardians of children (under 18) living at home, 79% consume alcohol in front their children, and most (60%) believe it's okay to do so in moderation of 1-2 standard drinks at most. Most parents (54%) also drink less now than before they had children.
- 67% of people believe it is okay for someone to get drunk, so long as it's only occasionally, with 58% saying this should happen about once a month or less. Only 9% believe it's okay to get drunk at least weekly.

While alcohol clearly does play a role in some social problems, these impacts appear to be happening in quite specific areas. Key indicators of this localisation include:

- Only 17% of drinkers have ever experienced someone expressing concern about their drinking, and is mostly relevant among 18-29 year olds and regular drinkers.
- Regular drinkers are most likely to have increased their alcohol consumption in the past year, but are also much less likely to feel comfortable about their level of consumption. This suggests there is a personal awareness they may have a problem. This pattern has remained consistent since 2011.
- 18-29 year olds are most likely to drink before going out for a drink. However, only 9% of this age group do so "always" and 45% drink less before going out than they do while out. What is more, for most young people this is more about saving money (57%) than it is about getting as drunk as possible (11%).

Measures of concern about alcohol among the populace routinely highlight 3 key demographic groups expressing these views: Women, 45-64 year olds (Baby boomers) and Non-drinkers. For example, women (78%), boomers (77%) and non-drinkers (84%) are most likely to think Australia has a problem with excessive drinking and related harms. They are also most likely to think more needs to be done to address alcohol-related harms. These patterns are consistent with 2011 and 2012.

Taken together, this highlights how strong concern about alcohol is localised in a single key demographic – older women who don't drink. For example, support for a ban on alcohol advertising before 8.30pm is highest among women (72%), boomers (78%) and non-drinkers (79%).

What is more, the data highlights how on many measures since 2011, the overall incidence of concern has fallen:

- Perception that alcohol is the most harmful drug has fallen by 6%
- Perception that Australia has a problem with excess drinking has fallen by 5%
- Perception that more needs to be done to reduce harms has fallen by 8%
- Perception that alcohol companies are not doing enough has fallen by 7%
- Perception that clubs and pubs are not doing enough has fallen by 4%
- Support for a ban on alcohol advertising before 8.30pm has fallen by 5%
- Support for an increase in tax to pay for health, education and treatment of alcohol related problems has fallen by 5%

Fw: FARE ANNUAL ALCOHOL POLL [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Jake Matthews to: Rebecca Drew

11/09/2013 11:07

UNCLASSIFIED

The reply. No other emails on the system

Jake

Jake Matthews  
Director  
Mental Health Promotion Section  
Mental Health Early Intervention & Prevention Branch  
(02) 6289 1875

----- Forwarded by Jake Matthews/MHDTD/Health on 11/09/2013 11:05 -----

From: Jake Matthews/PHD/Health  
To: Denita Wawn <Denita.Wawn@brewers.org.au>  
Date: 19/04/2013 10:20  
Subject: Re: FARE ANNUAL ALCOHOL POLL [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks Denita, as always, we appreciate the advance notice. An interesting read and happy to discuss. We observed the poll didn't generate as much media as anticipated.

Cheers

Jake

Jake Matthews  
Director  
Alcohol Policy & Programs Section  
(02) 6289 1875

Denita Wawn Hi Hope all well 19/04/2013 10:08:09

From: Denita Wawn <Denita.Wawn@brewers.org.au>  
To: "Jake Matthews (Jake.Matthews@health.gov.au)" <Jake.Matthews@health.gov.au>  
Date: 19/04/2013 10:08  
Subject: FARE ANNUAL ALCOHOL POLL [SEC=No Protective Marking]

Hi

Hope all well

Thought you may be interested in the attached document which is an analysis undertaken of the FARE Alcohol Poll yesterday.

We will be formally writing to the Minister today to outline our view of the poll and will be utilising this analysis.

Cheers

Denita Wawn  
Chief Executive Officer  
Brewers Association of Australia & New Zealand Inc.



**BREWERS**  
**ASSOCIATION**

T: 61 (0)2 6295 7199  
M: 61 (0)416 145 233  
Email: [denita.wawn@brewers.org.au](mailto:denita.wawn@brewers.org.au)  
Website: [brewers.org.au](http://brewers.org.au)  
Post: PO Box 4021, Manuka, ACT, 2603  
Street: 1/27 Murray Cres, Manuka, ACT

[attachment "Brewers Response to FARE Annual Alcohol Poll - 19 April 2013.docx" deleted by Jake Matthews/PHD/Health]

UNCLASSIFIED





**BREWERS  
ASSOCIATION**

19 April 2013

## **Brewers Response to FARE Alcohol Poll**

The 2013 FARE Annual Alcohol Poll released today reinforces existing evidence that the vast majority of alcohol consumers drink responsibly but once again FARE is seeking to demonise ordinary Australians rather than focusing on the minority that misuse alcohol.

To assist those who misuse alcohol we need to adopt evidence based targeted interventions that go to the root of the problem. We need to focus our existing resources to deliver programmes that make a difference to those who misuse alcohol. It would be great if FARE could return to its original mandate and use the \$36 million of beer drinkers money at its disposal to fund worthwhile initiatives rather than producing more research which FARE tries to utilise to justify that beer drinkers should pay more.

The Brewers Association is concerned with the veracity of the data as the report does not contain the poll questionnaire and ask such raises more questions than answers.

Below is an analysis of the poll undertaken by consultants on behalf of the Brewers Association.

### **Analysis of FARE Annual Alcohol Poll**

#### **Issues with FARE's Reporting of the Data**

The general press release alludes to an endemic problem which is far from the reality evident in the full data, and seeks to paint what is very occasional behaviour as widespread and pervasive among "millions of Australians". For example, FARE highlights how in 2013:

- "40% drank to get drunk and 31% felt guilty afterwards"
- "23% Australian drinkers "had not been able to stop drinking once they started and 26% couldn't remember what had happened the night before"

However, the data shows that of the minority 40% of drinkers who say that on occasions they drink to get drunk, many (29%) do so very infrequently, about once a month or less, and of those who have experienced remorse, only 3% do so on a weekly basis – hardly endemic! What is more, while 77% of Australian adults consume alcohol, the vast majority of drinkers only consumes alcohol 2 days per week or less (73%) and never drinks to get drunk (60%). All these patterns of actual widespread moderation have remained consistent in the last 3 years.

Of the minority who had been unable to stop drinking, only 4% do so on a weekly basis. And of those who were unable to remember the night before, only 1% experience this weekly.

FARE also reports that "an examination of preloading found more than half of all drinkers (57%) consume alcohol before going out", however the data reveals that once again this is a less than common occurrence: 43% of drinkers never do so or don't bother to go out to pubs or clubs or bars, and another 43% drink beforehand only rarely or sometimes.

Indeed, the data mostly reveals a nation of moderate drinkers, acting responsibly and teaching their children to act responsibly (see alternate reading below). However, FARE seeks to paint a nation out of control, and tar all Australians with the behaviour of a problematic minority.

In the full report, it is hard to judge the veracity of the data results as the responses are not accompanied by the questions – this itself should be cause for concern about the reported results. Only by seeing how questions were asked can the balance of the responses and impartiality of the survey be confirmed.

#### **Alternative Reading of the Data**

The number one health concern in Australia related to lifestyle factors continues to be obesity, with more people concerned about "poor diet" (31%) and "lack of physical exercise" (23%), than tobacco (21%) or alcohol (21%). This is consistent with 2012 despite changing the style of question, when 54% of people felt "obesity" was the biggest health threat compared to only 17% of people seeing alcohol as the biggest threat and only 16% seeing tobacco as the biggest threat. Indeed, it is interesting that the poll has chosen to ask the question differently in 2013, presumably because they didn't get the result they wanted in 2012.

In terms of the most harmful drugs, most people see illicit substances as most harmful (47%), compared to alcohol (31%) and tobacco (18%).

There is a widespread perception that Australia has a problem with excess drinking or alcohol abuse, with 75% of people agreeing with this premise. However, this would appear to be mostly due to adverse media images of alcohol in society, and much less about personal experience. Key indicators of this disconnect include:

- Alcohol is consumed by 77% of Australians (down from 81% in 2012), the vast majority of which consume alcohol on only 2 days or less per week (73%) and never drink to get drunk or only get drunk about once a month or less (89%).

- Many drinkers (47%) only have one to two standard drinks on a typical occasion, and most drinkers typically consume alcohol at home (60%). Accordingly, the majority of drinkers (71%) are comfortable with the amount of alcohol they consume, and most people (47%) who go to pubs, clubs or bars at least occasionally are always or usually comfortable not drinking alcohol in those settings.
- While 35% of Australians who drink have seen no change in their alcohol consumption over the past year, 31% have reduced their consumption or given up altogether – 3 times the number (11%) who has increased consumption. This pattern has remained consistent since 2010.
- Most drinkers (83%) have never had anyone express concern about their drinking.
- Most people are aware of the harmful effects of alcohol, and this perhaps is a key factor in the widespread moderation. For example, most people know that drinking alcohol while pregnant (78%) or while breastfeeding (74%) can be harmful to the developing foetus or baby, and 65% believe pregnant women should not consume any alcohol. Furthermore, 70% believe it is harmful to give alcohol to anyone under the age of 18 years.
- Among parents or guardians of children (under 18) living at home, 79% consume alcohol in front of their children, and most (60%) believe it's okay to do so in moderation of 1-2 standard drinks at most. Most parents (54%) also drink less now than before they had children.
- 67% of people believe it is okay for someone to get drunk, so long as it's only occasionally, with 58% saying this should happen about once a month or less. Only 9% believe it's okay to get drunk at least weekly.

While alcohol clearly does play a role in some social problems, these impacts appear to be happening in quite specific areas. Key indicators of this localisation include:

- Only 17% of drinkers have ever experienced someone expressing concern about their drinking, and is mostly relevant among 18-29 year olds and regular drinkers.
- Regular drinkers are most likely to have increased their alcohol consumption in the past year, but are also much less likely to feel comfortable about their level of consumption. This suggests there is a personal awareness they may have a problem. This pattern has remained consistent since 2011.
- 18-29 year olds are most likely to drink before going out for a drink. However, only 9% of this age group do so "always" and 45% drink less before going out than they do while out. What is more, for most young people this is more about saving money (57%) than it is about getting as drunk as possible (11%).

Measures of concern about alcohol among the populace routinely highlight 3 key demographic groups expressing these views: Women, 45-64 year olds (Baby boomers) and Non-drinkers. For example, women (78%), boomers (77%) and non-drinkers (84%) are most likely to think Australia has a problem with excessive drinking and related harms. They are also most likely to think more needs to be done to address alcohol-related harms. These patterns are consistent with 2011 and 2012.

Taken together, this highlights how strong concern about alcohol is localised in a single key demographic – older women who don't drink. For example, support for a ban on alcohol advertising before 8.30pm is highest among women (72%), boomers (78%) and non-drinkers (79%).

What is more, the data highlights how on many measures since 2011, the overall incidence of concern has fallen:

- Perception that alcohol is the most harmful drug has fallen by 6%
- Perception that Australia has a problem with excess drinking has fallen by 5%
- Perception that more needs to be done to reduce harms has fallen by 8%
- Perception that alcohol companies are not doing enough has fallen by 7%
- Perception that clubs and pubs are not doing enough has fallen by 4%
- Support for a ban on alcohol advertising before 8.30pm has fallen by 5%
- Support for an increase in tax to pay for health, education and treatment of alcohol related problems has fallen by 5%