

Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia

# DASSA Statistical Bulletin

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Alcohol and Other Drug Use in South Australia:  
Results from the 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey

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Government  
of South Australia

SA Health



***Alcohol and Other Drug Use in South Australia: Results from the 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey<sup>1</sup>***

**Background**

The National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS) is a triennial survey that provides representative, cross-sectional data on alcohol, tobacco and other drug use in Australia. The NDSHS also assesses community attitudes towards alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, as well as awareness of and community support for various drug-related policies.

This bulletin summarises the South Australian findings of the 2016 NDSHS for **alcohol, tobacco and other drugs<sup>2</sup>**, including prevalence of use and associated harms and where possible, compares data with previous iterations of the NDSHS and with national data. In 2016, 23,772 people responded to the survey nationally; 2,251 in South Australia.

**Key findings**

***Alcohol and other drug use: South Australia compared with Australia***

- The proportion of daily drinkers in South Australia is identical to the national figure (5.9% in 2016).
- Similar proportions of South Australians and Australians in 2016 consumed alcohol both at levels that increase the risk of disease or injury over a lifetime (15.8% and 17.1% respectively), and for alcohol consumption at levels that increase the risk of injury from a single occasion of drinking at least monthly (24.6% compared with 25.5% of Australians).
- The proportion of daily smokers in South Australia has decreased over time, from 16.5% in 2004 to 10.8% in 2016) and is lower than the Australian proportion (12.2% in 2016). Daily smoking among Australians was relatively unchanged from 2013 (12.8%), although there has been a significant downward trend from 2010 (15.1%).
- The proportion of South Australians reporting use of at least one illicit drug in the last 12 months did not change between 2013 and 2016 (15.7% in both years). This is similar to that reported nationally (15% and 15.6%).
- The proportion of South Australians reporting recent cannabis use was stable between 2013 and 2016 (11% and 10.7%) and similar to that reported nationally (10.2% and 10.4%).
- The proportion of South Australians reporting recent use of meth/amphetamine decreased between 2013 (2.2%) and 2016 (1.9%) and is only slightly higher than the national proportion, which decreased significantly between 2013 (2.1%) and 2016 (1.4%).
- The proportions of South Australians who reported recent use of ecstasy and cocaine are lower than the national figures: 1.6% and 2%, respectively, compared with 2.2% and 2.5%.

***Alcohol***

**Consumption**

- The proportion of South Australians drinking alcohol in the past 12 months has decreased by nearly seven percentage points since 2004 (85.3% to 78.6% in 2016). In addition, both daily and weekly drinking have decreased significantly since 2004 (from 8.9% to 5.9%, and from 41.3% to 35.8%, respectively).
- In 2016, the average age of initiation for alcohol consumption was 15.9 years among South Australian recent and ex-drinkers aged 14-24 years. This was similar to 2013 (15.5 years).

**Single occasion risk**

- The proportion of South Australians who drank at levels that put them at risk of injury from a single occasion of drinking (had more than 4 drinks in an episode of drinking) at least monthly did not change significantly between 2013 (27.8%) and 2016 (25.4%).

- There was a significant decrease in the proportion of South Australian men who drank at risky levels at least weekly, from 22.1% in 2013 to 17.8% in 2016.
- Between 2013 and 2016 the proportion of South Australians risky drinking at least monthly decreased significantly among those aged 40-49 years (from 38.1% to 24.6%) and increased significantly among those aged 50-59 years (from 25.2% to 33.1%).

#### Lifetime risk

- The proportion of South Australians who consumed alcohol at levels that put them at risk of alcohol-related injury or disease over their lifetime (on average had more than 2 drinks per day) decreased from 18.5% in 2013 to 15.8% in 2016. The proportion of men drinking at this level significantly decreased: from 28.1% to 21.7%.

#### Young drinkers

- South Australians aged 12-17 years were more likely to have never consumed alcohol than those aged 18 years and over (78.3% vs. 10.8% in 2016). There was an increase in the proportion of non-drinkers aged 12-17 years between 2013 (68.1%) and 2016 (78.3%).

#### Drinking behaviour and attitudes

- Over one-third (36%) of South Australians reported that bottled wine was the alcoholic drink consumed most often, followed by regular beer (18%) and bottled spirits and liqueurs (15%). Men preferred regular beer (32% vs. 4.1%); women preferred bottled wine (52% vs. 21%) and premixed drinks (12% vs. 5.1%).
- Young drinkers (12-17 years) usually drank premixed spirits in a bottle or can (46%), cider (20%) and bottled spirits and liqueurs (13%).
- Nearly 40% of South Australians had their first alcoholic drink supplied by a friend or acquaintance, followed by a parent (22%); almost 12% purchased their first alcoholic drink themselves.
- Young drinkers (12-17 years) were more likely to obtain alcohol from friends or acquaintances than those over the age of 18 (49% vs. 2.4%) and none reported buying it themselves (vs. 88% of those aged 18 years and over). Almost one-quarter (24%) of underage drinkers 'usually' obtained alcohol from their parents; this is much lower than in 2013 (37%).

#### Alcohol-related harms

- Almost one-quarter (23%) of South Australians in the past year had been the victim of an alcohol-related incident, predominantly verbal abuse (19%). Almost 7% had experienced physical abuse 11% were put in fear.
- South Australians aged 20-29 years had the largest proportion of any age group that had been victims of at least one alcohol-related incident (36%), followed by 14-19 year olds (29%).

#### **Tobacco**

- The proportion of daily smokers in South Australia decreased from 12.8% in 2013 to 10.8% in 2016, with decreases among all age groups (significant only for those aged 65-74 years, from 10.4% to 5.4%).
- In 2016, the average age of initiation was 16.2 years among South Australian smokers aged 14-24 years. This is significantly older than reported in 2013 (15.8 years).

#### **Illicit drugs**

##### Recent use of illicit drugs:

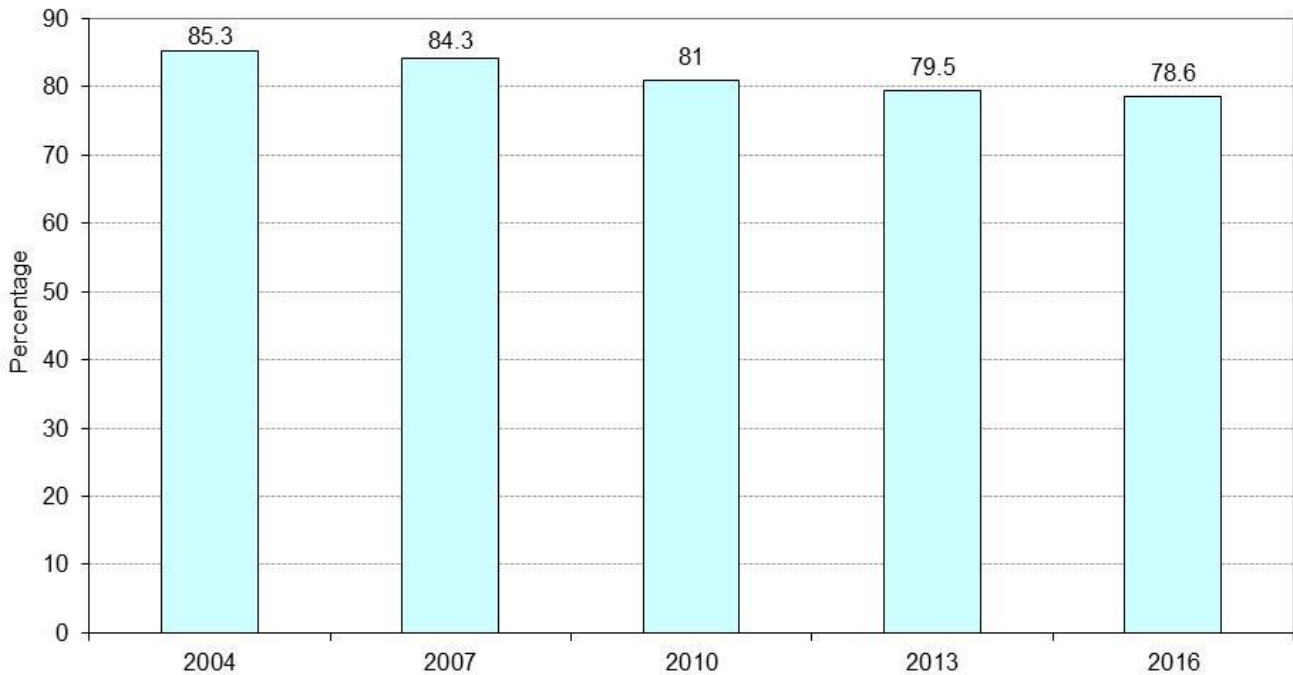
- The proportion of South Australians aged 14-19 years and 20-29 years who reported recent illicit drug use was higher than other age groups in South Australia.
- In 2016, the average age of initiation of any illicit drug was 16.7 years among South Australians aged 14-29 years. This was not significantly different than in 2013 (16.1 years).
- The proportion of South Australians using cannabis remained stable (10.7% in 2016 and 11% in 2013).
- Recent misuse of pharmaceuticals was reported by 5.5% of South Australians in 2016, compared with 4.8% nationally. Recent use of pain-killers/analgesics and opioids was reported by 4.3% of South Australians in 2016, compared with 3.6% nationally.
- Crystal meth/amphetamine continued to be the main form of meth/amphetamine used among Australians in 2016 (57% of recent users). This was also the case for South Australian meth/amphetamine users, with crystal/ice being the main form used in 2016 (78.7%; a non-significant increase from 2013: 63.9%).

## ALCOHOL

### Alcohol use – aged 14 years and older

Recent alcohol use in South Australia has decreased by six percentage points since 2004 (Figure 1). In 2016, 78.6% of South Australians had consumed at least one full serve of alcohol in the last 12 months; the national figure was slightly lower at 77.5%.

**Figure 1: The percentage of South Australians aged 14 years and over who reported recent\* use of alcohol, 2004-2016**

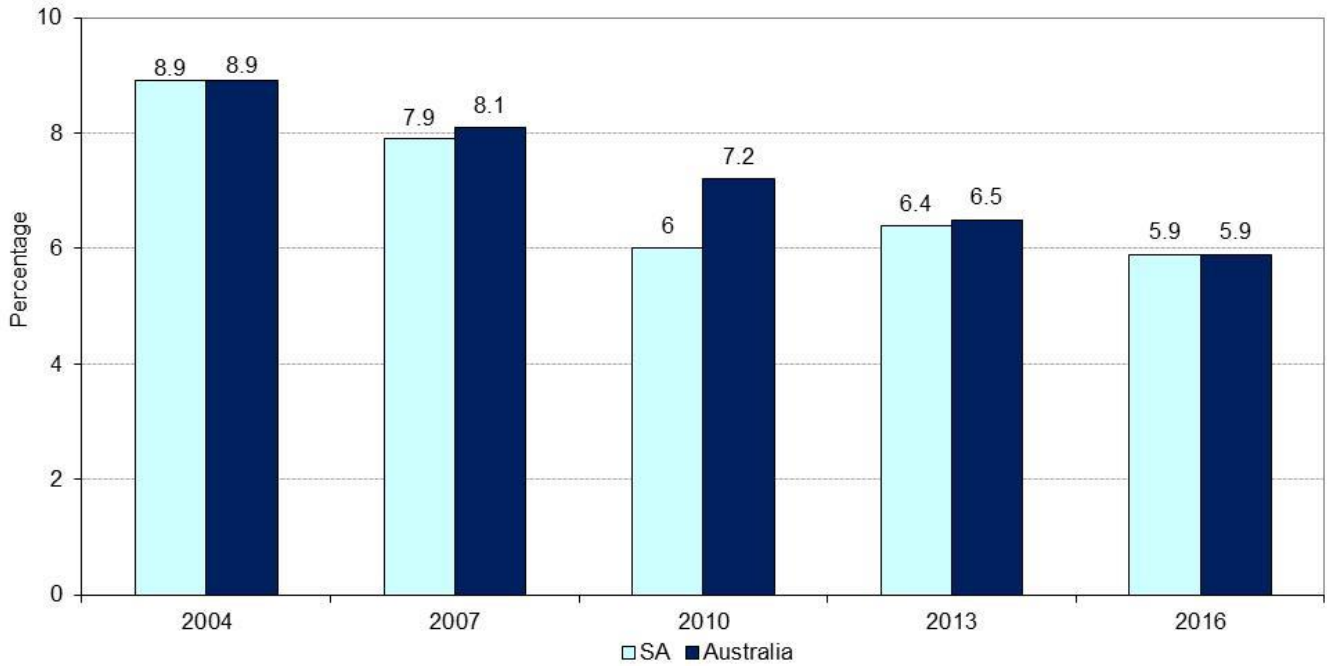


\* Had consumed at least one full serve of alcohol in the last 12 months

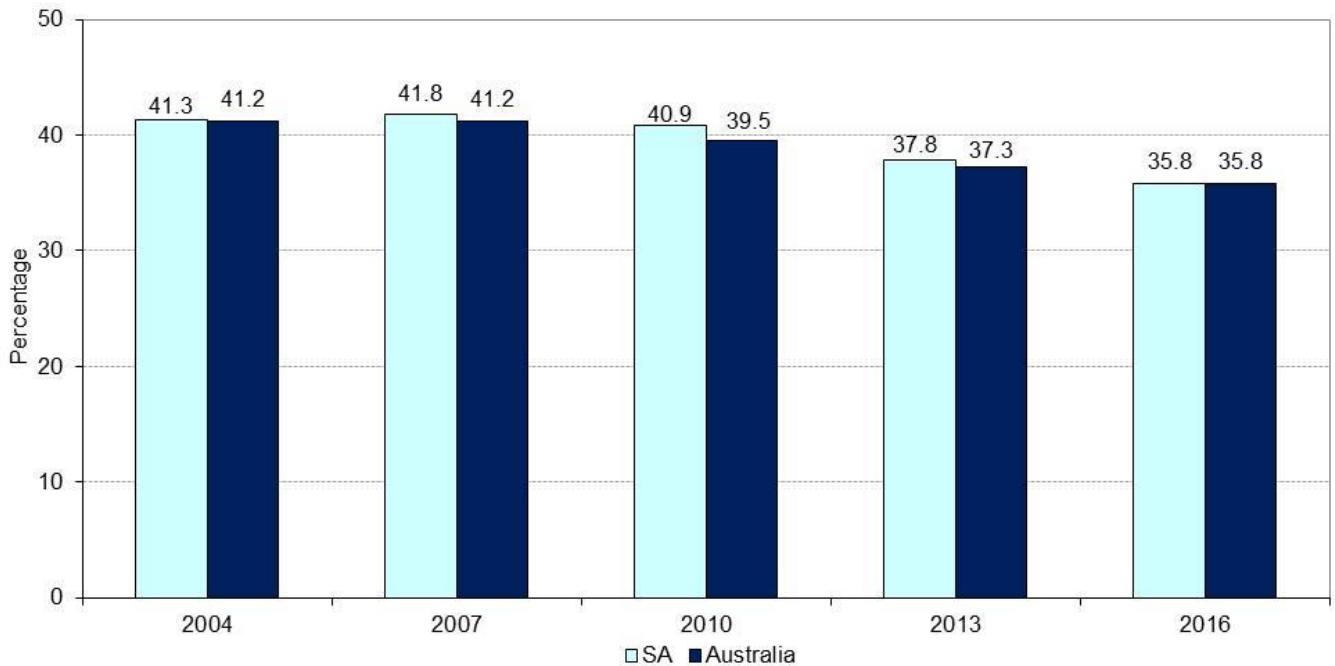
Figures 2 and 3 shows the prevalence of daily and at least weekly (but not daily) drinking since 2004, for Australia and South Australia. Daily drinking has decreased significantly, from 8.9% in 2004 to 5.9% in 2016. South Australian men in 2016 were 2.3 times more likely to drink daily than women (8.3% compared with 3.6%). In addition, there was a significant increase between 2013 and 2016 in the proportion of South Australian women who reported never having consumed alcohol, from 10.1% to 16%. Weekly alcohol consumption (including daily) decreased significantly among men between 2013 (46.5%), and 2016 (40.3%).

Nationally, 1.8 times as many men as women reported drinking daily, although there was a significant decrease among men in daily drinking between 2013 (8.5%) and 2016 (7.6%). There was also a significant decrease in weekly (excluding daily) drinking, from 37.3% in 2013 to 35.8% in 2016.

**Figure 2: The percentage of South Australians and Australians aged 14 years and over who reported drinking daily, 2004-2016**



**Figure 3: The percentage of South Australians and Australians aged 14 years and over who reported drinking at least weekly (but not daily), 2004-2016**



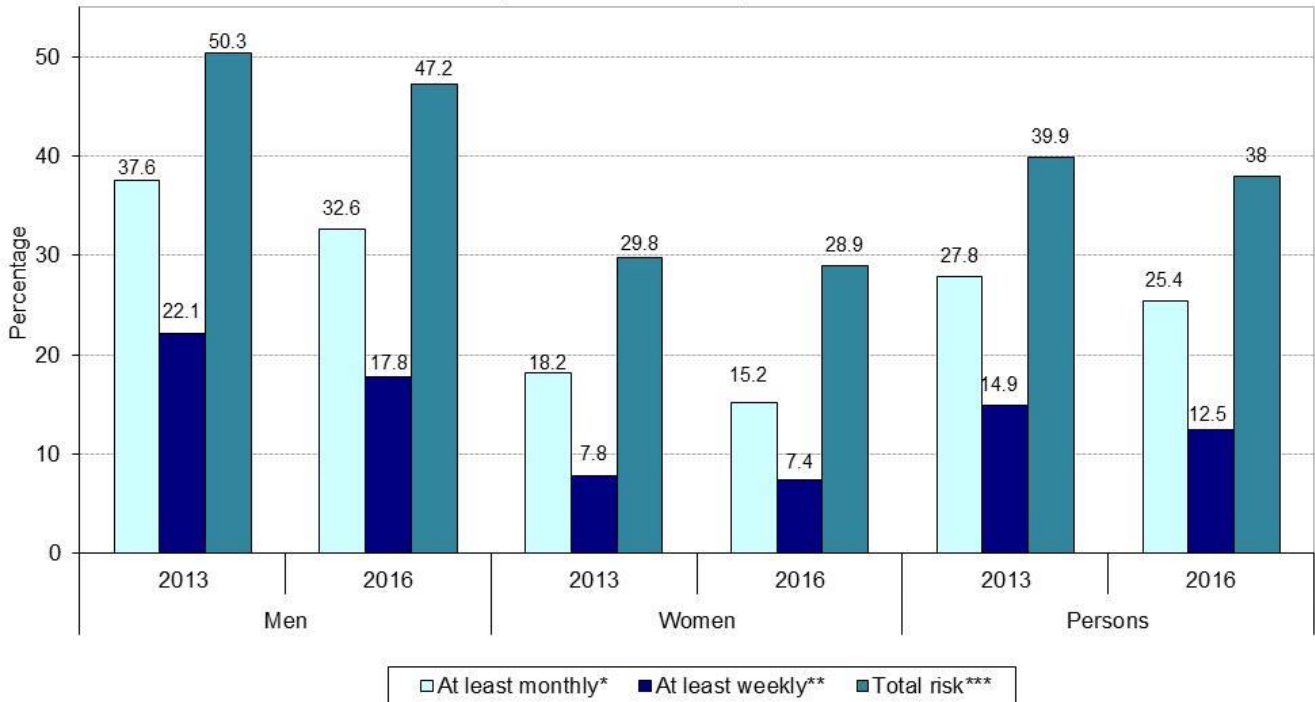
### Risky drinking – aged 14 years and older<sup>3</sup>

#### Single occasion risk

Figure 4 shows the proportion of South Australians in 2016 who drank at levels that put them at risk of injury from a single occasion of drinking: at least monthly (includes weekly), at least weekly, and at least once in the last 12 months. There were no changes over time among all South Australians, with the proportion drinking at these levels at least monthly not significantly different between 2013 (27.8%)

and 2016 (25.4%). However, the proportion of South Australian men who drank at these levels at least weekly decreased significantly from 22.1% to 17.8%. Nationally, there were no changes in the proportion of Australians who drank at risky levels at least monthly, (from 26.4% in 2013 to 25.5% in 2016), although there was a significant decrease in risky drinking at least weekly, from 14.2% in 2013 to 13.3% in 2016. The proportion of Australians drinking at risky levels at least monthly (including weekly) was not significantly different from that reported in South Australia.

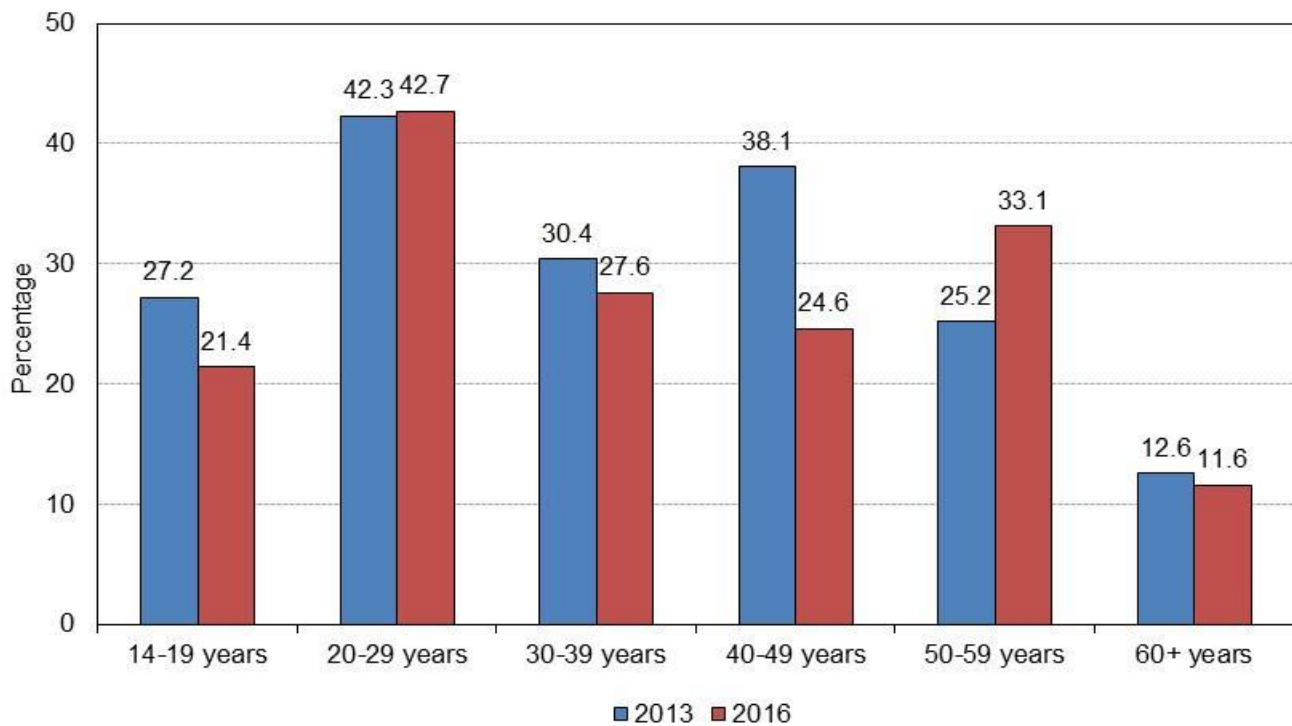
**Figure 4: The percentage of South Australians aged 14 years and over who drank at levels that put them at risk of injury from a single drinking occasion at least once in the previous 12 months, 2013 and 2016**



\*More than four standard drinks at least once a month. \*\*More than four standard drinks at least once a week. \*\*\* Five or more standard drinks at least once in the previous 12 months.

Figure 5 shows the proportion of South Australians drinking at levels that put them at risk of injury from a single occasion of drinking at least monthly, by age group. There was a significant decrease in risky drinking at least monthly among South Australians aged 40-49 years (from 38.1% to 24.6%) and a significant increase among those aged 50-59 years (from 25.2% to 33.1%). National data show a significant decrease in the proportion of Australians aged 14-19 years drinking at risky levels at least monthly (from 25% to 18%); there were no changes for the other age groups.

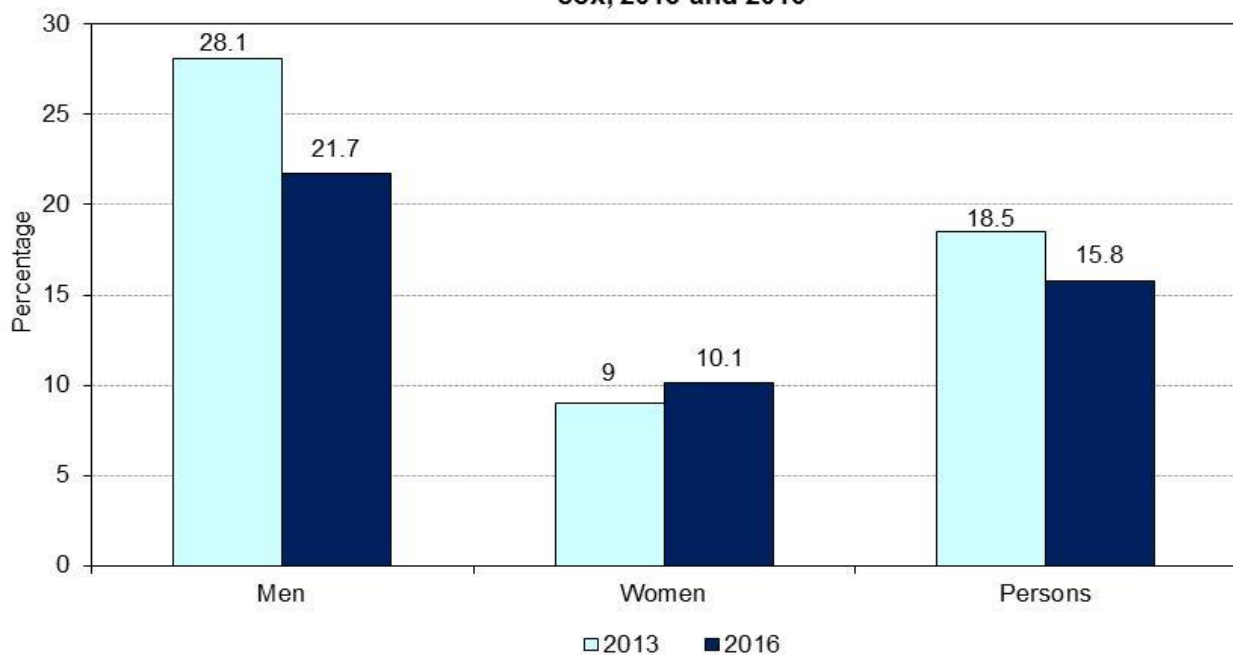
**Figure 5: The percentage of South Australians who drank at levels that put them at risk of injury from a single drinking occasion at least monthly in the previous 12 months, by age group, 2013 and 2016**



#### *Lifetime risk*

Figure 6 shows the proportion of South Australians drinking at levels that put them at risk of disease or injury over a lifetime. There was a significant decrease in lifetime risk between 2013 and 2016 for South Australian men only, from 28.1% to 21.7%. Nationally, there were significant decreases among men (from 26.5% to 24.5%) and all Australians (from 18.2% to 17.1%).

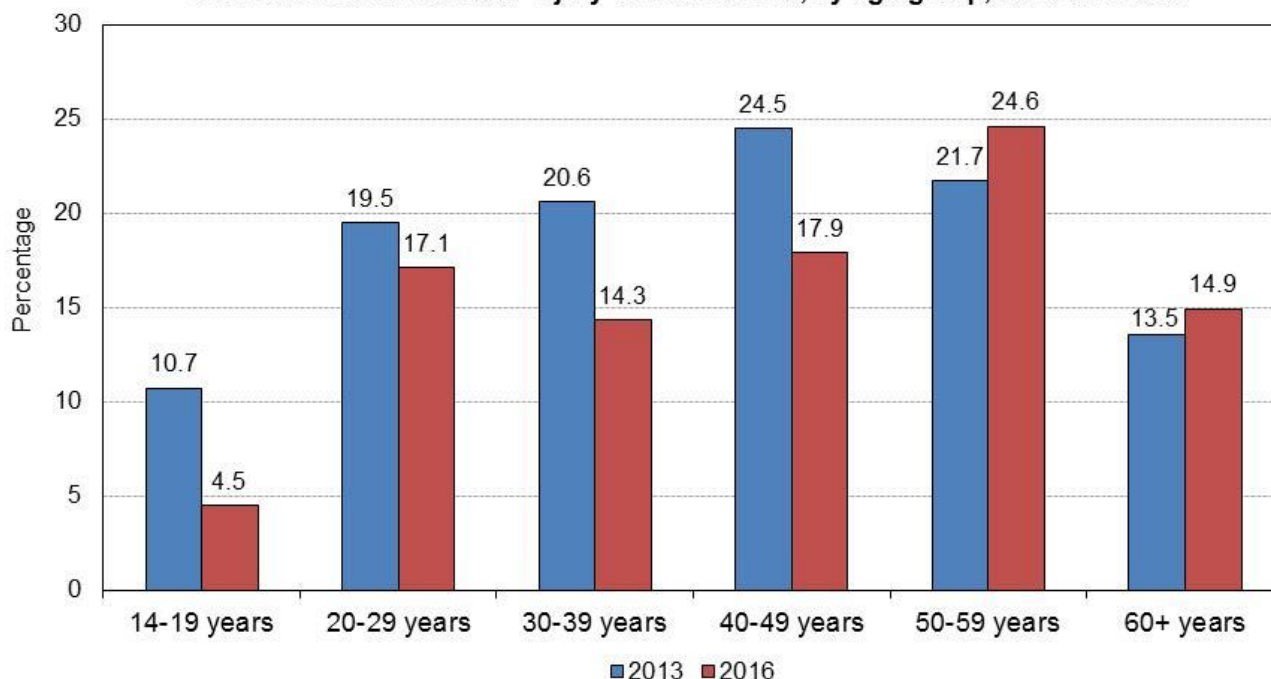
**Figure 6: The percentage of South Australians aged 15 years and over who drank at levels that put them at risk of disease or injury over a lifetime\*, by sex, 2013 and 2016**



\* On average, the consumption of three or more standard drinks per day over the previous 12 months

Figure 7 shows the proportion of South Australians drinking at levels that put them at risk of disease or injury over a lifetime by age group. There was a decrease in the proportion of lifetime risky drinkers in both South Australia and nationally, which was statistically significant among all Australians, from 18.2% to 17.1%. There was also a significant decrease in the proportion of lifetime risky drinkers among Australians aged 20-29 years (from 21.9% to 19.1%). While there were decreases in lifetime risky drinking among all age groups of South Australians except those 50-59 years and 60 years and over, differences were not statistically significant.

**Figure 7: The percentage of South Australians who drank at levels that put them at risk of disease or injury over a lifetime, by age group, 2013 and 2016\***



\*Estimates for those aged 14-19 years have a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

## Young Drinkers

South Australians aged 12-17 years were far more likely to have never consumed alcohol than those aged 18 years and over (78.3% vs. 10.8% in 2016). No 12-17 year olds reported daily drinking, and there was an increase in the proportion of 12-17 year old non-drinkers between 2013 (68.1%) and 2016 (78.3%).

These trends are consistent with those reported nationally: in 2016, the proportion of 12-17 year olds who had never consumed alcohol was higher than among those aged 18 years and over (77.9% vs. 11.1%), and there was an increase in the proportion of 12-17 year olds who had never consumed alcohol between 2013 and 2016 (from 68.1% to 77.9%).

Table 1 compares risky drinking (single occasion risk at least monthly and over a lifetime) among Australians aged 12-17 years with those aged 18 years and over, in 2013 and 2016; estimates were unreliable among young South Australians. A significantly lower proportion of Australians aged 12-17 years engage in risky drinking than those aged 18 years and over, or than those aged 14 years and over. Furthermore, there was a significant decrease in the proportion of young Australians drinking at levels that increased their risk of injury from a single occasion at least monthly (from 8.7% in 2013 to 5.4% in 2016) and in lifetime risky drinking among Australians aged 18 years and over (from 19.1% in 2013 to 18% in 2016).

There was also a significant decrease in single occasion risky drinking at least monthly among Australians aged 18-24 years, from 47% in 2013 to 42% in 2016, and in lifetime risky drinking among Australians aged 25-34 years, from 20% in 2013 to 17.6% in 2016.



**Table 1: Risky drinking among Australians aged 12-17 years or 18+ years, 2013 and 2016**

Risky drinking	12-17 years		18+ years	
	2013	2016	2013	2016
Single occasion at least monthly	8.7	5.4 <sup>#</sup>	27.3	26.6
Over a lifetime	2.6	*1.3	19.1	18.0 <sup>#</sup>

\* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution. # Statistically significant change between 2013 and 2016.

### Age of initiation

The overall age of onset of drinking appears to be decreasing, with younger age groups reporting that they consumed their first full serve of alcohol at an earlier age than the older age groups: Among South Australians in the 2016 NDSHS, 28.3% of those aged 60 years and over had consumed a full serve of alcohol by the time they were 16 (mean age of onset 19 years) compared with 61.4% of those aged 20-29 years (mean age of onset 16 years)<sup>4</sup>.

However, when only looking at **recent and ex-drinkers aged 14-24 years**, there was a significant increase in the average age of initiation between 2013 (15.7 years) and 2016 (16.1 years) for all Australians, and this increased significantly among both men (from 15.7 to 16.3 years) and women (from 15.6 to 16 years). In 2016, the average age of initiation for alcohol consumption among South Australian recent and ex-drinkers aged 14-24 years was 15.9 years. This was similar to 2013 (15.5 years); the average age was 16.1 years among men and 15.7 among women.

### Drinking behaviour and source of supply

#### *Drink preference*

Figure 8 presents 2016 data for South Australia on the main drink usually consumed. More than one-third (36%) of South Australians reported bottled wine as the drink consumed most often, followed by regular strength beer (18.3%) and bottled spirits/liqueurs (14.9%). This is consistent with national data, and similar to that found in 2013, although there has been a small increase in the proportion of South Australians who consumed low/mid-strength beer, from 7.2% to 10.8%.

**Figure 8: Drink preferences: main drink usually consumed by South Australians aged 14 years and over, 2016**

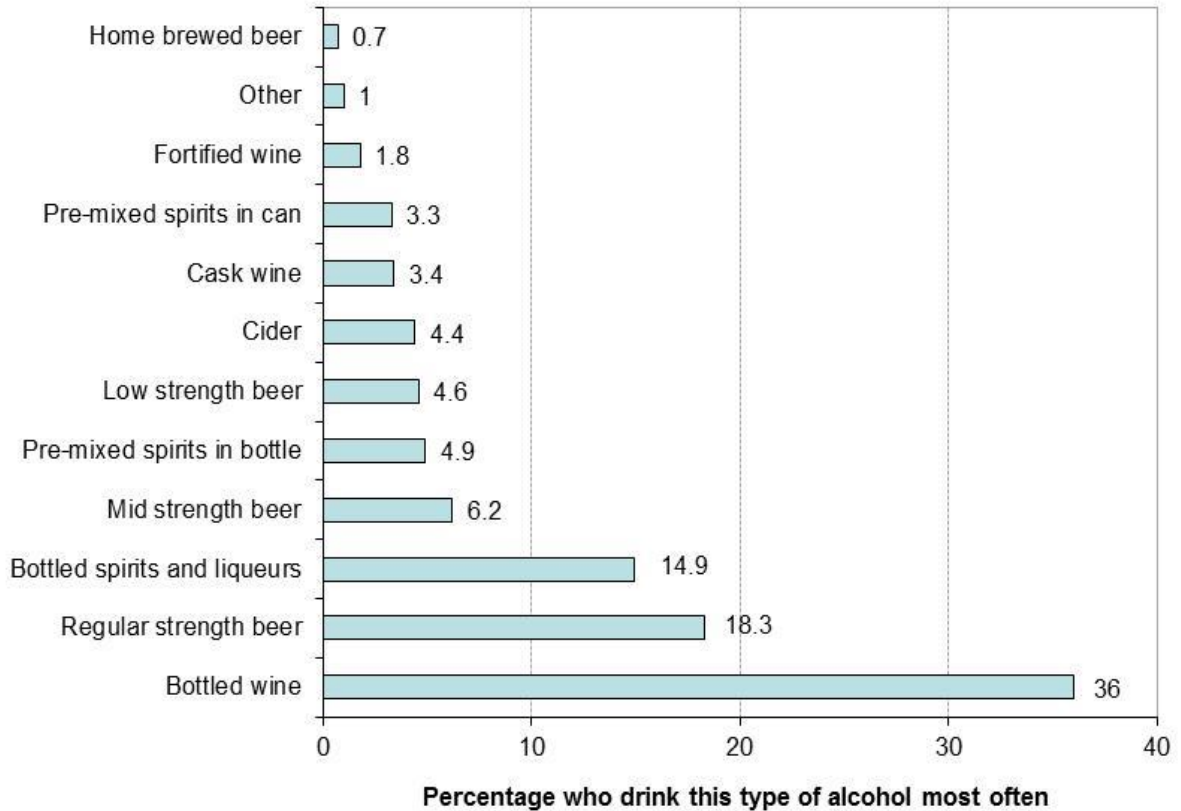
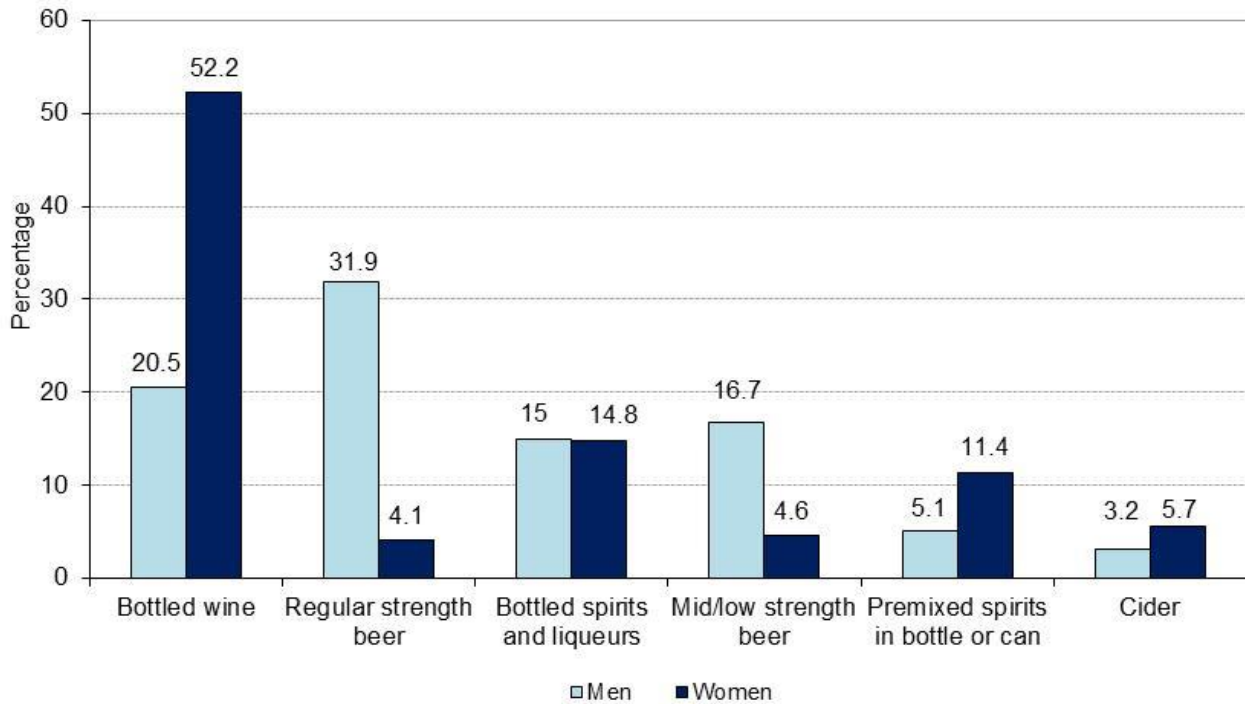


Figure 9 indicates that men and women have different drink preferences. A higher proportion of men 'usually' consumed regular strength beer (31.9% vs. 4.1% of women) whereas women 'usually' consumed bottled wine (52.2% vs. 20.5%) and premixed spirits (11.4% vs. 5.1%). This was broadly consistent with 2013, although the proportion of men usually consuming regular strength beer decreased in 2016 (from 36.3% in 2013) and the proportion usually consuming mid/low-strength beer increased (11.9% in 2013). The proportion of women usually consuming premixed spirits increased (8.7% in 2013), as did the proportion who consumed any beer (from 5.9% in 2013 to 8.7% in 2016).

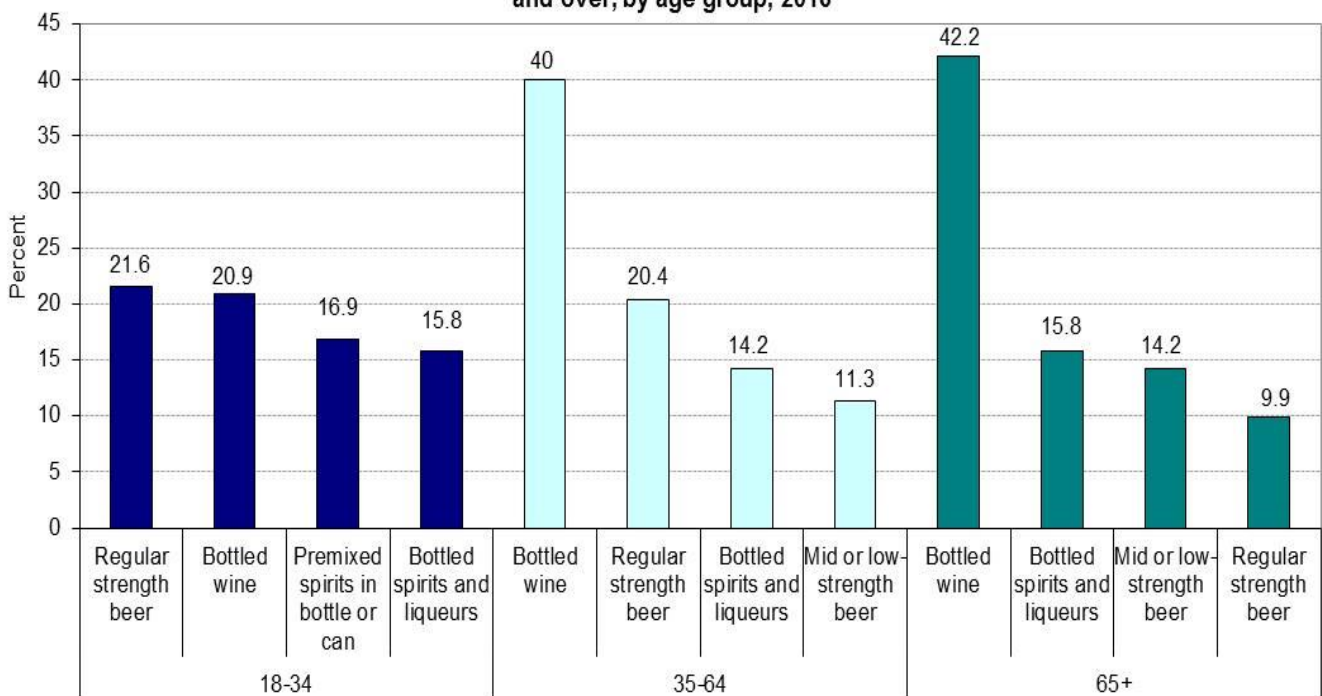
**Figure 9: Drink preferences: main drink usually consumed by South Australians aged 14 years and over, by sex, 2016\***



\* Only the top six drink preferences are included in the figure

Figure 10 shows that South Australians aged 18-34 years 'usually' consumed regular strength beer (21.6%) or bottled wine (20.9%), whereas the majority aged 35 years and over 'usually' consumed bottled wine (40-42%). Only 9.9% of those aged 65 years and over 'usually' consumed regular strength beer, compared with 20.4% of 35-64 year olds and 21.6% of 18-34 year olds. Bottled spirits were 'usually' consumed by similar proportions: 14-16%. These data are similar to 2013.

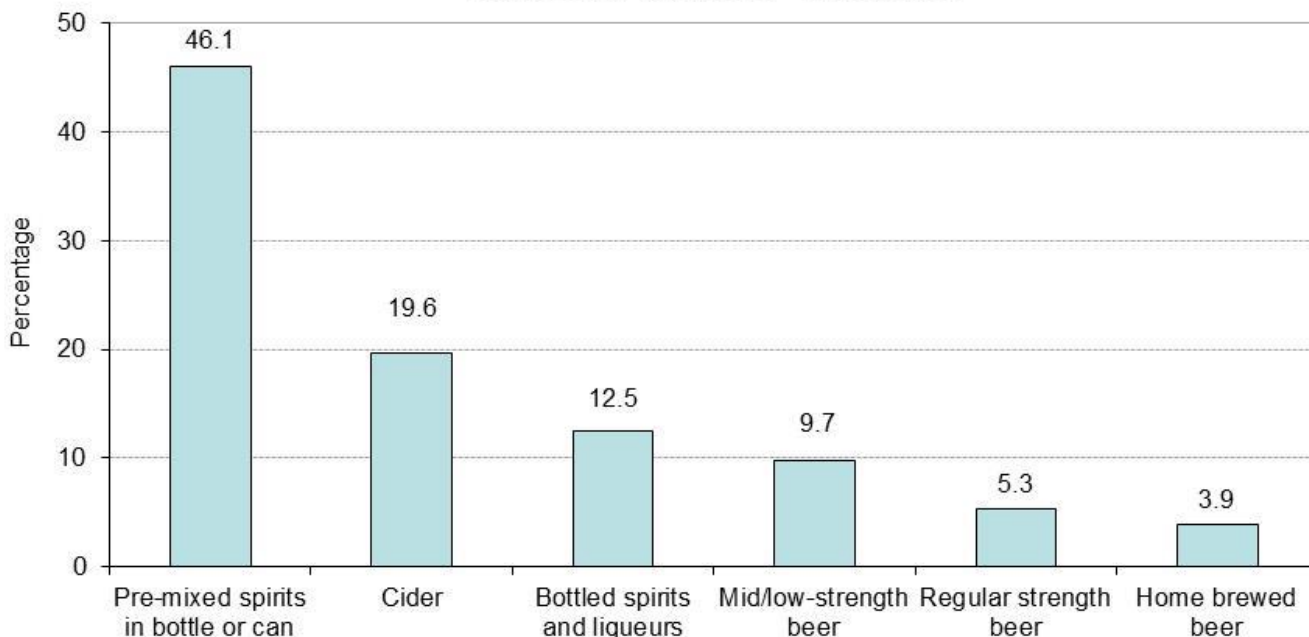
**Figure 10: Drink preferences: main drink usually consumed by South Australians aged 18 years and over, by age group, 2016\***



\*Only the top four drink preferences are included in the figure.

A different pattern emerges with the drink preferences of those aged 12-17 years (Figure 11). Underage South Australian drinkers 'usually' consumed premixed spirits in a bottle or can (46.1%), cider (19.6%) and bottled spirits and liqueurs (12.5%). Note a change from 2013, where 20% 'usually' consumed bottled wine and 12% regular strength beer. In 2016, cider emerged as the second most common alcoholic drink 'usually' consumed, and no one reported 'usually' consuming bottled wine. This is consistent with national data, where 40.6% usually' consumed premixed spirits in a bottle or can, followed by bottle spirits and liqueurs (14.9%). However, only 9.5% of Australians aged 12-17 years 'usually' drank cider, and 19.5% 'usually' drank any type of beer (15% of South Australians).

**Figure 11: Drink preferences: main drink usually consumed by South Australians aged 12-17\* years, 2016**



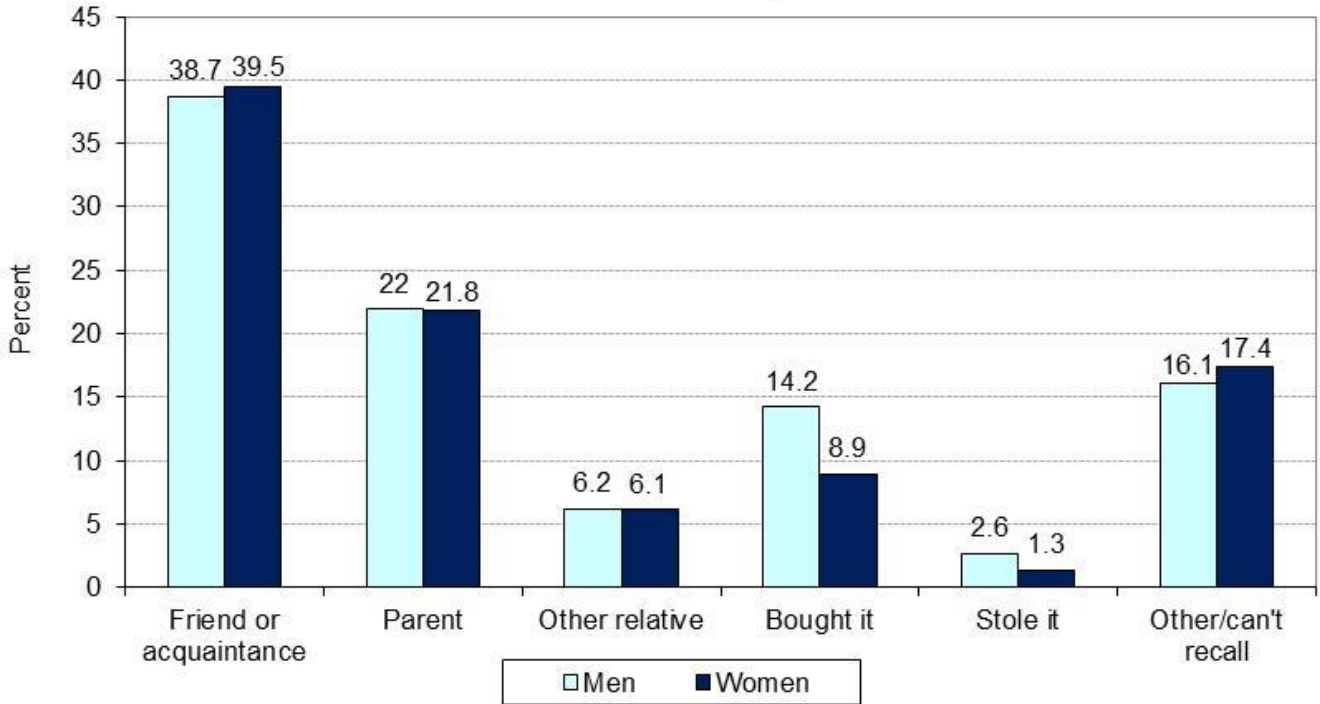
\*Only the top four drink preferences are included in the figure. Estimates for all types of beer have a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

### Source of supply

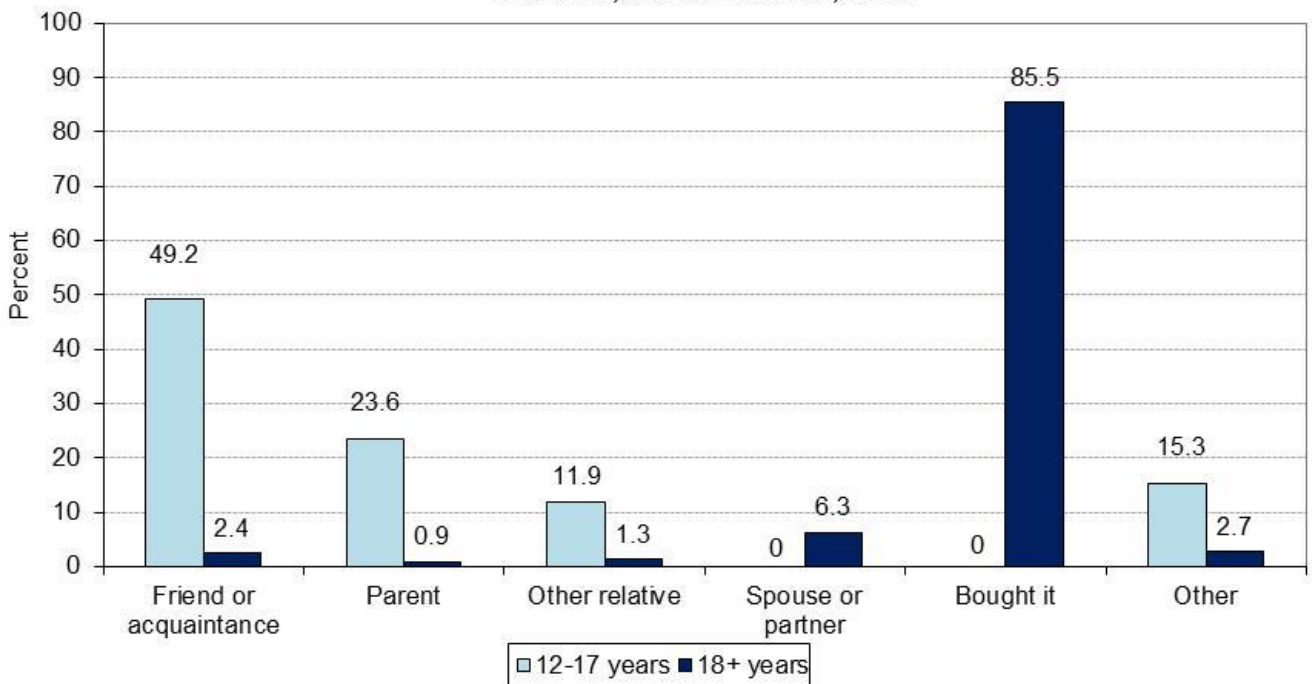
Figure 12 shows the source of supply for South Australians' **first** alcoholic drink, for men and women. The majority were supplied by a friend or acquaintance (around 40%), followed by a parent (22%). A further 11.5% purchased it themselves (14.2% of males and 8.9% of females). These proportions were similar to 2013.

Figure 13 shows the **usual** source of supply for South Australians by age. Unsurprisingly, those aged 12-17 years were more likely to 'usually' obtain alcohol from friends or acquaintances than those aged 18 years and over (49.2% vs. 2.4%). This was a substantial increase from 2013, where 34.2% of those aged 12-17 years reported 'usually' obtaining alcohol from friends. In addition, no 12-17 year olds in 2016 reported buying alcohol themselves, compared with 88.1% of those aged 18 years and over. Almost one-quarter (23.6%) of underage drinkers 'usually' obtained alcohol from their parents; this is much lower than in 2013 (36.7%). National data indicate that 31.9% of underage drinkers in 2016 reported usually obtaining alcohol from their parents, and 42.3% from friends or acquaintances.

**Figure 12: Source of first alcoholic drink for those aged 14 years and over, by sex, South Australia, 2016**



**Figure 13: Usual source of alcohol for those aged 12-17 years and 18 years and over, South Australia, 2016**



### Alcohol-related incidents

Table 2 shows that in 2016, 23.1% of South Australians aged 14 years and over reported that they had been the victim of an alcohol-related incident in the previous 12 months (predominantly verbal abuse), a significant decrease from 26.4% in 2013. This change over time was seen among men and women, for both physical and verbal abuse. In contrast, there was a significant increase in women

reporting being put in fear, from 12.1% to 13.3%. These data are consistent with national data, with a significant decrease between 2013 (26%) and 2016 (22.2%) in the proportion of Australians reporting that they were victims of any alcohol-related incident. There were also significant decreases between 2013 and 2016 in the proportion of Australian men who reported being the victim of verbal or physical abuse, put in fear, or experiencing any alcohol-related incident. There was also a significant decrease in the proportion of Australian women who reported being the victim of verbal abuse, or experiencing any alcohol-related incident.

**Table 2: Victims of alcohol-related incidents in the previous 12 months: proportion of South Australians and Australians aged 14 years and over, by sex, 2013 and 2016**

Incident	Males		Females		Persons	
	2013	2016	2013	2016	2013	2016
<b>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</b>						
Verbal abuse	25.7	21.1 <sup>#</sup>	21.1	17.6 <sup>#</sup>	23.4	19.3 <sup>#</sup>
Physical abuse	10.2	7.4 <sup>#</sup>	7.0	6.4 <sup>#</sup>	8.6	6.9 <sup>#</sup>
Put in fear	11.0	9.0 <sup>#</sup>	12.1	13.3 <sup>#</sup>	11.5	11.1
<b>Any incident</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>23.9<sup>#</sup></b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>22.2<sup>#</sup></b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>23.1<sup>#</sup></b>
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>						
Verbal abuse	25.7	20.2 <sup>#</sup>	18.9	17.2 <sup>#</sup>	22.3	18.7 <sup>#</sup>
Physical abuse	10.4	8.1 <sup>#</sup>	7.1	6.5	8.7	7.3 <sup>#</sup>
Put in fear	11.3	9.3 <sup>#</sup>	13.8	13.5	12.6	11.4 <sup>#</sup>
<b>Any incident</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>22.7<sup>#</sup></b>	<b>23.4</b>	<b>21.6<sup>#</sup></b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>22.2<sup>#</sup></b>

<sup>#</sup> Statistically significant change between 2013 and 2016

Men were more likely than women to have been victims of alcohol-related incidents (28.7% vs. 24.1% were the victim of at least one incident in 2013 and 23.9% vs. 22.2% in 2016). This was the case for both physical and verbal abuse, but women were more likely to report that they had experienced being put in fear (13.3% vs. 9% of men). Findings are consistent with those reported nationally.

In the majority of cases of verbal abuse, victims of both sexes reported that the person responsible was a stranger (56.1% of men and 41.4% of women). Around one-fifth (21.1%) of women who had experienced verbal abuse stated that the person responsible was a current or ex-partner, compared with 9% of men. A further 17.5% reported that the person was a friend or acquaintance known to the victim (26.4% of men) and 20% a relative (8.5% of men).

For those who had experienced physical abuse, 22.9% of women stated that the person responsible was a current or ex-partner (8.2% of men). There were 16.7% of women who reported that the person was a friend or acquaintance (31.6% of men) and 37.4% a relative (0% of men). The remaining 23% of women and 60.2% of men stated that the person responsible for their physical abuse was a stranger.

For those who reported being put in fear, 18.6% of women reported that the person was a current or ex-partner (4.9% of men), 19.8% a friend or acquaintance (20.8% of men) and 13.1% a relative (6.2% of men). In almost half (48.5%) of cases, women reported that the person responsible was a stranger (68.1% of men).

Figure 14 shows that the highest proportion of South Australians who reported being the victim of an alcohol-related incident were aged 20-29 years (36.3%), followed by those aged 14-19 years (28.9%). This is consistent with national data, where 34.6% of those aged 20-29 years had been the victim of any alcohol-related incident. This was followed by those aged 30-39 years (25.3%).

**Figure 14: Victims of alcohol-related incidents in the previous 12 months: proportion of South Australians aged 14 years and over, by age group, 2016**

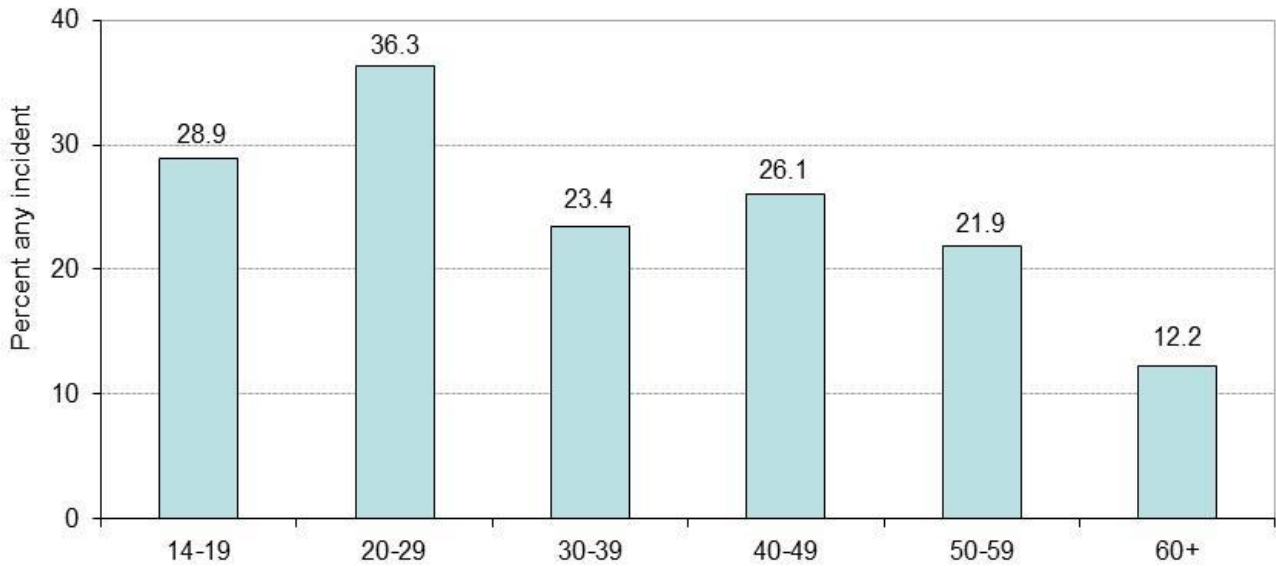
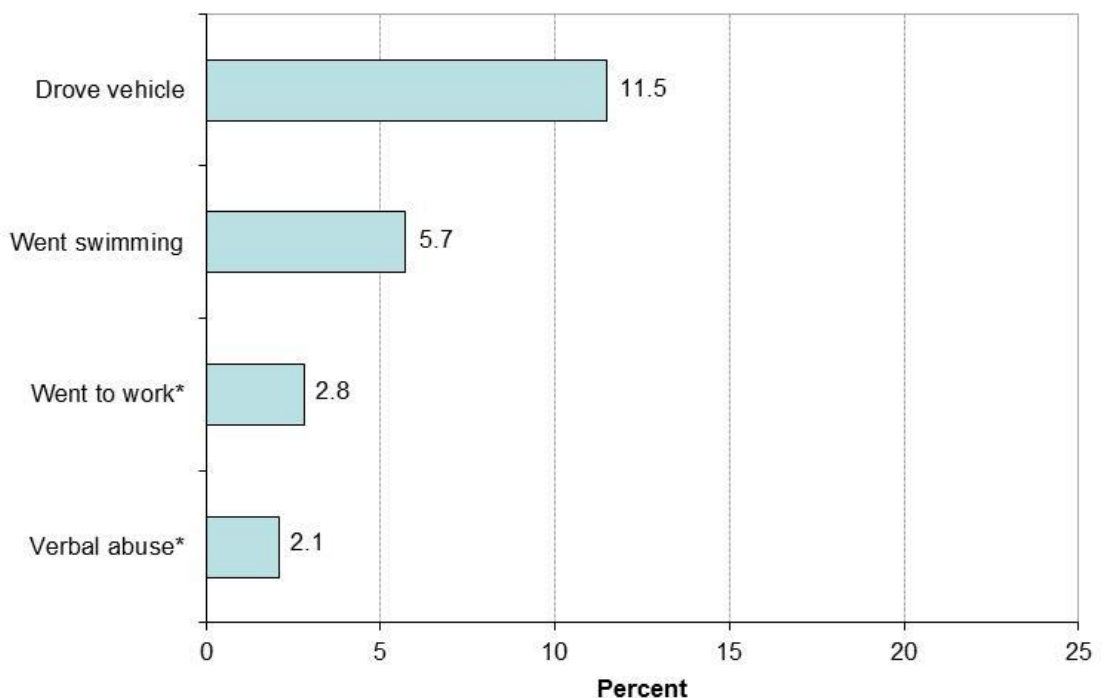


Figure 15 shows the activities that South Australians reported engaging in under the influence of alcohol that could potentially cause harm, either to themselves or to others. The most common was driving a vehicle (11.5%, a decrease from 15% in 2013) followed by swimming (5.7%), verbally abusing someone (2.8%) and going to work (2.1%).

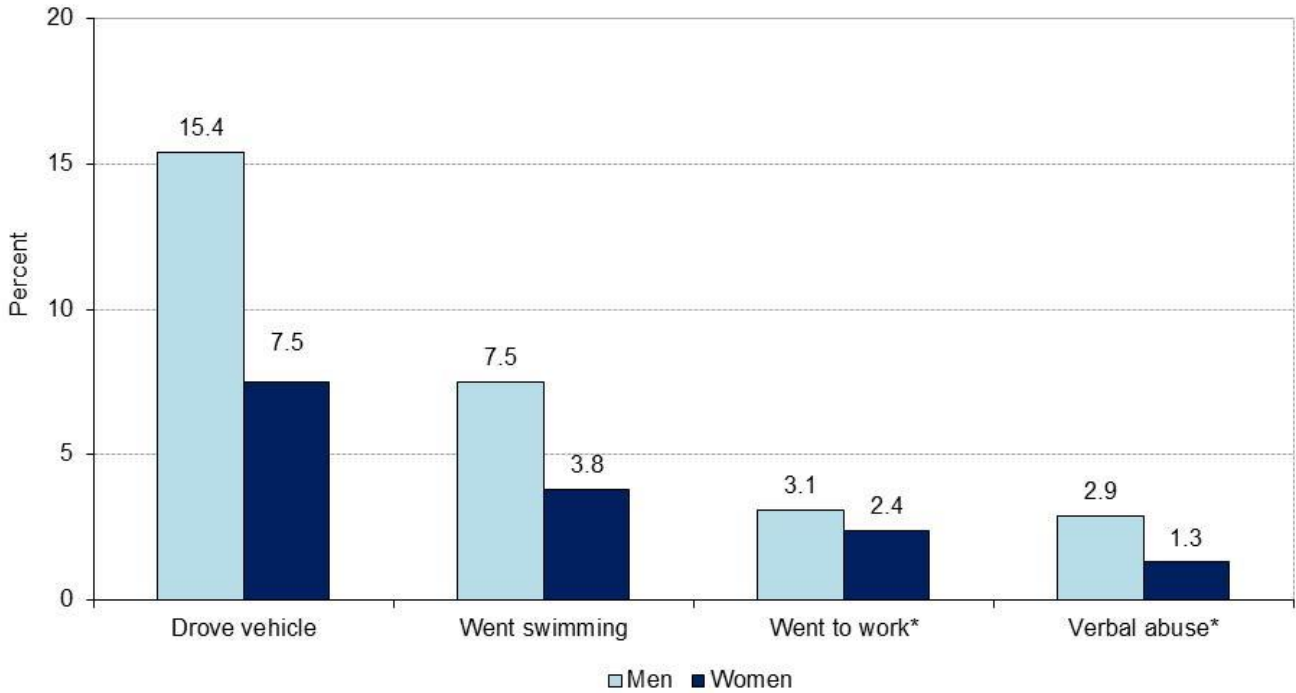
**Figure 15: Activities done in the previous 12 months while under the influence of alcohol: percentage of South Australians aged 14 years and over, 2016**



Only the top four activities are included due to small numbers in the other categories \*Estimates have a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

In 2016, just over 15% of men had driven a vehicle (a decrease from 22.6% in 2013), 7.5% went swimming (8.4% in 2013), 3.1% went to work (6.9% in 2013) and 2.9% had verbally abused someone (5.9% in 2013). The pattern for women was similar but the proportions were lower: 7.5% had driven a vehicle (unchanged from 2013), 3.8% had gone swimming (5% in 2013), 2.4% went to work (0.9% in 2013) and 1.3% had verbally abused someone (2.2% in 2013); see Figure 16.

**Figure 16: Activities done in the previous 12 months while under the influence of alcohol: percentage of South Australians aged 14 years and over by sex, 2016**



Only the top four activities are included due to small numbers in the other categories. \*Estimates have a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

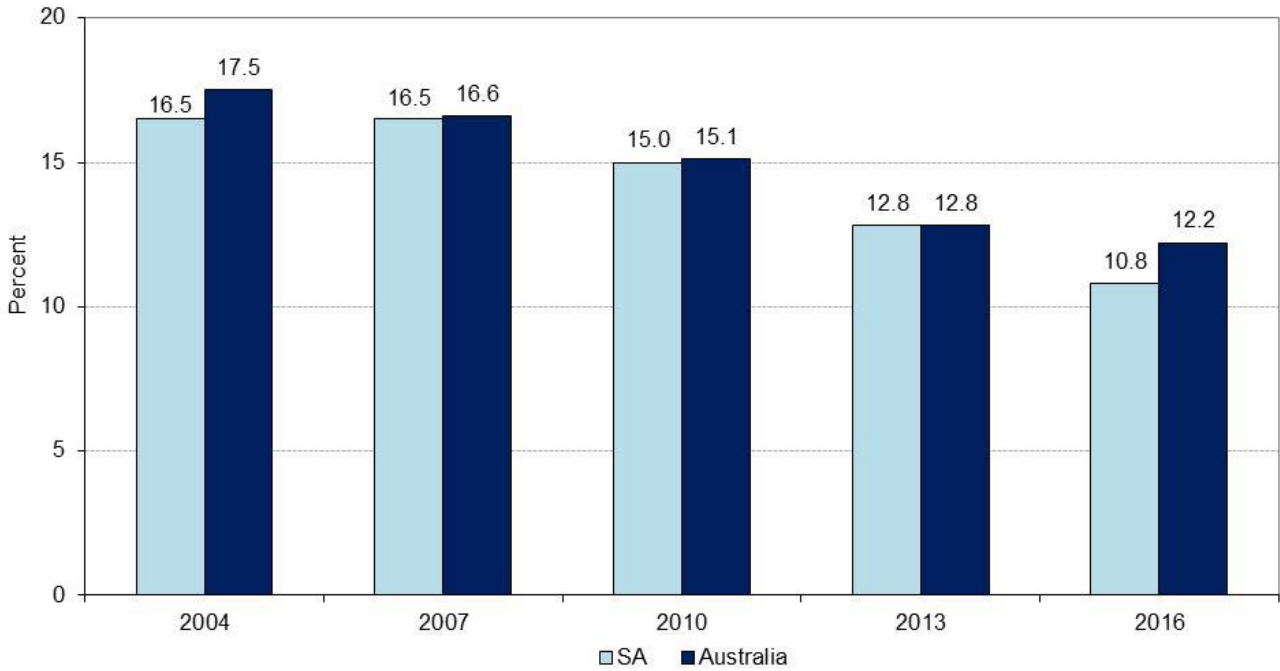
## TOBACCO

### Tobacco use in Australia – aged 14 years and older

Daily smoking has decreased significantly since 2004 among South Australians and Australians aged 14 years and over, from 16.5% to 10.8% and from 17.5% to 12.2%, respectively (Figure 17). While changes between 2013 and 2016 were not significant, they follow a significant decrease nationally between 2010 and 2013. Figure 18 presents daily smoking among South Australians by sex; in each year except for 2013 a higher proportion of men reported daily smoking, and there was a significant decrease among women between 2013 (13.1%) and 2016 (9.4%).



**Figure 17: The percentage of of Australians and South Australians aged 14 years and over who reported daily smoking, 2004-2016**



**Figure 18: The percentage of of South Australians aged 14 years and over who reported daily smoking by sex, 2004-2016**

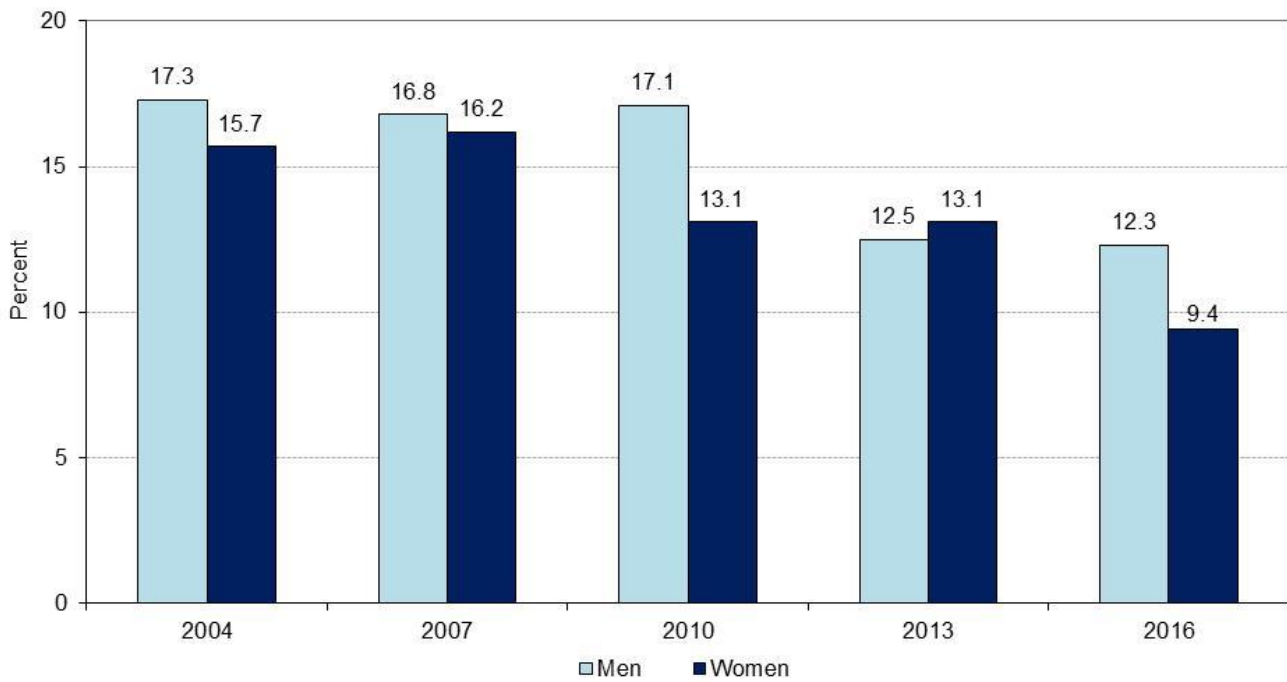
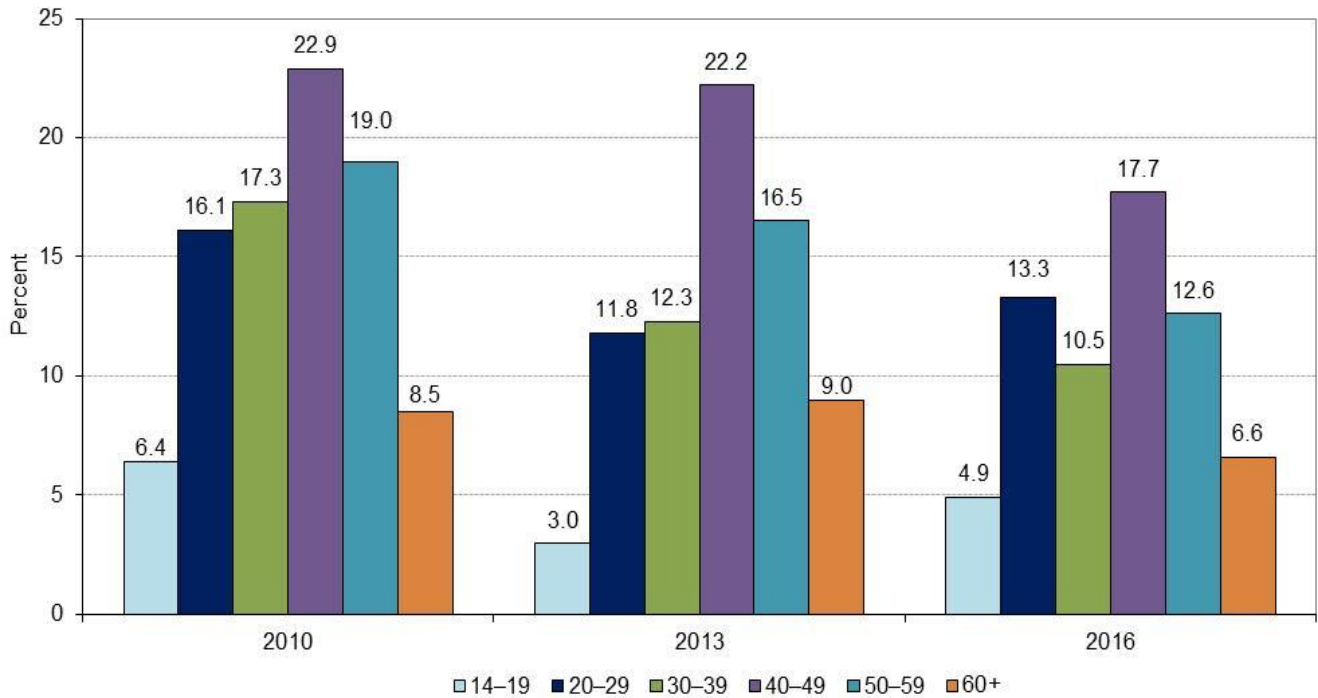


Figure 19 shows that daily smoking was highest among South Australians aged 40-49 years (17.7%), followed by those aged 20-29 years (13.3%). The only significant change between 2013 and 2016 was among those aged 65-74 years, from 10.4% in 2013 to 5.4% (not shown on the graph).

**Figure 19: The percentage of South Australians aged 14 years and over who reported daily smoking by age group, 2010-2016\***



\* Estimates for those aged 14-19 years in 2010 and 2016 have relative standard errors of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution. Estimate for those aged 14-19 years in 2013 has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for most uses.

## Age of initiation

In 2016, the average age of initiation<sup>5</sup> for tobacco consumption was 16.2 years among South Australian smokers aged 14-24 years. This is significantly older than reported in 2013 (15.8 years). The average age in 2016 was 16.5 years among men, and 16 years among women. There was also a significant increase in the average age of initiation between 2013 (15.9 years) and 2016 (16.3 years) for Australian smokers aged 14-24 years. While the average age of initiation increased among both Australian men (from 16 to 16.6 years), and women (from 15.7 to 16 years), the change was only significant among men.

## DRUGS – ILLICIT USE

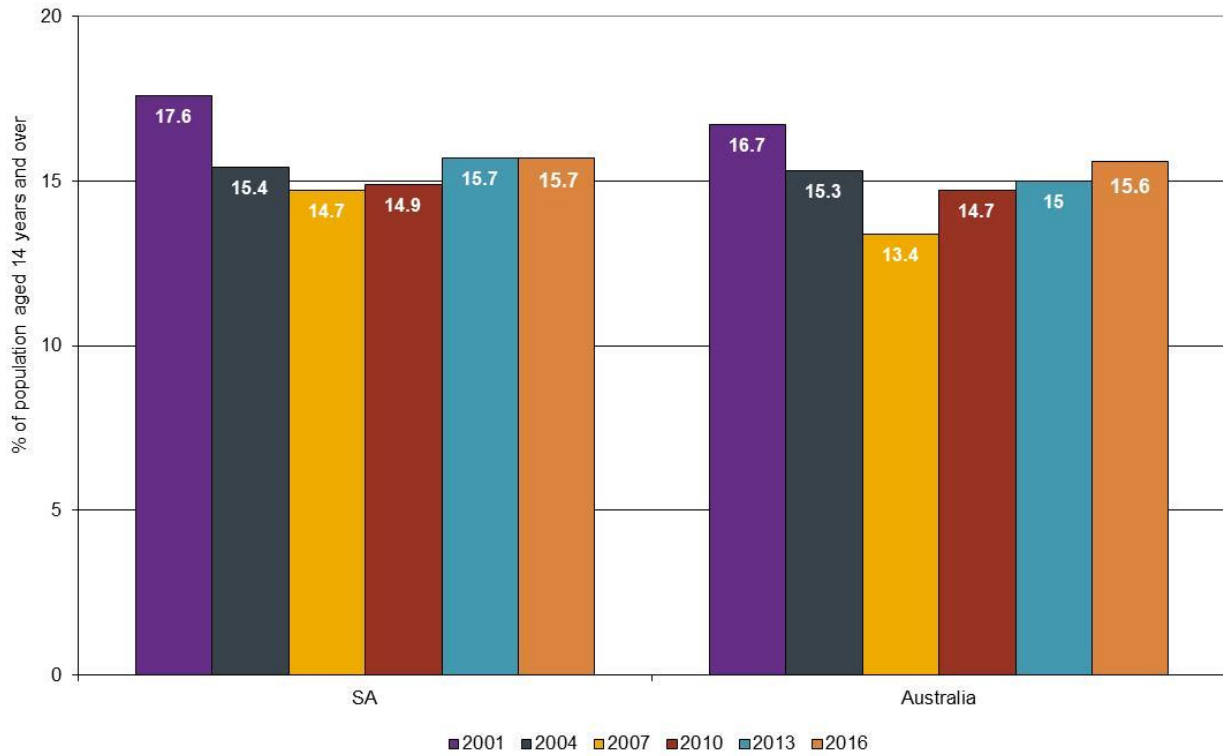
### Illicit use of drugs in the last 12 months

In 2016, 15.7% of South Australians had used an illicit drug at least once in the last 12 months. The Australian proportion was 15.6%, which was not significantly different. This is illustrated in Figure 20; there were no significant changes between 2013 and 2016. South Australian men were more likely to report recent use (19% compared with 12.7% of women in 2016); Australian results were similar (18.3% compared with 13% of women in 2016).

### Age of initiation

In 2016, the average age of initiation of illicit drug use<sup>6</sup> was 16.7 years among South Australians aged 14-29 years. This has not changed significantly from the average age in 2013 (16.1 years). The average age in 2016 was 16.4 years among men and 17.1 among women. There was no change in the average age of initiation between 2013 (16.6 years) and 2016 (16.7 years) for all Australians.

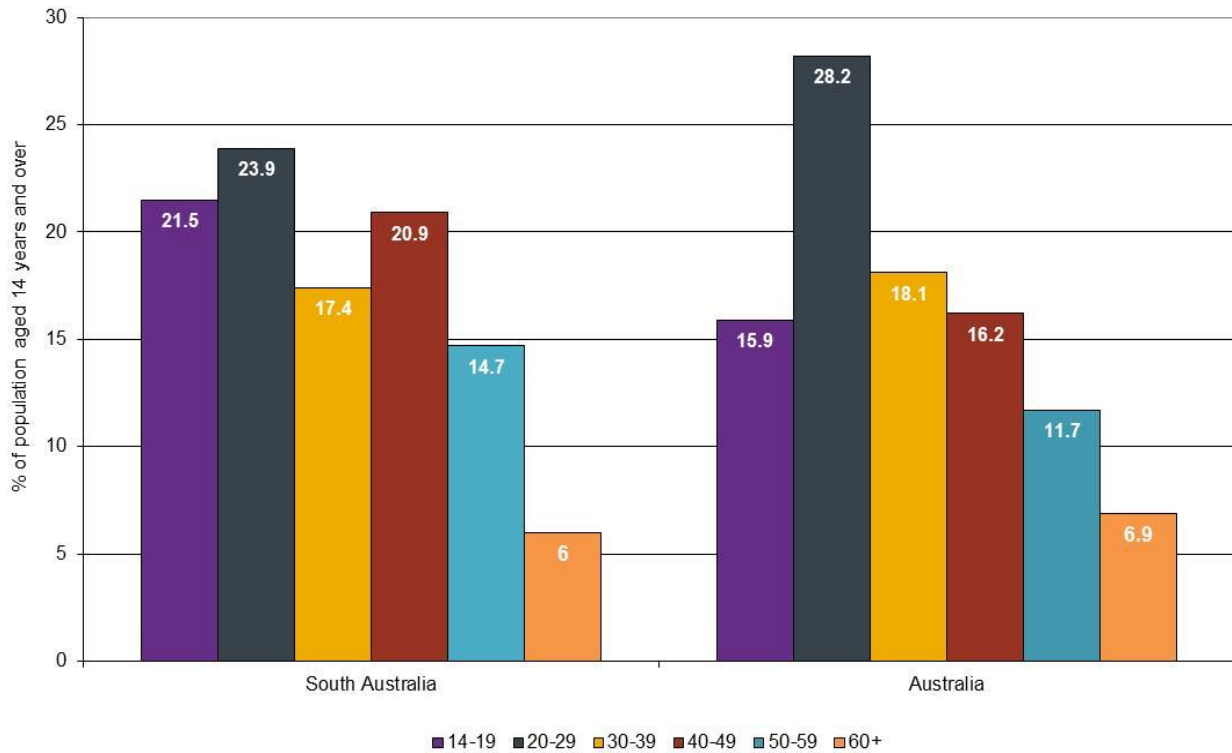
**Figure 20: The percentage of the population aged 14 years and over who reported recent use of any illicit drug\*, South Australia and Australia, 2001-2016**



\* Had used at least once in the last 12 months

Figure 21 shows that the proportion of South Australians aged 14-19 years and 20-29 years who reported recent illicit drug use was higher than other age groups (21.5% and 23.9%, respectively). There were no significant changes between 2013 and 2016. Nationally, the group with the highest proportion reporting recent illicit drug use was aged 20-29 years (28.2%), followed by those aged 30-39 years (18.1%). There was a significant increase between 2013 and 2016 in the proportion of 40-49 year old Australians who had recently used illicit drugs, from 13.6% to 16.2%.

**Figure 21: The percentage of the population aged 14 years and over who reported recent use of any illicit drug\* by age group, South Australia and Australia, 2016**



\* Had used at least once in the last 12 months

Table 3 summarises recent illicit use of drugs in South Australia and Australia for 2016 by drug type. The most commonly used illicit drug in South Australia was cannabis (10.7%) with cocaine (2%) and meth/amphetamine (1.9%) used by much smaller proportions. The recent use of ecstasy decreased significantly, from 2.8% in 2013 to 1.6% in 2016. Use of all other illicit drugs remained stable. These data were consistent with those reported nationally; however there were also significant decreases in the use of meth/amphetamine (from 2.1% to 1.4%), hallucinogens (from 1.3% to 1%) and synthetic cannabinoids (from 1.2% to 0.3%).

Use of pharmaceuticals for non-medical purposes was higher than any of the illicit drugs except cannabis: 5.5% of South Australians and 4.8% of Australians. Pain-killers/analgesics and opioids (excluding over the counter drugs) were used by 4.3% of South Australians and 3.6% of Australians in the last 12 months. Note that some of these estimates are unreliable, as described in the footnote below Table 3.

**Table 3: Summary of recent illicit drug use<sup>(a)</sup>, percent of South Australians and Australians aged 14 years and over, 2016**

<b>Drug</b>	<b>South Australia %</b>	<b>Australia %</b>
Cannabis	10.7	10.4
Ecstasy	1.6 <sup>#</sup>	2.2
Meth/amphetamine <sup>(b)</sup>	1.9	1.4 <sup>#</sup>
Cocaine	2.0	2.5
Hallucinogens	*0.9	1.0 <sup>#</sup>
Inhalants	*0.8	1.0
Heroin	**0.3	0.2
Ketamine	**0.1	0.4
GHB	**0.1	*0.1
Synthetic Cannabinoids	**<0.1	0.3 <sup>#</sup>
New and Emerging Psychoactive Substances	n.p.	0.3
Injected drugs	*0.4	0.3
Any illicit <sup>(c)</sup> excluding pharmaceuticals	12.5	12.6
<b>Pharmaceuticals</b>		
Pain-killers/analgesics and opioids <sup>(b,f)</sup>	4.3	3.6
Tranquillisers/sleeping pills <sup>(b)</sup>	1.4	1.6
Steroids <sup>(b)</sup>	n.p	*0.1
Methadone <sup>(d)</sup> or Buprenorphine	**0.3	0.1
Misuse of any pharmaceutical <sup>(b,f)</sup>	5.5	4.8
Illicit use of any drug <sup>(e)</sup>	15.7	15.6

\* Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution. \*\* Estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for most uses. (a) Used in the previous 12 months. (b) For non-medical purposes, includes the following forms: powder, liquid, crystal (ice), base, tablet, capsules and prescription amphetamines. Excludes over the counter paracetamol, aspirin and other non-opioid over-the-counter pain-killers/analgesics. (c) Illicit use of at least 1 of 12 drugs (excluding pharmaceuticals) in the previous 12 months in 2016. (d) Non-maintenance. (e) Used at least 1 of 17 illicit in the previous 12 months in 2016. (f) Due to a change in the questions, significance testing was not undertaken between 2013 and 2016. #Statistically significant change between 2013 and 2016. n.p. not published because of small numbers, confidentiality or other concerns about the quality of the data.

### Illicit drug-related incidents

Table 4 shows that in 2016, 8.9% of South Australians had been the victim of an illicit drug-related incident in the previous 12 months; much lower than the proportion that had experienced alcohol-related incidents (23.1%). Although numbers are small, a higher proportion of women had experienced verbal abuse, physical abuse or being put in fear. These results are similar to Australian data.

There was an increase between 2013 (8.2%) and 2016 (8.9%) in the proportion of South Australians reporting that they were the victim of any illicit drug-related incident; this occurred among both South Australian men and women, as well as nationally. Between 2013 and 2016, there were significant decreases in the proportion of Australian men who reported illicit drug-related physical abuse, and a significant increase in experiencing fear among Australian women.

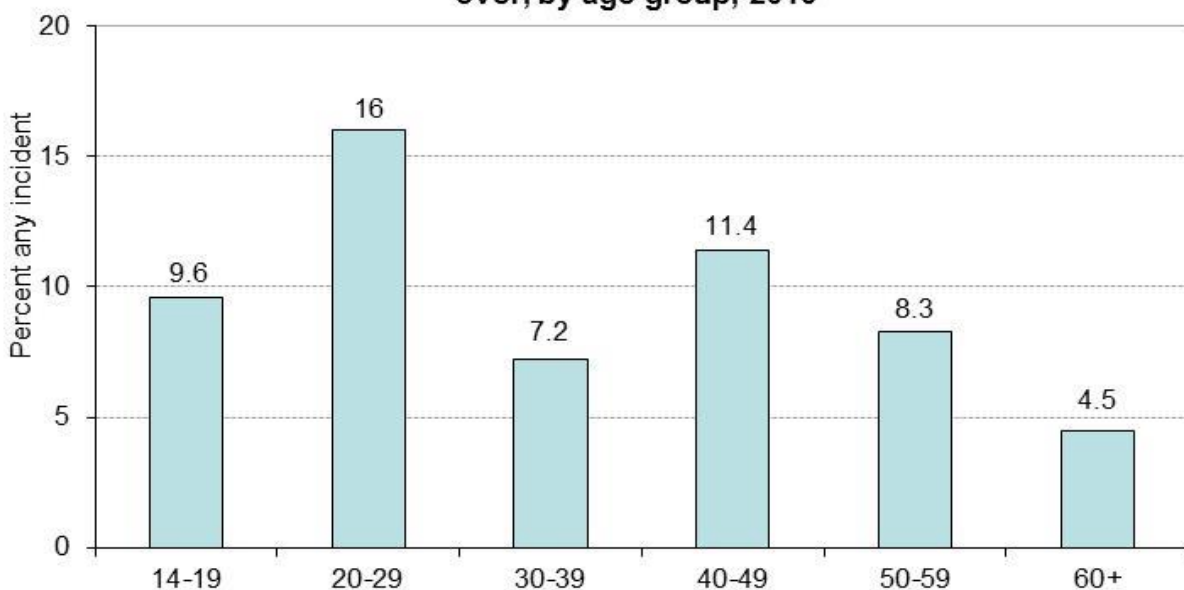
**Table 4: Victims of illicit drug-related incidents in the previous 12 months: proportion of South Australians and Australians aged 14 years and over, by sex, 2013 and 2016**

Incident	Males		Females		Persons	
	2013	2016	2013	2016	2013	2016
<b>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</b>						
Verbal abuse	5.9	6.6	7.0	7.1	6.4	6.9
Physical abuse	3.5	2.2	2.1	2.5	2.8	2.4
Put in fear	4.9	5.1	5.4	7.0	5.2	6.0
<b>Any incident</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>8.5<sup>#</sup></b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>9.4<sup>#</sup></b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>8.9<sup>#</sup></b>
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>						
Verbal abuse	6.8	7.3	6.4	6.7	6.6	7.0
Physical abuse	3.4	2.7 <sup>#</sup>	2.9	2.5	3.1	2.6 <sup>#</sup>
Put in fear	4.3	4.7	5.6	7.1 <sup>#</sup>	5.0	6.0 <sup>#</sup>
<b>Any incident</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>9.6<sup>#</sup></b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>9.3<sup>#</sup></b>

<sup>#</sup> Statistically significant change between 2013 and 2016.

Figure 22 shows that South Australians aged 20-29 years had the highest proportion (16%) of any age group that reported being the victim of an illicit drug-related incident; this was slightly higher than the national figure (12.5%). This was followed by those aged 40-49 years (11.4%; 10.6% in Australia; a significant increase from 8.3% in 2013).

**Figure 22: Victims of illicit drug-related incidents in the previous 12 months: proportion of South Australians aged 14 years and over, by age group, 2016**

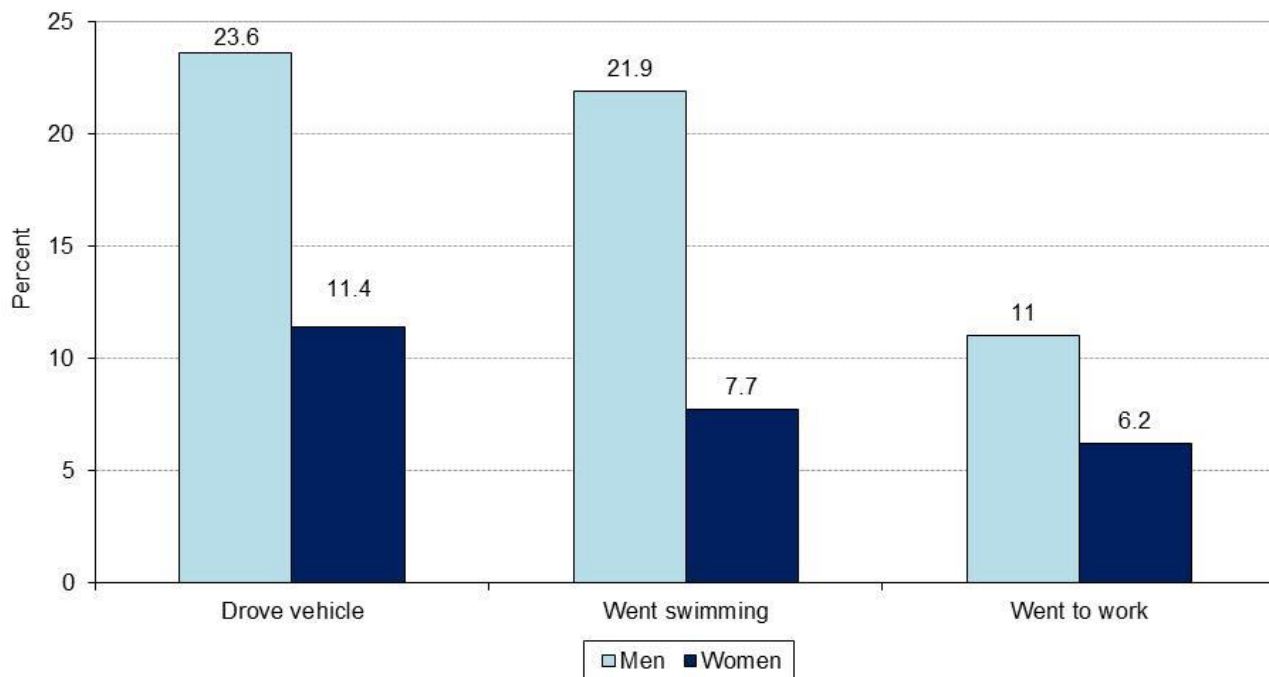


In 2016, the most common activity undertaken under the influence of illicit drugs by recent users aged 14 years and over was driving a vehicle (18.7%) followed by swimming (16.3%) and going to work (9.1%). This was similar to the national figure: 15.1% reported they had driven a vehicle, 12.4% had gone swimming and 9.9% had gone to work. Between 2013 and 2016, there was a significant decrease in the proportion of Australians reporting that they had verbally abused someone while under the influence of illicit drugs (from 4.3% to 2.8%) or created a disturbance, damaged or stole goods (from 4.5% to 3.1%).

Figure 23 shows that among South Australian men who had recently used illicit drugs, the most common activity was driving a vehicle (23.6%), followed by swimming (21.9%) and going to work

(11%). The pattern for women was similar but the proportions were lower: 11.4% had driven a vehicle, 7.7% had gone swimming and 6.2% had gone to work. South Australian data were generally similar to those reported nationally (18.5% of men and 10.3% of women had driven a vehicle, 15.1% and 8.6% had gone swimming and 12% and 6.8% had gone to work).

**Figure 23: Activities done in the previous 12 months while under the influence of illicit drugs: percentage of South Australians aged 14 years and over by sex, 2016**

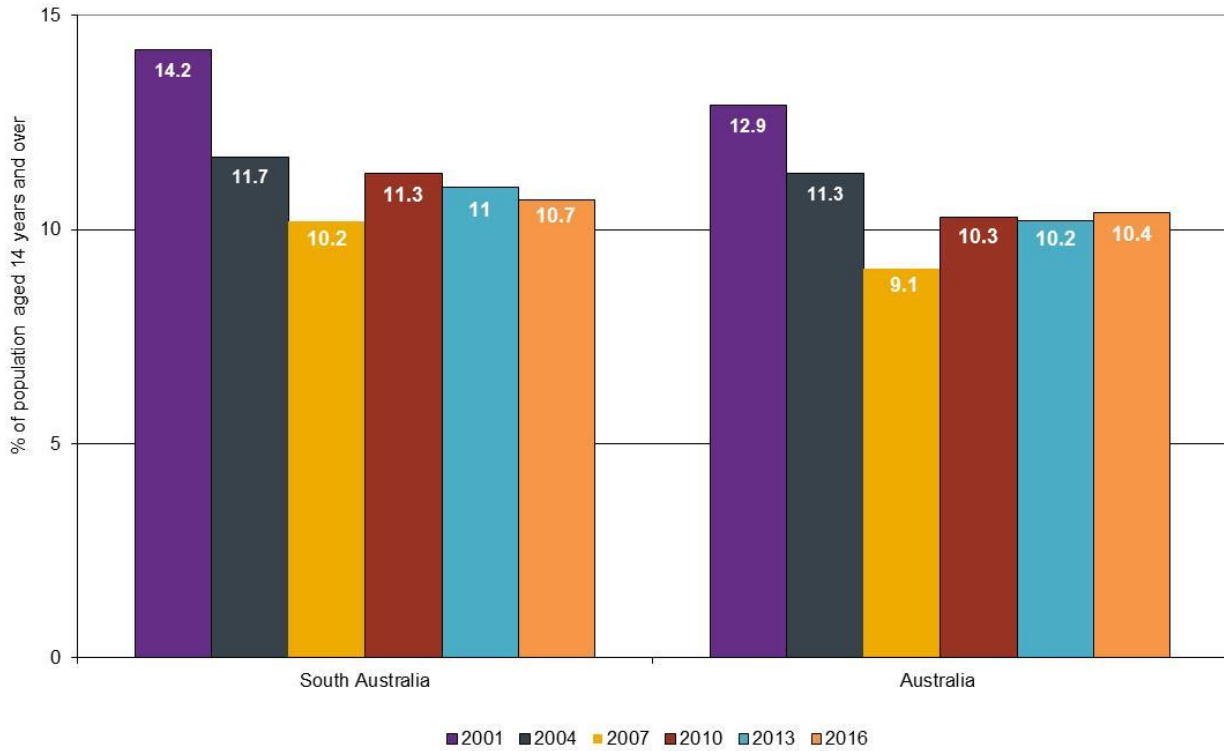


Only the top three activities are included due to small numbers in the other categories. \* Estimates have relative standard errors of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

### Prevalence of use – cannabis

Figure 24 shows the proportion of South Australians and Australians aged 14 years or older that had used cannabis in the past 12 months. There has been a decrease since 2001 for both; changes between 2013 and 2016 were not significant.

**Figure 24: The percentage of the population aged 14 years and over who reported recent use of cannabis\*, South Australia and Australia, 2001-2016**

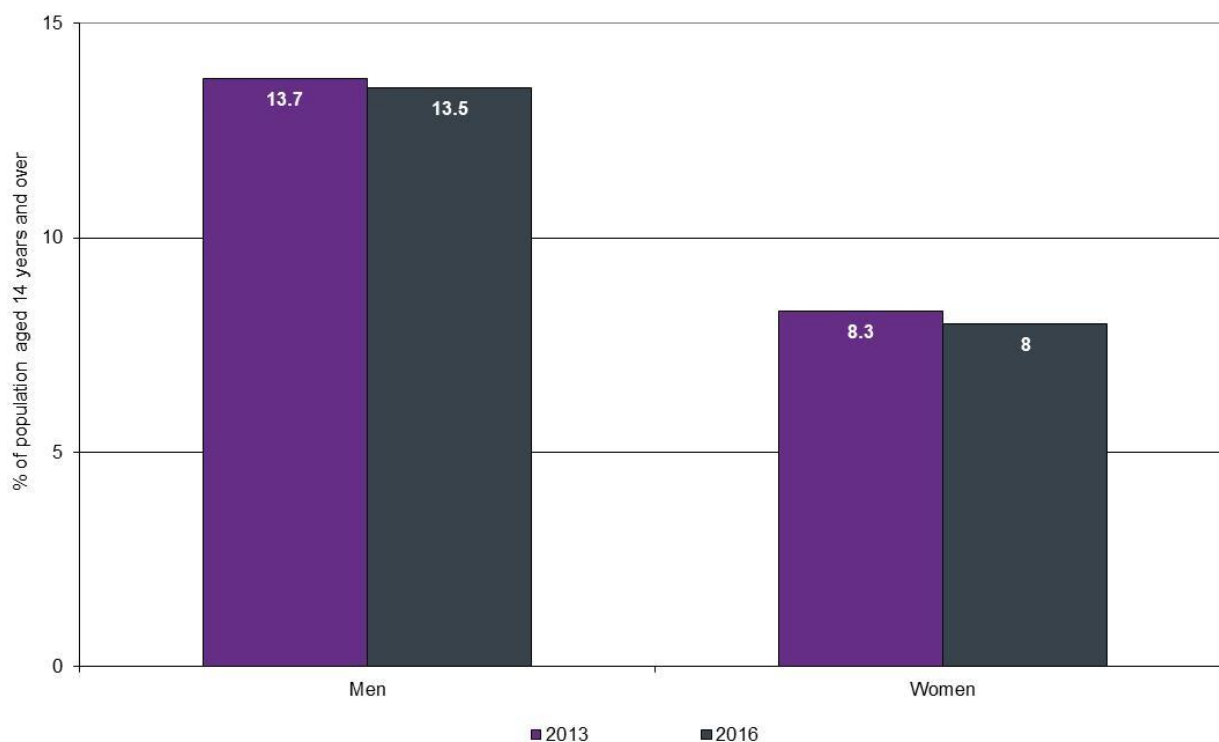


\* Had used cannabis at least once in the last 12 months

The prevalence of cannabis use in 2016 was highest among South Australians aged 20-29 years (19.9%; 22.1% in Australia), although this is a decrease from 2013 (22.3%). In contrast, there has been an increase in prevalence among South Australians aged 14-19 years, from 12.3% in 2013 to 18.7% in 2016. Figure 25 shows the proportion of South Australian men and women aged 14 years and over who recently used cannabis, showing that prevalence was higher among men (13.5% vs. 8%), with no significant changes for either sex between 2013 and 2016. Australian data are consistent with 13.1% of men and 7.9% of women in 2016 reporting recent use of cannabis (12.8% and 7.6%, respectively, in 2013).



**Figure 25: The percentage of the population aged 14 years and over who reported recent use of cannabis\* by sex, South Australia, 2013 and 2016**



\* Had used cannabis at least once in the last 12 months

### Prevalence of use – stimulants

Table 5 shows the proportion of South Australians aged 14 years or older that had used the three most common stimulants in the past 12 months. Recent use of meth/amphetamine decreased from 4.1% in 2004 to 1.9% in 2016, cocaine use increased from 0.7% to 2%, and ecstasy use decreased from 2.8% to 1.6%. Statistical significance testing was carried out between 2013 and 2016, and while recent meth/amphetamine and cocaine use remained stable, the decrease in ecstasy use was significant. Nationally, there was a significant decrease in recent meth/amphetamine use between 2013 (2.1%) and 2016 (1.4%), which occurred among both men (from 2.7% to 1.8%) and women (from 1.5% to 1%).

**Table 5: Proportion of South Australians and Australians<sup>(a)</sup> aged 14 years and over who used stimulants in the last 12 months, 2004-2016**

Stimulant	2004	2007	2010	2013	2016
Meth/amphetamine <sup>(b)</sup>	4.1 (3.2)	2.6 (2.3)	2.5 (2.1)	2.2 (2.1)	1.9 (1.4 <sup>#</sup> )
Ecstasy	2.8 (3.4)	2.9 (3.5)	3.3 (3.0)	2.8 (2.5 <sup>#</sup> )	1.6 <sup>#</sup> (2.2)
Cocaine	0.7 (1.0)	1.3 (1.6)	1.7 (2.1)	1.2 (2.1)	2.0 (2.5)

(a) National data in brackets. (b) Used for non-medical purposes. # Statistically significant change between 2013 and 2016.

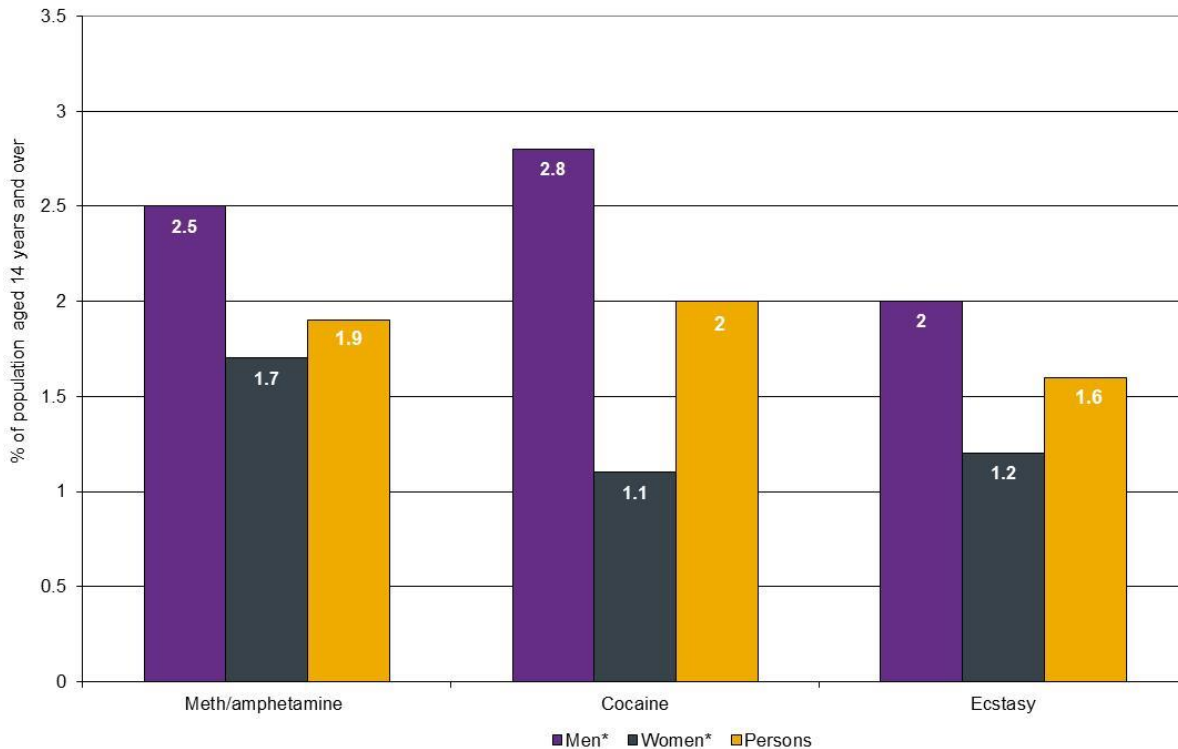
A greater proportion of South Australian men in 2016 had recently used meth/amphetamine and cocaine. The prevalence of recent ecstasy use was higher among South Australian women, although there has been a significant decrease in use from 3% in 2013 to 1.2%, which was not seen among men (from 2.6% in 2013 to 2% in 2016)<sup>7</sup>.

Nationally in 2016, the prevalence of recent meth/amphetamine use among men and women aged 14 years and over was similar to South Australia: 1.8% and 1%, respectively. Recent meth/amphetamine use decreased significantly between 2013 and 2016: from 2.7% to 1.8% among men, and from 1.5% to 1% among women. Recent cocaine use was slightly higher among Australians compared with South Australians (3.1% of men and 2% of women), and increased significantly among Australian

women: from 1.4% in 2013 to 2% in 2016. Recent ecstasy use was also higher among Australian men (2.6%) compared with South Australian men, and use decreased significantly between 2013 (3.2%) and 2016. Conversely, recent ecstasy use among Australian women (1.8%) was lower than among South Australian women. These data are presented in Figure 26 for South Australia in 2016.

The prevalence of use of all three stimulants in 2016 was highest among Australians aged 20-29 years (meth/amphetamine 2.8%, ecstasy 7.1% and cocaine 6.9%)<sup>8</sup>. South Australian estimates are unreliable.

**Figure 26: The percentage of the population aged 14 years and over who reported recent use of stimulants\*\* by sex, South Australia, 2016**



\*Estimate for men and women for cocaine and ecstasy, and for men for meth/amphetamine, has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution. \*\* Had used stimulants at least once in the last 12 months

The following sections on meth/amphetamine route of administration, frequency of use and users level of psychological distress present Australian data only as South Australian sample sizes are too small to make prevalence estimates reliable

### Form used and route of administration – meth/amphetamine

While the proportion of Australians using meth/amphetamine decreased significantly between 2013 and 2016, the main route of administration has continued to be smoking. Table 6 shows that in 2016, 41.8% of recent meth/amphetamine users smoked the drug, a significant increase since 2010 (19.1%). A further 28.6% swallowed the drug, with 16.3% snorting and 11.9% injecting<sup>9</sup>.

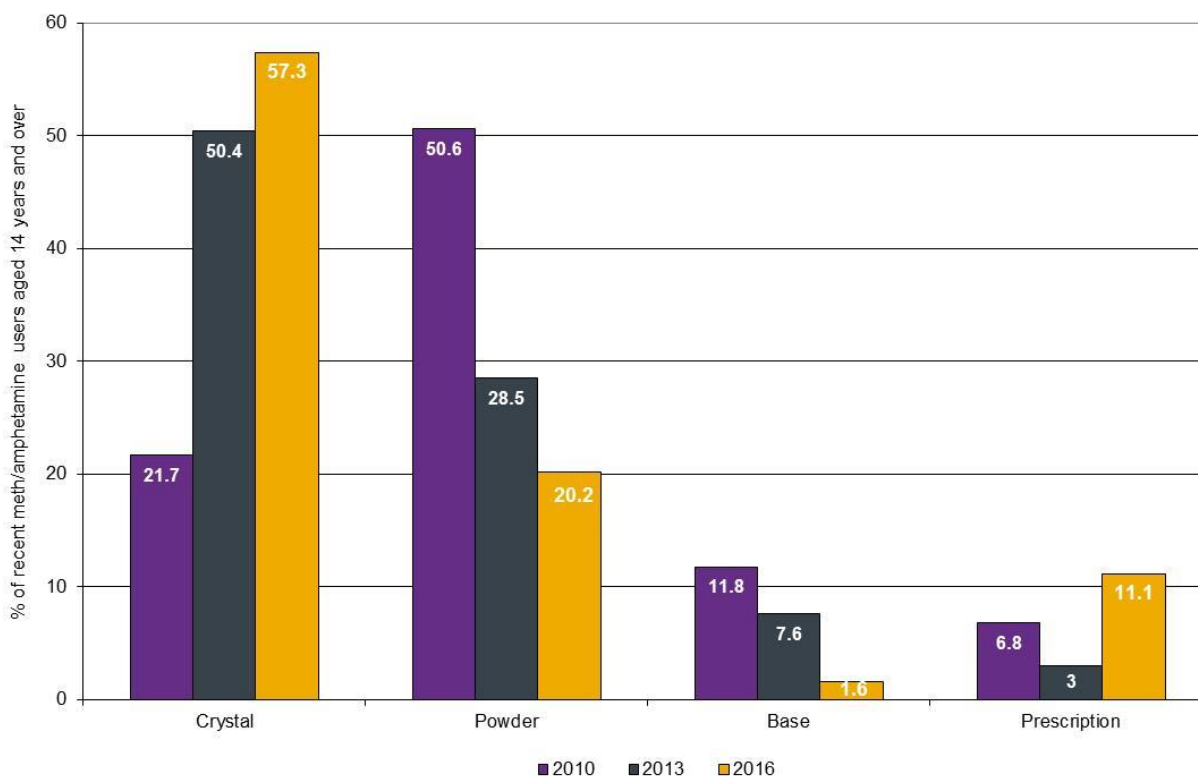
**Table 6: Recent meth/amphetamine\* users' main route of administration, proportion of the Australian population aged 14 years and over, 2010, 2013 and 2016**

Year	Smoked	Snorted	Swallowed	Injected	Other
2010	19.1	34.2	36.0	10.6	0.0
2013	40.9	22.9	26.5	9.5	0.5
2016	41.8	16.3	28.6	11.9	1.3

\* Used for non-medical purposes at least once in the last 12 months

In 2010, 21.7% of Australians recently using meth/amphetamine mainly used the crystalline form. This increased significantly to 50.4% in 2013, followed by a non-significant increase to 57.3% in 2016. The proportion of Australian users who mainly used the powder form decreased significantly from 50.6% in 2010 to 28.5% in 2013, with a further significant decrease to 20.2% in 2016. Mainly using base<sup>10</sup> meth/amphetamine also decreased significantly from 7.6%<sup>11</sup> in 2013 to 1.6%<sup>12</sup> in 2016, and mainly using prescription amphetamines for non-medical purposes increased significantly from 3%<sup>13</sup> in 2013 to 11.1% in 2016. These data are presented in Figure 27.

**Figure 27: Main form of meth/amphetamine used among recent users\* aged 14 years and over, Australia, 2010, 2013 and 2016**



\* Had used meth/amphetamine at least once in the last 12 months.

### Frequency of use – meth/amphetamine

Table 7 shows the frequency of meth/amphetamine use in Australia among recent users aged 14 years or more, in 2013 and 2016. The data indicate an increase in frequency of use. Just over 20% in 2016 had used meth/amphetamine at least once a week, which was not significantly different from 2013, although a significant increase since 2010 (9.3%). Almost 11% used once a month, which was significantly lower than in 2013. There was also a significant decrease in monthly use among those aged 20-29 years (from 20.7% in 2013 to 10% in 2016<sup>14</sup>) and among those aged 18 years and over (from 16.7% to 10.3%).

**Table 7: Frequency of use<sup>(a)</sup>, recent users of meth/amphetamine aged 14 years and over<sup>(b)</sup>, Australia, 2013 and 2016**

Frequency of use	2013 (%)	2016 (%)
<b>At least once a week or more</b>	15.5	20.4
<b>About once a month</b>	16.6#	10.6
<b>Every few months</b>	19.8	24.7
<b>Once or twice a year</b>	48.0	44.3

(a)Used for non-medical purposes. (b) Used in the last 12 months. # Statistically significant change between 2013 and 2016.

### Psychological distress – meth/amphetamine

Table 8 presents data on the level of anxiety and depression (measured by the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale<sup>15</sup>) among Australians aged 18 years and over, by recent meth/amphetamine use. The majority (68%) of those who had not used meth/amphetamine in the previous 12 months reported low levels of distress, which was a significant decrease from 2013 (70%). Among those who did report recent meth/amphetamine use, 35.7% experienced low levels of distress, with 37.2% experiencing high or very high levels. This was a significant increase from 2013 (26.6%). Note that those who had not used meth/amphetamine in the previous 12 months also reported a significant increase in high/very high levels of distress, from 9.6% in 2013 to 11.2% in 2016.

**Table 8: Level of psychological distress\* by meth/amphetamine<sup>(a)</sup> use, Australia<sup>(b)</sup>, 2016**

Level of distress	Not used in the previous 12 months	Used in the previous 12 months
<b>Low</b>	68.2 <sup>#</sup> (70.0)	35.7 (41.7)
<b>Moderate</b>	20.5 (20.4)	27.1 (31.8)
<b>High</b>	8.2 <sup>#</sup> (7.0)	21.6 (15.6)
<b>Very high</b>	3.0 <sup>#</sup> (2.6)	15.7 (10.9)
<b>High/very high</b>	11.2 <sup>#</sup> (9.6)	37.2 <sup>#</sup> (26.6)

\*Kessler scores -Low 10–15; moderate: 16–21; high: 22–29; very high: 30–50. (a)Used for non-medical purposes.

(b) 2013 data in brackets #Statistically significant change between 2013 and 2016.

## More information

### [2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey Detailed Findings](#)

This bulletin was produced by Marie Longo and Richard Cooke, Population Health and Clinical Monitoring, Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia:

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Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia acknowledges the contribution of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the data custodian of the National Drug Strategy Household Survey.

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1 Note that 23 respondents in the 2016 NDSHS dataset were potentially identifiable and were removed from the Confidentialised Unit Record Files (CURF). Analysis presented here may not match AIHW published data (may result in a discrepancy of around 0.1%). Unless explicitly stated, data are publicly available on the AIHW website: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/illicit-use-of-drugs/ndshs-2016-detailed/contents/table-of-contents>

2 In 2016, there was a change in methodology, which may have affected some of the estimates. Respondents could complete the survey via a paper form, an online form or a telephone interview. This was the first time an online form was used: the 2013 and 2010 surveys consisted solely of the drop-and-collect method. A respondent's demographic characteristics affect their choice of completing a paper survey or an online survey and are also known to affect the likelihood of reporting drug use. Regression analysis was used to test whether there could be an effect between the three collection modes used in 2016. After adjusting for socio-demographic factors, significant differences in prevalence rates between the online and papers respondents were found in 4 out of the 9 variables studied. The model suggests no significant difference between paper and online completion for drinking status; lifetime risk and single occasion risk status; and recent use of methamphetamines and tranquilisers. Estimates for smoking, cocaine, pain-killers/opiates and cannabis may have been impacted by a difference in the mode effect of paper and online forms (online respondents were less likely to be a daily smoker, or use cocaine, painkillers/ opiates or marijuana in the previous 12 months than paper forms).

3 The NH&MRC Guidelines state that for persons under 18 years, not drinking alcohol is the safest option. However, for comparability with other age groups, the NDSHS includes a low-risk category for those aged 12-17 years.

4 These data are not published elsewhere.

5 Among respondents who reported ever having smoked a full cigarette.

6 Based on illicit use of at least 1 of 14 classes of drugs (meth/amphetamine, cannabis, heroin, cocaine, hallucinogens, inhalants, ecstasy, ketamine, GHB, pain-killers/analgesics and opioids, tranquilisers/sleeping pills, methadone/buprenorphine and any injected drug; excludes synthetic cannabinoids and new/emerging psychoactive substances).

7 Estimates for both men and women have relative standard errors of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

8 These data are not published elsewhere.

9 *Ibid.*

10 Also known as 'pure', 'wax' or 'point'. This form of methamphetamine is oily or waxy and often brown in colour.

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

12 *Ibid.*

13 *Ibid.*

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

15 Coombs, T., 2005, 'Australian Mental Health Outcomes and Classification Network; Kessler -10 Training Manual', NSW Institute of Psychiatry.