

IN THE DARK ABOUT ALCOHOL HARMS: AUSTRALIANS' KNOWLEDGE OF ALCOHOL AND CANCER

Alcohol causes at least seven types of cancer,¹ and was estimated to cause 4% of all new cancers in Australia in 2020.²

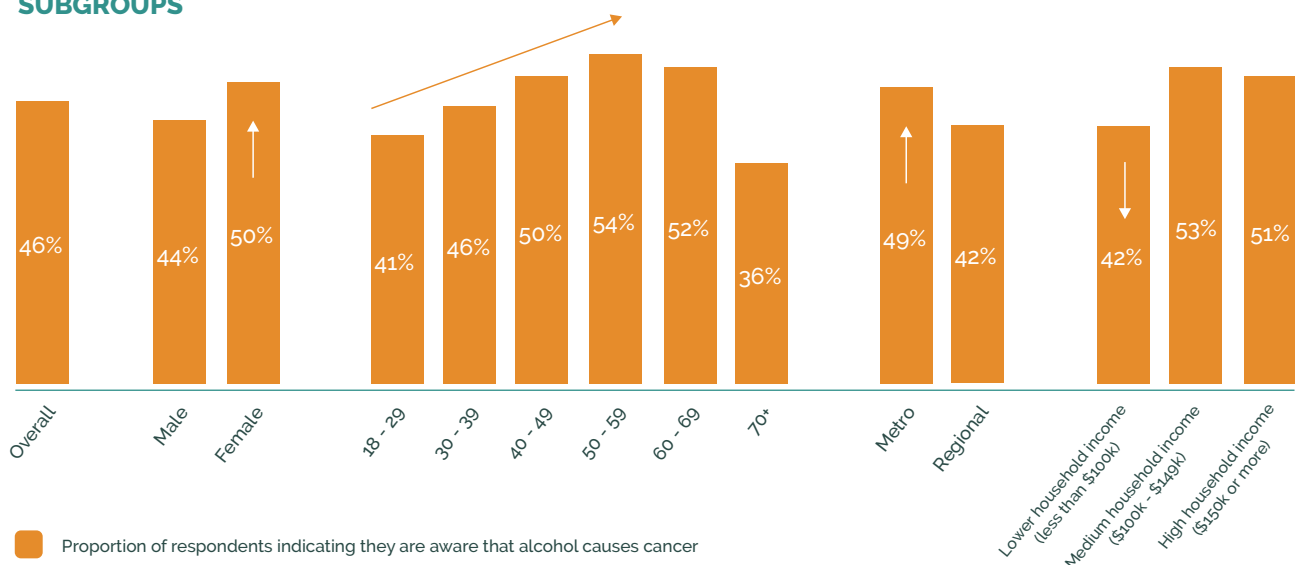
We asked **2,000 Australian adults** about their knowledge around alcohol and cancer. The nationally representative sample was surveyed online in September 2023.³

What did we find?

Less than half of Australians know that alcohol can cause cancer.

- Males are less likely than females to know that alcohol can cause cancer.
- Younger Australians are less likely than older age groups to know that alcohol can cause cancer.
- People living in regional areas are less likely than those living in metro areas to know that alcohol can cause cancer.
- People in lower income households are less likely to know that alcohol can cause cancer.

GRAPH 1 – KNOWLEDGE OF THE LINK BETWEEN ALCOHOL AND CANCER BY DEMOGRAPHIC SUBGROUPS



Australians' knowledge of the types of cancer caused by alcohol remains low.

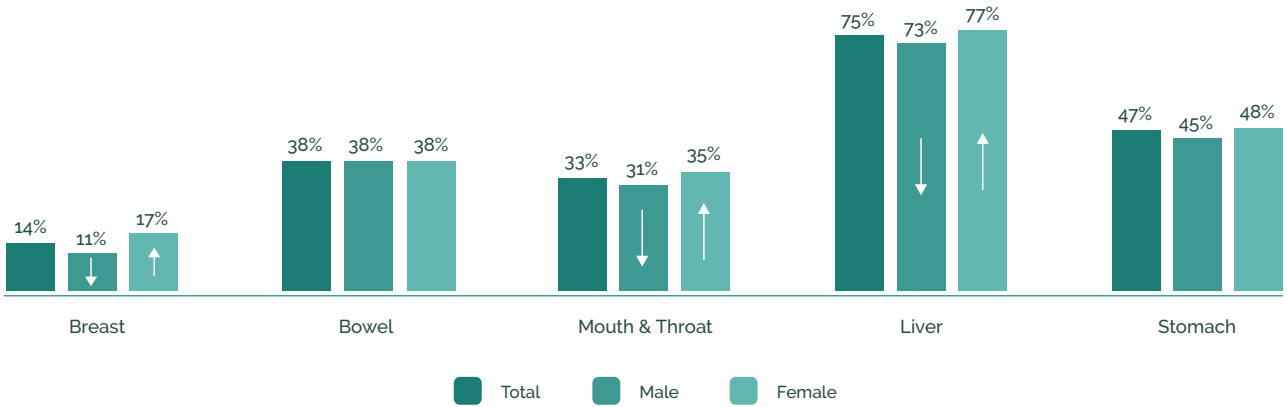
- Only 14% of Australians know alcohol can cause breast cancer.
- Only a third of Australians know alcohol can cause cancer of the mouth and throat.
- Women are more likely than men to know that alcohol can cause cancers of the liver, mouth and throat, and breast.
- Australians aged 60 – 69 years are more likely than other Australians to know alcohol can cause certain cancers.
- Australians in higher income households are more likely to know that alcohol can cause certain cancers.

¹ Continuous Update Project Expert Report 2018: Alcoholic drinks and the risk of cancer. World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research. <https://www.wcrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Alcoholic-Drinks.pdf>

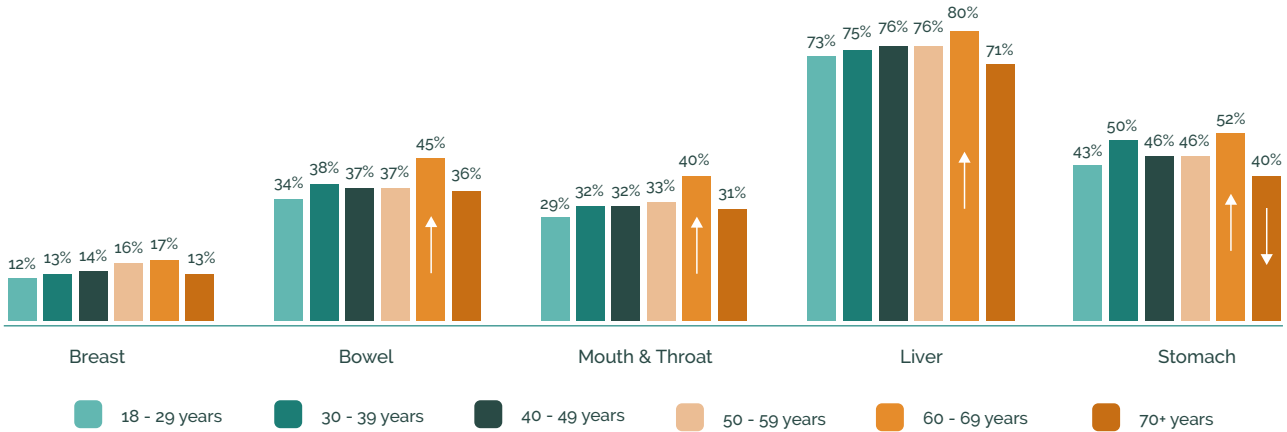
² Runggay H, Shield K, Charvat H, et al. Global burden of cancer in 2020 attributable to alcohol consumption: a population-based study. *Lancet Oncol.* 2021;22(8): 1071-1080.

³ Full details on the survey and sample can be found in [Public opinion on alcohol in Australia – Knowledge, attitudes, and support for change.](#)

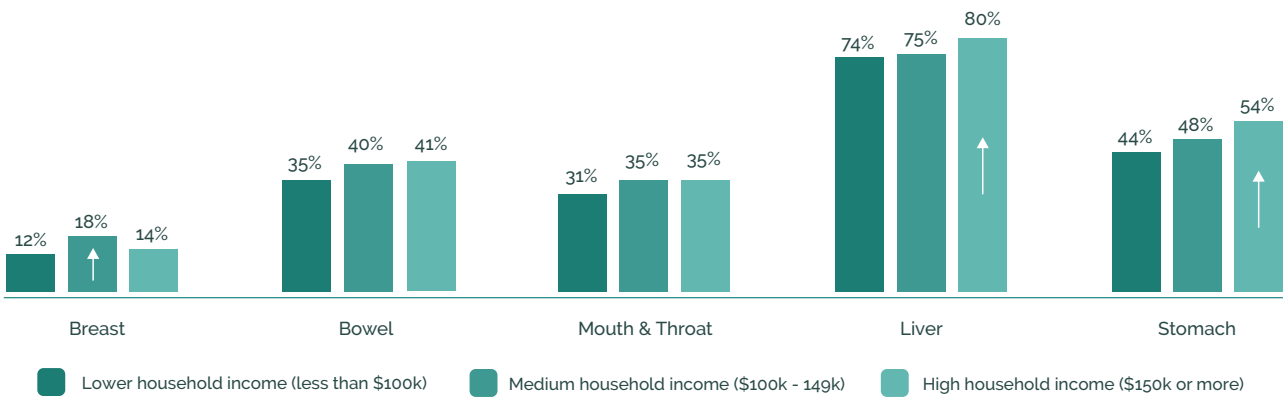
GRAPH 2 – KNOWLEDGE OF CANCER TYPES CAUSED BY ALCOHOL BY GENDER



GRAPH 3 – KNOWLEDGE OF CANCER TYPES CAUSED BY ALCOHOL BY AGE



GRAPH 4: KNOWLEDGE OF CANCER TYPES CAUSED BY ALCOHOL BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME LEVEL



*Arrows note statistically significant differences.

Australians need to see more health messages that show the true impact of alcohol products.

Australians have a right to know if the products they are using can cause them harm. Yet many people in the community are not aware that alcohol causes cancer.

The alcohol industry spends millions of dollars every year telling people to drink, ignoring the fact that its products cause significant harm. Australians need to see more health messages that show the true impact of the harms and see fewer messages telling them to drink more.

Empowering Australians with the knowledge that alcohol causes harm is an important part of a comprehensive approach to reducing harm from alcohol. The time has come for the Australian Government to commit to raising awareness of the harms from alcohol through the introduction of a health warning label on all alcohol products.