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## **MEDIA RELEASE – ALCOHOL AWARENESS WEEK 2010**

**The Salvation Army’s annual Alcohol Awareness campaign looks this year at why people drink alcohol, have they tried to reduce the amount they are drinking and if they’ve been unsuccessful in that effort, why?**

**New Roy Morgan Research being released by The Salvation Army on Monday, 13 September, concludes the consumption and misuse of alcohol remain major elements of the Australian way of life. It reveals, for example, that 12% of people sometimes drink simply because they want to get drunk (2.1 million people), and that within this overall number one in three 18-24 year olds reported that they sometimes or often consume alcohol because they want to get drunk.**

**The research estimates more than 7% of people often or sometimes drink alcohol “in order to feel normal” (approximately 1.3 million people).**

**The research also shows that in the past year 26.5% (approximately 4.8 million people) have deliberately cut down on the amount of alcohol they were drinking at the one time. Nearly 28% (approximately 5 million people) deliberately went without alcohol for a week.**

**In an encouraging move, The Salvation Army says the new research shows that in the past 12 months, 16% (approximately 2.9 million people) deliberately changed their drinking habits so that at least one day a week was alcohol free.**

The Salvation Army’s new alcohol awareness research examined reasons why people drink alcohol, whether people have tried to cut down on alcohol and why they have failed if they’ve been unsuccessful.

Roy Morgan Research has carried out a major survey for The Salvation Army. The results may surprise many. The research will be launched on Monday, 13 September across Australia.

The Salvos’ annual national campaign is not an anti-alcohol initiative but seeks to create more debate in the community about the real impact alcohol is having on society.

**The new Roy Morgan Research estimates that:**

- 2.1 million people *sometimes* use alcohol because they want to get drunk (12.1%), with a further 334,000 people *often* using alcohol because they want to get drunk (1.8%).
- 975,000 people *sometimes* drink alcohol “in order to feel normal” (5.4%) with a further 397,000 people *often* drinking “in order to feel normal” (2.2%).

**When it comes to cutting down on alcohol consumption, The Salvation Army’s new research estimates that:**

- In the past 12 months 4.8 million people have deliberately cut down on the amount of alcohol they were drinking at the one time (26.5%).
- 475,000 people have tried unsuccessfully in the past 12 months to cut down on the amount of alcohol they were drinking at the one time (2.6%).
- 5 million people had deliberately gone for at least a week without alcohol in the past 12 months (27.9%) with 527,000 people trying unsuccessfully to go for a week without alcohol (2.9%).
- In the past 12 months 2.9 million people had deliberately changed their drinking so one day a week was alcohol free (16.3%), while 536,000 had tried unsuccessfully to do this (3.0%).

The Salvation Army’s Major Peter Sutcliffe said, “The new campaign is urging everyone to look at their lifestyles and ask more questions. Alcohol is so ingrained in society. It’s just everywhere. A key part of this initiative is to get people to stop and ask do we need to have alcohol all the time when we celebrate or when we have a meal or wind down. Just because people might drink out of habit, does that mean such consumption needs to continue? We’re asking people to stop for a moment and ask themselves more questions about their lifestyle choices.

“What we do know is that the social and economic costs of alcohol are simply enormous. This new research is designed to promote more debate about what is really happening. It is very helpful, we believe, to regularly have a really good look at why people are drinking and what are the drivers behind people’s drinking habits. The Salvation Army is extremely concerned about the negative impact of alcohol misuse on the community – on individuals and on families.

“We see the impact of alcohol abuse every day. People who are experiencing relationship breakdowns or family problems. Victims of violence and people who have lost their jobs. The research shows alcohol consumption remains very high. It’s remarkable to see how many people are actively using alcohol to relax or wind down ... many millions of people are doing exactly that. It’s alarming to think that millions of people use alcohol because they want to get drunk.

“Obviously this research shows trends based on a standard sample size. It shows that 32% of 18-24 year olds reported they often or sometimes consume alcohol because they want to get drunk.

**People have revealed all kinds of reasons for why they consume alcohol, and the research estimates that:**

- 6.1 million people *sometimes* drink alcohol because the people they were with were drinking (34%), and another 2.0 million (11.2%) *often* drink for this reason.
- 6.7 million people *sometimes* drink alcohol to go with a meal (36.9%), and another 3.6 million *often* drink to go with a meal (20%).
- 1.3 million people *sometimes* drink alcohol to stop feeling down or depressed (7.2%), and another 178,000 (1%) *often* drink for this reason.

- 975,000 people *sometimes* drink alcohol in order to feel normal (5.4%), and another 397,000 (2.2%) *often* drink for this reason.
- 7.8 million people *sometimes* drink alcohol to be sociable (43%), and another 4.4 million people *often* drink alcohol to be sociable (24.3%).

**The research also estimated that:**

- In the past 7 days 1.2 million people had alcohol every single day (7.1%).

Major Peter Sutcliffe added “It’s surprising to see more than 1.3 million people are sometimes or often drinking alcohol in order “to feel normal”. This obviously has to raise wider questions about what is really happening in our community.

“This new research clearly confirms alcohol is a key part of the way people celebrate with millions of people revealing that they link alcohol and celebrations together. We believe it is time to step back and ask more questions about this. Why is it that we feel alcohol must be part of celebrating and being sociable? Why is it so alcohol so entrenched in our society?”

“The fact that many people have now said they are taking action to cut down at some level is clearly encouraging. It is good to see close to three million people appear to have deliberately changed their drinking patterns so that one day a week is alcohol free.”

**Celebrations and habits also featured in the new research:**

- 26.4% reported that when they drink alcohol it was often because they were celebrating (approximately 4.8 million people) and 47.3% said it was sometimes because they were celebrating (approximately 8.6 million people).
- 43% said when they drink alcohol it was sometimes to be sociable (approximately 7.8 million people) and another 24.3% said it was often to be sociable (approximately 4.4 million people).
- 14% said that when they drink alcohol, it is sometimes just out of habit (approximately 2.6 million people) and another 7.6% said that is often just out of habit (approximately 1.4 million people).

The research indicates that 5.5% of people (approximately 989,000 people) had unsuccessfully tried cutting down their alcohol consumption in the last 12 months by either cutting down the amount they drink at one time, going for at least a week without drinking, or by having at least one alcohol-free day a week. Of these people who were unsuccessful in cutting down on their drinking in these ways, the most common reasons given were:

- It was a hard habit to break.
- They had been having a difficult time, or going through a stressful period.

Gerard Byrne, The Salvation Army’s Recovery Services Clinical Director said, “We continue to be concerned about the simple fact that there are huge issues that need to be addressed in the community. People are becoming more and more concerned about personal safety. We know issues with mental health are on the rise and it’s been clearly established that long-term heavy drinking is a known risk factor for depression and anxiety. And, of course, alcohol abuse has all kinds of links to gambling because it lowers inhibitions and impairs judgement.

“To some degree drinking alcohol is still treated as if it is quintessentially Australian. It’s vital we have more debate about alcohol – why we are drinking and how we can reduce the real impact of what’s happening. This major new research underlines there’s still much to be concerned about.

“Our message is that if you are struggling with alcohol, don’t give up trying to overcome your habits, because you can beat issues. Alcohol is insidious in the way it can creep up on a person. We need more education out there. It is not easy to break habits but it can be done. The community is starting to wake up to what is really happening and we believe the tide is starting to turn.

“There are definitely lots of people out there who want to get out of our current alcohol culture. A lot of people want to change their habits. We have to take much more responsibility and stop having the view that it’s someone else’s problem. It’s a problem for all of us and we can all do more.”

The Roy Morgan Research was a CATI telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of 629 people aged 14+ conducted in September 2010 for The Salvation Army. Anyone wanting to get more information should go to [www.salvos.org.au](http://www.salvos.org.au).

**Media enquiries to The Salvation Army media office, (02) 9266 9820 – diverts after hours.**

## The Roy Morgan Research At A Glance

- 12.1% of people sometimes drink because they want to get drunk. **(2.1 million people)**.
- 1.8% of people often drink because they want to get drunk. **(334,000 people)**.
- 5.4% of people sometimes drink alcohol “in order to feel normal”. **(975,000 people)**.
- 2.2% of people often drink alcohol “in order to feel normal”. **(397,000 people)**.
- In the last 12 months, 26.5% said they have deliberately cut down on the amount of alcohol they were drinking at the one time. **(4.8 million people)**.
- In the last 12 months, 2.6% said they had tried unsuccessfully to cut down on the amount of alcohol they were drinking at the one time. **(475,000 people)**.
- 27.9% said they had deliberately gone for at least a week without alcohol in the last 12 months. **(5 million people)**.
- 2.9% said that in the last 12 months they had tried unsuccessfully to go for a week without alcohol. **(527,000 people)**.
- 16.3% said they had deliberately changed their drinking in the past 12 months so one day a week was alcohol free. **(2.9 million people)**.
- 3.0% said that in the last 12 months they had tried unsuccessfully to change their drinking so that at least one day a week was alcohol-free. **(536,000 people)**.
- 34% of people in the survey said when they drink alcohol it was sometimes because the people they were with were drinking. **(6.1 million people)**.
- 11.2% said that when they drink alcohol, often it was because the people they were with were drinking. **(2 million people)**.
- 20% said when they drink alcohol, it’s often to go with a meal. **(3.6 million people)**.
- 36.9% said when they drink alcohol, it is sometimes to go with a meal. **(6.7 million people)**.
- 7.2% of people said when they drink alcohol, it is sometimes to stop them feeling down or depressed. **(1.3 million people)**.
- 24.3% of people said when they drink alcohol, often it’s to be sociable. **(4.4 million people)**.
- A further 43% of people said when they drink alcohol, sometimes it’s to be sociable. **(7.8 million people)**.
- 7.1% of people revealed in the past 7 days they had had alcohol every day – 7 days a week. **(1.2 million people)**.
- 38.3% of people sometimes use alcohol to relax or wind down. **(6.9 million people)**.
- 17.4% of people often use alcohol to relax or wind down. **(3.1 million people)**.
- 26.4% of people revealed when they drink alcohol, it was often because they were celebrating. **(4.8 million people)**.
- 47.3% of people revealed when they drink alcohol, it was sometimes because they were celebrating. **(8.6 million people)**.

- 24.3% of people in the survey revealed when they drink alcohol it is often to be sociable **(4.4 million people)**.
- 43% of people said when they drink alcohol, it is sometimes to be sociable. **(7.8 million people)**.
- 14% of people said when they drink alcohol, it is sometimes just out of habit. **(2.6 million people)**.
- 7.6% of people said when they drink alcohol, it is often out of habit. **(1.4 million people)**.
- People who said they had been unsuccessful in cutting down on their drinking – 1.2% said it was a hard habit to break. **(219,000 people)**. 1.2% said they were having a difficult time or going through a stressful period. **(210,000 people)**. 0.5% said they had been unsuccessful because they needed to conform socially and fit in **(83,000 people)**.
- 4.7% of people have had a drinking session in the past month where they consumed 15 drinks or more. **(876,000 people)**.
- 2% of people revealed they drink between 16 to 20 standard drinks a week. **(389,000 people)**.
- 0.8% of people revealed they drank more than 30 standard drinks a week. **(152,000 people )**.
- 5.6% of people revealed they drink alcohol 7 days a week. **(1 million people)**.
- 1.7% of people revealed they drink alcohol 6 days a week. **(312,000 people)**.

# Alcohol Awareness Study 2010

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In August 2010, Roy Morgan Research was commissioned by the Salvation Army to conduct its annual research into alcohol awareness amongst the Australian community.

In recent years this research has been conducted by Roy Morgan Research (except in 2007 when alcohol research was not undertaken by the Salvation Army). Each year the focus of the research is on different aspects of Australians' awareness of issues associated with the consumption of alcohol.

In 2010, the research questions examined the following key issues:

- The level and frequency of consumption of alcohol;
- The reasons or situations associated with consumption of alcohol; and
- Attempts to reduce the amount of alcohol consumed and/or the frequency of consumption.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

From August 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> 2010, Roy Morgan Research interviewed by telephone a nationally representative sample of 629 Australians aged 14 and over. The survey was a part of Roy Morgan Research's telephone omnibus survey, CATIBus.

The survey asked questions about alcohol, including:

- Respondents' alcohol consumption – the average number of standard drinks each week and the greatest number of standard drinks in one session in the last month (these questions are asked each year);
- Frequency of alcohol consumption – number of days per week on which alcohol was consumed, over the past 7 days and on average;
- How frequently (often, sometimes, never) a series of nominated reasons or situations were associated with respondents' consumption of alcohol;
- Respondents' success or otherwise in attempting to moderate their consumption of alcohol at some point over the last 12 months – by cutting down the amount of alcohol consumed at one time, going for at least a week without drinking alcohol and/or changing their drinking so that at least one day a week is alcohol free; and
- If unsuccessful in moderating their drinking (as outlined above), the reason/s why they were not successful.

The data were weighted to the Australian population aged 14 and over by age, sex and area.

This report outlines the key findings from these questions. It also considers some trend data collected over previous years regarding Australians' alcohol consumption.

While the following analysis includes discussion of results for 14-17 year olds, it should be noted that only 45 respondents were of this age group. As such, these results should be considered indicative rather than precise.

### **3. OUTLINE OF KEY FINDINGS**

#### **3.1 Australians' alcohol consumption**

Almost every year since 2002, Roy Morgan Research has asked a nationally representative sample of Australians their alcohol consumption habits, including the average number of standard drinks they drink each week and the greatest number of standard drinks they have drunk in one session in the last month (asked since 2004).

This enables us to consider Australians' drinking behaviour in 2010 and the gradual trends unfolding.

##### **3.1.1 Average number of standard drinks each week**

In 2010, 38% of Australians aged 14 and over had between one and five standard drinks on average each week, 23% had six or more standard drinks each week, and some 28% reported not drinking in an average week.

There has been a gradual downward trend in the proportion of Australians who drink six or more standard drinks on average each week (31% in 2002 compared with 23% in 2010). This trend is almost entirely driven by males. In 2002, 43% of male Australians drank on average six or more standard drink per week, reducing to 31% in 2010. For females, however, the corresponding figures were 17% in 2002 and 15% in 2010.

The proportion of Australians aged 14 and over who do not drink any alcoholic drinks on average each week has remained relatively stable in recent years (30% in 2002 compared with 28% in 2010).

The proportion of people who claimed to have never consumed alcohol had remained constant at around 5% to 6% since 2004, but jumped to 10.5% in 2010. Much of the increase in 2010 was driven by women, where the proportion that had never drunk alcohol rose from 6% to 13%. Such an increase in a single year is counter-intuitive, and the explanation for much of it appears to be related to the way respondents interpreted and spontaneously answered the question. Both the ‘none’ and ‘have never drunk alcohol at all’ are unprompted response categories (not read out) and a person who had never drunk alcohol before could accurately answer this question with either response. The cumulative total of these two response categories is very similar to that of the previous survey (39% in 2010, 37% in 2009), indicating that the change (if any) is only moderate since the last survey.

The tables below/overleaf provide a more detailed break-down by total Australians, males and females.<sup>1</sup>

Q1 On average, how many standard drinks do you drink each week?

Number of standard drinks	2002	2003	2004	Total	2006	2008	2009	2010
	n=614	n=609	n=1331	2005 n=1296	n=1332	n=653	n=687	n=629
Have Never Drunk Alcohol At All	2%	1%	6%	5%	5%	5%	6%	<b>11%</b>
None	30%	30%	29%	32%	30%	37%	31%	<b>28%</b>
1-5	38%	37%	35%	32%	36%	33%	37%	<b>38%</b>
6-10	15%	17%	15%	17%	15%	16%	14%	<b>14%</b>
11-15	9%	7%	7%	6%	6%	4%	6%	<b>5%</b>
16-20	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%	1%	1%	<b>2%</b>
21-25	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	<b>1%</b>
26-30	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	-
More than 30	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	<b>1%</b>
TOTAL 6+ DRINKS	31%	31%	29%	30%	28%	24%	24%	23%
Can't Say	-	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	<b>1%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report ‘0%’ means some responses, rounded down to zero and ‘-’ means no responses.

Q1 On average, how many standard drinks do you drink each week?

Number of standard drinks	Male							
	2002 n=299	2003 n=302	2004 n=665	2005 n=644	2006 n=654	2008 n=328	2009 n=349	2010 n=303
Have Never Drunk Alcohol At All	-	0%	4%	5%	3%	5%	7%	<b>9%</b>
None	23%	24%	21%	25%	24%	31%	23%	<b>21%</b>
1-5	33%	32%	33%	31%	32%	28%	37%	<b>40%</b>
6-10	18%	20%	17%	20%	19%	20%	18%	<b>17%</b>
11-15	13%	10%	10%	7%	9%	7%	7%	<b>8%</b>
16-20	4%	6%	7%	5%	4%	2%	1%	<b>3%</b>
21-25	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	<b>2%</b>
26-30	2%	3%	2%	2%	4%	2%	1%	-
More than 30	4%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%	<b>2%</b>
TOTAL 6+ DRINKS	43%	43%	40%	38%	41%	34%	32%	31%
Can't Say	1%	-	1%	1%	0%	2%	2%	<b>1%</b>

Q1 On average, how many standard drinks do you drink each week?

Number of standard drinks	Female							
	2002 n=315	2003 n=307	2004 n=666	2005 n=652	2006 n=678	2008 n=325	2009 n=338	2010 n=326
Have Never Drunk Alcohol At All	3%	2%	8%	5%	7%	5%	<b>6%</b>	<b>13%</b>
None	36%	36%	36%	39%	36%	43%	<b>39%</b>	<b>36%</b>
1-5	43%	41%	36%	34%	40%	38%	<b>36%</b>	<b>36%</b>
6-10	12%	15%	12%	14%	12%	12%	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>
11-15	4%	4%	4%	5%	2%	1%	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>
16-20	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>
21-25	-	-	1%	1%	0%	-	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>
26-30	-	-	-	1%	0%	-	-	-
More than 30	-	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	-	-
TOTAL 6+ DRINKS	17%	20%	19%	23%	16%	14%	17%	15%
Can't Say	-	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>

### 3.1.2 Greatest number of standard drinks per session in last month

In 2010, about 35% of all Australians aged 14 and over reported that the greatest number of standard drinks that they had consumed in one session in the last month was between one and three drinks (10% reported a maximum of one standard drink, 14% reported a maximum of two standard drinks and 11% reported a maximum of three standard drinks).

There are indications that an apparent downward trend among men in this area has now leveled off. In 2004, 40% of Australian men consumed six or more standard drinks in one session in the last month, steadily reducing to 30% by 2008. In 2009, and now in 2010, the corresponding figure was 31%.

Q2. During the last month, what is the greatest number of standard drinks that you have had in one session?

Number of standard drinks	Total					
	2004 n=1331	2005 n=1296	2006 n=1332	2008 n=653	2009 n=687	2010 n=629
<b>1</b>	10%	10%	9%	8%	15%	<b>10%</b>
<b>2</b>	14%	13%	13%	16%	14%	<b>14%</b>
<b>3</b>	11%	11%	9%	10%	11%	<b>11%</b>
<b>4</b>	9%	8%	8%	10%	8%	<b>9%</b>
<b>5</b>	5%	7%	5%	4%	5%	<b>5%</b>
<b>6</b>	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	<b>5%</b>
<b>7</b>	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	<b>1%</b>
<b>8</b>	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%	<b>3%</b>
<b>9</b>	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	<b>0%</b>
<b>10</b>	4%	6%	5%	3%	5%	<b>4%</b>
<b>11-12</b>	3%	3%	4%	3%	2%	<b>3%</b>
<b>13-14</b>	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	-
<b>15-16</b>	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	<b>2%</b>
<b>17-18</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	<b>1%</b>
<b>19-20</b>	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	<b>1%</b>
<b>21-25</b>	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	<b>1%</b>
<b>26-30</b>	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>
<b>More than 30</b>	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	<b>0%</b>
<b>TOTAL 6+ DRINKS</b>	26%	26%	26%	20%	23%	21%
<b>Can't say/ Refused</b>	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	<b>2%</b>
<b>None</b>	18%	20%	23%	25%	18%	<b>18%</b>
<b>Total Have Never Drunk Alcohol</b>	6%	5%	5%	5%	<b>6%</b>	<b>11%</b>

Q2. During the last month, what is the greatest number of standard drinks that you have had in one session?

Number of standard drinks	Male					
	2004 n=665	2005 n=644	2006 n=654	2008 n=328	2009 n=349	2010 n=303
1	7%	7%	8%	4%	13%	4%
2	11%	10%	11%	13%	15%	14%
3	9%	9%	10%	9%	9%	11%
4	10%	9%	8%	9%	8%	10%
5	5%	7%	6%	5%	5%	5%
6	10%	8%	6%	8%	6%	7%
7	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%
8	4%	3%	4%	6%	5%	4%
9	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%
10	5%	7%	7%	4%	5%	6%
11-12	5%	4%	5%	5%	2%	5%
13-14	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	-
15-16	4%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%
17-18	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
19-20	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%
21-25	1%	2%	2%	0%	1%	1%
26-30	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
More than 30	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%
<b>TOTAL 6+ DRINKS</b>	40%	35%	35%	30%	31%	31%
Can't say/ Refused	1%	1%	2%	3%	2%	2%
None	13%	16%	18%	21%	12%	15%
<b>Total Have Never Drunk Alcohol</b>	4%	5%	3%	5%	7%	9%

Q2. During the last month, what is the greatest number of standard drinks that you have had in one session?

Number of standard drinks	Female					
	2004 n=666	2005 n=652	2006 n=678	2008 n=325	2009 n=338	2010 n=326
1	13%	12%	10%	12%	16%	15%
2	17%	17%	16%	19%	14%	15%
3	12%	12%	9%	10%	13%	10%
4	8%	6%	8%	10%	8%	9%
5	6%	6%	5%	3%	6%	4%
6	4%	5%	6%	3%	4%	4%
7	2%	%	2%	2%	1%	1%
8	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
9	1%	1%	1%	-	1%	0%
10	2%	4%	3%	2%	4%	2%
11-12	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%
13-14	0%	1%	-	-	-	-
15-16	1%	2%	1%	-	1%	1%
17-18	-	-	0%	-	-	-
19-20	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%
21-25	0%	1%	0%	-	-	1%
26-30	-	0%	0%	-	-	-
More than 30	-	0%	0%	1%	-	-
<b>TOTAL 6+ DRINKS</b>	13%	18%	17%	10%	14%	12%
Can't say/ Refused	1%	1%	2%	2%	-	1%
None	22%	24%	27%	30%	23%	22%
<b>Total Have Never Drunk Alcohol</b>	8%	5%	7%	5%	6%	13%

**3.1.3 Number of days alcohol consumed during last week**

The survey indicated that 7% of Australians aged 14 years and above consumed alcohol daily over the previous seven days. Men (9%) were more likely than women (5%) to have consumed alcohol daily over this period. On average, Australians aged 14 and over consumed alcohol on two days per week.

Fifty percent of Australians aged 14 and over had not consumed any alcohol in the previous seven days, including 11% who had never drunk alcohol at all. Men were more likely than women to have consumed alcohol in the last seven days. Among men, 47% had not consumed alcohol in the previous seven days, including 9% who had never consumed alcohol. Among women, 54% had not consumed alcohol in the previous seven days, including 13% who had never consumed alcohol.

Q3. In the last seven days, how many days have you had any alcohol at all to drink?

	<b>Total</b> n=629	<b>Men</b> n=303	<b>Women</b> n=326
<b>0</b>	39%	38%	41%
<b>1</b>	16%	14%	17%
<b>2-3</b>	16%	17%	15%
<b>4-5</b>	9%	10%	7%
<b>6</b>	1%	2%	0%
<b>7</b>	7%	9%	5%
<b>Can't Say</b>	2%	2%	2%
<b>Total Never Drunk Alcohol</b>	11%	9%	13%
<b>Mean</b>	1.7	2.0	1.5

**3.1.4 Average number of days alcohol consumed per week**

Almost two in five (39%) Australians aged 14 years said that, on average, they consume no alcohol at all in any given week (including 11% who have never consumed alcohol).

The survey indicated that 6% of Australians aged 14 years and above consume alcohol on a daily basis in an average week. Men (8%) were more likely than women (3%) to consume alcohol on a daily basis (on average).

Q3a. On average, how many days would you drink any alcohol at all?

	<b>Total</b> n=629	<b>Men</b> n=303	<b>Women</b> n=326
<b>0</b>	28%	21%	35%
<b>1</b>	23%	25%	21%
<b>2-3</b>	21%	25%	17%
<b>4-5</b>	8%	7%	9%
<b>6</b>	2%	3%	1%
<b>7</b>	6%	8%	3%
<b>Can't Say</b>	2%	3%	2%
<b>Total Never Drunk Alcohol</b>	11%	9%	13%
<b>Mean</b>	1.8	2.2	1.5

**3.2 Reasons or situations leading to consumption of alcohol**

This section of the survey asked respondents how frequently (often, sometimes, never) the following reasons or situations were associated with their consumption of alcohol:

- Celebrating
- To stop feeling down or depressed
- Being sociable
- Just out of habit
- Wanting to get drunk
- Wanting to relax or wind down
- To go with a meal
- Because the people I'm with are drinking
- In order to feel normal.

### 3.2.1 Celebrating

‘Celebrating’ was often a reason for consuming alcohol for 26% of those surveyed. People aged 18-24 were substantially more likely (47%) to often consume alcohol due to celebrating. There was no discernable difference by gender.

Q4a. Celebrating: How often a reason for drinking?

	SEX		AGE - SUMMARY						
	TOTAL n=629	Men n=303	Women n=326	14-17 n=45	18-24 n=66	25-34 n=92	35-49 n=172	50-64 n=143	65 And Over n=111
<b>Often</b>	26%	27%	26%	19%	47%	33%	25%	20%	19%
<b>Sometimes</b>	47%	48%	47%	23%	39%	46%	56%	54%	41%
<b>Never</b>	14%	15%	13%	23%	7%	9%	11%	15%	22%
<b>Can't Say</b>	2%	2%	2%	8%	-	-	1%	4%	3%
<b>Total never drunk alcohol</b>	11%	9%	13%	27%	7%	12%	7%	7%	16%

### 3.2.2 To stop feeling down or depressed

‘To stop feeling down or depressed’ was often (1%) or sometimes (7%) a reason for consuming alcohol for 8% of those surveyed. This figure was broadly similar across gender and age groups.

Q4b. To stop feeling down or depressed: How often a reason for drinking?

	SEX		AGE - SUMMARY						
	TOTAL n=629	Men n=303	Women n=326	14-17 n=45	18-24 n=66	25-34 n=92	35-49 n=172	50-64 n=143	65 And Over n=111
<b>Often</b>	1%	0%	2%	-	3%	-	1%	1%	-
<b>Sometimes</b>	7%	7%	8%	4%	7%	7%	8%	7%	8%
<b>Never</b>	79%	83%	76%	61%	83%	81%	83%	82%	74%
<b>Can't Say</b>	2%	2%	2%	8%	-	-	1%	3%	3%
<b>Total never drunk alcohol</b>	11%	9%	13%	27%	7%	12%	7%	7%	16%

### 3.2.3 Being sociable

'Being sociable' was often a reason for consuming alcohol for 24% of respondents. People aged 18-24 were substantially more likely (36%) to often consume alcohol for this reason. Men were somewhat more likely (27%) to consume alcohol for this reason than women (21%).

Q4c. Being sociable: How often a reason for drinking?

	SEX		AGE - SUMMARY						
	TOTAL	Men	Women	14-17	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65 And Over
	n=629	n=303	n=326	n=45	n=66	n=92	n=172	n=143	n=111
<b>Often</b>	24%	27%	21%	14%	36%	30%	24%	23%	16%
<b>Sometimes</b>	43%	43%	43%	28%	38%	41%	51%	50%	33%
<b>Never</b>	20%	19%	20%	23%	19%	18%	17%	17%	29%
<b>Can't Say</b>	3%	2%	3%	8%	-	-	1%	3%	7%
<b>Total never drunk alcohol</b>	11%	9%	13%	27%	7%	12%	7%	7%	16%

### 3.2.4 Just out of habit

Consuming alcohol 'Just out of habit' was often (8%) or sometimes (14%) a reason for drinking among 22% of survey respondents. People aged 50 to 64 were substantially more likely than other age groups to drink for this reason, with 11% doing so often, and a further 19% doing so sometimes.

Q4d. Just out of habit: How often a reason for drinking?

	SEX		AGE - SUMMARY						
	TOTAL	Men	Women	14-17	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65 And Over
	n=629	n=303	n=326	n=45	n=66	n=92	n=172	n=143	n=111
<b>Often</b>	8%	9%	7%	10%	10%	2%	6%	11%	9%
<b>Sometimes</b>	14%	18%	11%	2%	10%	10%	18%	19%	15%
<b>Never</b>	65%	63%	67%	54%	73%	76%	68%	58%	57%
<b>Can't Say</b>	3%	2%	3%	8%	-	1%	2%	5%	3%
<b>Total never drunk alcohol</b>	11%	9%	13%	27%	7%	12%	7%	7%	16%

### 3.2.5 Wanting to get drunk

'Wanting to get drunk' was often a reason for consuming alcohol for 2% of respondents, with a further 12% sometimes drinking for this reason. The age groups substantially over-represented in drinking for this reason were 14-17 year olds (9% often, 15% sometimes) and 18-24 year olds (5% often, 27% sometimes). While there was no significant difference by gender in terms of often drinking for this reason, men (15%) were more likely than women (9%) to sometimes consume alcohol in order to get drunk.

Q4e. Wanting to get drunk: How often a reason for drinking?

	SEX		AGE - SUMMARY						
	TOTAL	Men	Women	14-17	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65 And Over
	n=629	n=303	n=326	n=45	n=66	n=92	n=172	n=143	n=111
<b>Often</b>	2%	2%	1%	9%	5%	-	1%	1%	1%
<b>Sometimes</b>	12%	15%	9%	15%	27%	24%	10%	4%	3%
<b>Never</b>	74%	73%	75%	41%	61%	64%	82%	85%	78%
<b>Can't Say</b>	2%	2%	2%	8%	-	-	1%	3%	2%
<b>Total never drunk alcohol</b>	11%	9%	13%	27%	7%	12%	7%	7%	16%

### 3.2.6 Wanting to relax or wind down

'Wanting to relax or wind down' was often a reason for consuming alcohol for 17% of respondents, with a further 38% sometimes drinking for this reason. Men (19% often, 42% sometimes) were somewhat more likely to do so than women (16% often, 35% sometimes). The age groups most likely to often consume alcohol for this reason were 25-34 years (22%), 35-49 years (21%) and 50-64 years (21%).

Q4f. Wanting to relax or wind down: How often a reason for drinking?

	SEX		AGE - SUMMARY						
	TOTAL	Men	Women	14-17	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65 And Over
	n=629	n=303	n=326	n=45	n=66	n=92	n=172	n=143	n=111
<b>Often</b>	17%	19%	16%	2%	15%	22%	21%	21%	9%
<b>Sometimes</b>	38%	42%	35%	20%	44%	38%	44%	36%	35%
<b>Never</b>	32%	29%	34%	44%	34%	28%	26%	32%	38%
<b>Can't Say</b>	2%	2%	2%	8%	-	-	2%	3%	2%
<b>Total never drunk alcohol</b>	11%	9%	13%	27%	7%	12%	7%	7%	16%

**3.2.7 To go with a meal**

Consuming alcohol ‘To go with a meal’ was often (20%) or sometimes (37%) nominated as a reason for drinking by 57% of respondents. The incidence of this behaviour increased in reasonably linear fashion with age up to the 50-64 year age group (29% often, 34% sometimes). There was no notable difference in behaviour by gender.

Q4g. To go with a meal: How often a reason for drinking?

	SEX		AGE - SUMMARY						
	TOTAL n=629	Men n=303	Women n=326	14-17 n=45	18-24 n=66	25-34 n=92	35-49 n=172	50-64 n=143	65 And Over n=111
<b>Often</b>	20%	20%	21%	5%	16%	12%	23%	29%	24%
<b>Sometimes</b>	37%	40%	34%	10%	39%	47%	41%	34%	34%
<b>Never</b>	30%	30%	30%	50%	38%	30%	29%	26%	24%
<b>Can't Say</b>	2%	2%	2%	8%	-	-	1%	4%	3%
<b>Total never drunk alcohol</b>	11%	9%	13%	27%	7%	12%	7%	7%	16%

**3.2.8 Because the people I'm with are drinking**

Consuming alcohol ‘Because the people I'm with are drinking’ was often (11%) or sometimes (34%) a reason for drinking among 45% of survey respondents. Men (51%) were more likely than women (40%) to often or sometimes consume alcohol for this reason. This behaviour was more prevalent among 18-24 year olds, with 56% often (15%) or sometimes (41%) consuming alcohol for this reason. Those aged 25-34 were only moderately likely (9%) to often drink for this reason, but were substantially more likely (42%) to sometimes drink for this reason.

Q4h. Because the people I'm with are drinking: How often a reason for drinking?

	SEX		AGE - SUMMARY						
	TOTAL n=629	Men n=303	Women n=326	14-17 n=45	18-24 n=66	25-34 n=92	35-49 n=172	50-64 n=143	65 And Over n=111
<b>Often</b>	11%	14%	9%	16%	15%	9%	11%	11%	9%
<b>Sometimes</b>	34%	37%	31%	20%	41%	42%	35%	33%	27%
<b>Never</b>	42%	39%	44%	29%	37%	36%	45%	46%	45%
<b>Can't Say</b>	3%	2%	3%	8%	-	2%	2%	4%	3%
<b>Total never drunk alcohol</b>	11%	9%	13%	27%	7%	12%	7%	7%	16%

**3.2.9 In order to feel normal**

Drinking ‘in order to feel normal’ was often (2%) or sometimes (5%) a reason for consuming alcohol for 7% of survey respondents. The incidence of this behaviour was reasonably consistent across age groups, with the notable exception of 14-17 year olds, where 10% reported often drinking for this reason. This result should, however, be treated with caution due to the small sample size involved. There was no notable difference in behaviour by gender.

Q4i. In order to feel normal: How often a reason for drinking?

	SEX		AGE - SUMMARY						
	TOTAL n=629	Men n=303	Women n=326	14-17 n=45	18-24 n=66	25-34 n=92	35-49 n=172	50-64 n=143	65 And Over n=111
<b>Often</b>	2%	3%	2%	10%	3%	1%	1%	3%	1%
<b>Sometimes</b>	5%	5%	6%	5%	7%	4%	5%	6%	6%
<b>Never</b>	80%	82%	78%	51%	83%	84%	87%	82%	74%
<b>Can't Say</b>	2%	2%	2%	8%	-	-	1%	3%	3%
<b>Total never drunk alcohol</b>	11%	9%	13%	27%	7%	12%	7%	7%	16%

**3.2.10 Reasons for Drinking Alcohol: Summary Grid**

Q4. When you drink alcohol, how often do the following reasons apply to you?

	n	Often	Sometimes	Never	Can't Say	Never drunk alcohol
<b>CELEBRATING</b>	629	26%	47%	14%	2%	11%
<b>BEING SOCIABLE</b>	629	24%	43%	20%	3%	11%
<b>TO GO WITH A MEAL</b>	629	20%	37%	30%	2%	11%
<b>WANT TO RELAX OR WIND DOWN</b>	629	17%	38%	32%	2%	11%
<b>BECAUSE THE PEOPLE I'M WITH ARE DRINKING</b>	629	11%	34%	42%	3%	11%
<b>JUST OUT OF HABIT</b>	629	8%	14%	65%	3%	11%
<b>IN ORDER TO FEEL NORMAL</b>	629	2%	5%	80%	2%	11%
<b>WANTING TO GET DRUNK</b>	629	2%	12%	74%	2%	11%
<b>TO STOP FEELING DOWN OR DEPRESSED</b>	629	1%	7%	79%	2%	11%

### **3.3 Moderation of alcohol consumption behaviour**

The survey asked respondents whether they had attempted to moderate their alcohol consumption in one or more of the manners listed below within the previous 12 months, and whether or not they were successful in that attempt:

- Deliberately cutting down the amount of alcohol they drink at the one time
- Deliberately going for at least a week without drinking any alcohol
- Deliberately changing their drinking so that at least one day a week is alcohol free

In addition, those who were unsuccessful in an attempt were asked to nominate the main reason or reasons for their lack of success.

#### **3.3.1 Attempts to moderate alcohol consumption**

More than one in three (37%) stated that they had successfully moderated their alcohol consumption in one or more of the manners specified. Men (40%) were more likely than women (35%) to have moderated their alcohol consumption at some point in the previous 12 months.

Only 6% of respondents reported that they were unsuccessful in an attempt to moderate their alcohol consumption. Detailed demographic examination of these respondents was not possible, due to the small sample size involved (34 individuals). However, the following table demonstrates that these 34 cases were spread across those aged 18 and over, and across both males and females.

	SEX			AGE - SUMMARY					
	TOTAL n= 629	Men n=303	Women n=326	14-17 n=45	18-24 n=66	25-34 n=92	35-49 n=172	50-64 n=143	65 And Over n=111
<b>Total successfully cut down drinking in last 12 months</b>	238	126	112	11	30	36	82	49	30
	37%	40%	35%	23%	45%	36%	47%	35%	27%
<b>Total unsuccessfully cut down drinking in last 12 months</b>	34	19	15	-	8	5	11	7	3
	6%	6%	5%		12%	5%	7%	5%	3%

Interestingly, among those who were unsuccessful in moderating their alcohol consumption, 92% (31 individuals) also reported successfully moderating their alcohol consumption at some point during the same period.

When examined by individual survey question, it emerged that the moderating behaviour that these individuals were least likely to have also been successful in achieving was changing their drinking to achieve at least one alcohol free day (only 61% of those unsuccessful in achieving an alcohol free day were also successful in achieving an alcohol free day at another attempt during the last 12 months.).

Q5. For each of the following, please say whether you have done any of these things in the last 12 months

	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Tried Unsuccessfully To Cut Down On The Amount Of Alcohol You Drink At The One Time?</b>	<b>Tried Unsuccessfully To Go For At Least A Week Without Drinking Any Alcohol?</b>	<b>Tried Unsuccessfully To Change Your Drinking So That At Least One Day A Week Is Alcohol-Free?</b>
	n=629	n=16	n=18	n=19
<b>Deliberately Cut Down On The Amount Of Alcohol You Drink At The One Time?</b>	27%	94%	76%	76%
<b>Deliberately Gone For At Least A Week Without Drinking Any Alcohol?</b>	28%	82%	84%	69%
<b>Deliberately Changed Your Drinking So That At Least One Day A Week Is Alcohol-Free?</b>	16%	72%	59%	61%

The degree to which respondents nominated both successful and unsuccessful attempts at moderating their drinking over the period is noteworthy, suggesting that the process of moderating drinking has many diverse steps, not all of which are successful. Given this pattern, future investigation in this area could include additional questions designed to gauge the relative proportion of successful/unsuccessful attempts over the period and/or the degree to which permanent/ongoing moderation of drinking behaviour had been achieved.

More than half (52%) of Australians aged 14 years and over had not attempted to moderate their alcohol consumption in the manners specified during the last 12 months. There was no significant difference in behaviour by gender (men 51%, women 52%). Older Australians were somewhat less likely than average to have attempted to moderate their alcohol consumption in the manners specified, with 59% of those aged 50-64 years, and 57% of those aged 65 or above, making no attempt to do so in the last 12 months.

Q5. For each of the following, please say whether you have done any of these things in the last 12 months.

	SEX			AGE - SUMMARY					65 And Over n=111
	TOTAL n= 629	Men n=303	Women n=326	14-17 n=45	18-24 n=66	25-34 n=92	35-49 n=172	50-64 n=143	
<b>None of these (alcohol moderation approaches) attempted</b>	52%	51%	52%	50%	48%	51%	45%	59%	57%

### 3.3.2 Reason/s for lack of success in moderating alcohol consumption

The ability to examine the reasons for unsuccessful attempts at moderating alcohol consumption was limited by the small sample size involved (34 individuals). Percentages provided in this section of the report refer to a base of these 34 respondents, rather than the sample as a whole.

The most common reasons nominated were ‘Hard to break the habit’ (22%, 8 respondents) and ‘Was having a difficult time/Going through a stressful period’ (21%, 7 respondents).

Q6. You mentioned you have tried unsuccessfully to cut down your drinking. Why were you unsuccessful?

Filter: TOTAL UNSUCCESSFULLY CUT DOWN DRINKING

	TOTAL	
	n=34	%
<b>Hard To Break The Habit</b>	8	22%
<b>Was Having A Difficult Time/ Going Through A Stressful Period</b>	7	21%
<b>I Forget/ Forgot About My Goal</b>	3	9%
<b>The Need To Conform Socially/ Fit In</b>	3	8%
<b>A Smaller/ Lesser Amount Of Alcohol Wasn't Enough</b>	2	6%
<b>Consciously Decided Would Prefer To Drink</b>	2	6%
<b>Pressure From Friend/ Peer Pressure</b>	-	
<b>Other</b>	7	21%
<b>Can't Say</b>	4	11%

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Consumption - and misuse - of alcohol remains a major element of the Australian way of life, but there are indications that some moderation of drinking behaviour is occurring.

There has been a gradual downward trend over the course of the Salvation Army's Alcohol Awareness Surveys – driven almost entirely by males - in the proportion of Australians drinking six or more standard drinks on average each week. This proportion is now 23% overall, and 31% for males (down from 31% and 43% respectively in 2002).

This encouraging statistic is mitigated by the finding that a downward trend among males in the greatest number of drinks per session has now leveled off. In 2010, 31% of Australian males aged 14 years and over report consuming more than six standard drinks in one session in the previous month.

The survey indicates that 7% of Australians aged 14 years and over consumed alcohol daily in the week prior to the survey period, with 9% of men drinking in this manner. This corresponded reasonably closely to the estimated frequency of consuming alcohol in an average week, where 6% of Australians aged 14 years and over, and 8% of men, reported that they usually consumed alcohol on a daily basis.

The integration of alcohol and social interaction remains very strong. 'Celebrating' (73%) and 'Being sociable' (67%) were often or sometimes a reason for consuming alcohol among those surveyed. More than half (55%) often or sometimes consume alcohol because the people they were with were drinking.

Disturbingly, 'Wanting to get drunk' was nominated as a reason for drinking by 14% of Australians aged 14 years and over. This statistic is higher in the younger age-brackets, where 24% of 14-17 year olds and 32% of 18-24 year olds reported that they often or sometimes consumed alcohol for this reason (though caution in relation to the small sample size of 14-17 year olds is essential). In addition, 8% of respondents – broadly consistent across gender and ages – reported often or sometimes drinking to stop feeling down or depressed and 7% (10% among 14-17 year olds) reported often or sometimes consuming alcohol in order to feel normal.

On the other hand, there is evidence that people appear to be recognising the negative impacts of over-consumption of alcohol and making changes – or at least attempting to make changes – to their drinking behaviour. More than a third (37%) of those surveyed reported successfully moderating their drinking at some point over the previous 12 months by cutting down the amount of alcohol they drink at the one time, going for at least a week without any alcohol or ensuring at least one day a week was alcohol free. Only 6% reported they were unsuccessful in such an attempt and, of these, 92% were also successful at another alcohol reduction attempt or attempts.