

DASSA Statistical Bulletin

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South Australian Population Health Survey Module
System 2023: a summary of the results relating to
alcohol consumption

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This Bulletin is the 25th in a series providing the most up-to-date data available on the prevalence of alcohol and other drug use, the harms associated with use, and alcohol and other drug treatment services in South Australia. It provides a summary of 2023 data collected through the *South Australian Population Health Survey (SAPHS) Module System* on alcohol consumption patterns. Note that these data are from one annual population health survey and are not intended to be representative of all drinkers. A more comprehensive picture of alcohol use and harm in the South Australian community requires the use of additional data from other sources, such as wastewater analysis, road crash data and hospital data.

Background

The Health Omnibus Survey (HOS) was a face-to-face survey that collected data on alcohol consumption from 2011 to 2017¹. However, due to problems recruiting participants, in 2018 the South Australian Population Health Survey (SAPHS) Module System began collecting these data. This is a computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) survey that utilises random digit dialling of mobile and landline numbers to draw a random sample of South Australians; 3,002 were surveyed in 2022. In 2018, proxies (parents or guardians) were used for 15-year-old respondents; this requirement was removed in 2019. A review of the changes to methodology and their implications on the prevalence of alcohol consumption and risky drinking estimates can be found in a previous bulletin².

A total of 10 questions relating to alcohol consumption were included in these surveys; these were adapted from the National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS)³. In 2020, revisions to the Australian Alcohol Guidelines were released by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)⁴, which changed the way risky consumption is now reported. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has re-analysed data from the NDSHS and provided a method and rationale for measuring risky drinking according to the revised Guidelines⁵. These are summarised in a previous bulletin⁶ which includes data on frequency and quantity of use to provide context; how they differ from those developed in 2009; and the implications for future reporting. In this bulletin, data on frequency and quantity of use are still included for ongoing monitoring, but risky drinking data are presented using the new Guidelines only. Data comparisons are made over time⁷, and more recently⁸ and although data from 2020 and 2021 are included for information, limited statistical analyses were performed⁹.

Highlights¹⁰

Frequency of use¹¹

- Higher proportion of men consume alcohol than women at all frequencies, but any consumption remained stable between 2011 and 2023.
- Older people consume alcohol more frequently than younger people, and daily drinking increased among all age groups between 2022 and 2023 except for those aged 30-39 years.

Quantity of use

- Men drink more than women, but both decreased their quantity of use between 2011 and 2023.
- Quantity of use was highest among the youngest age group, with decreases between 2011 and 2023 among those aged 30-39 years and 60 years and over.

Guideline 1: Reducing the risk of alcohol-related harm for adults

- Lifetime risk: the proportion of South Australians drinking at this level occurred more among men and in the 18-29- and 40-49-year age groups but decreased overall between 2011 and 2023.
- Single occasion risk: the proportion of South Australians drinking at this level occurred more among men and in the 18-29- and 40-49-year age groups but decreased overall between 2011 and 2023.

Guideline 2: People under 18 years of age

- The proportion of underage drinkers has remained stable over time although there is evidence of an increase in recent years.

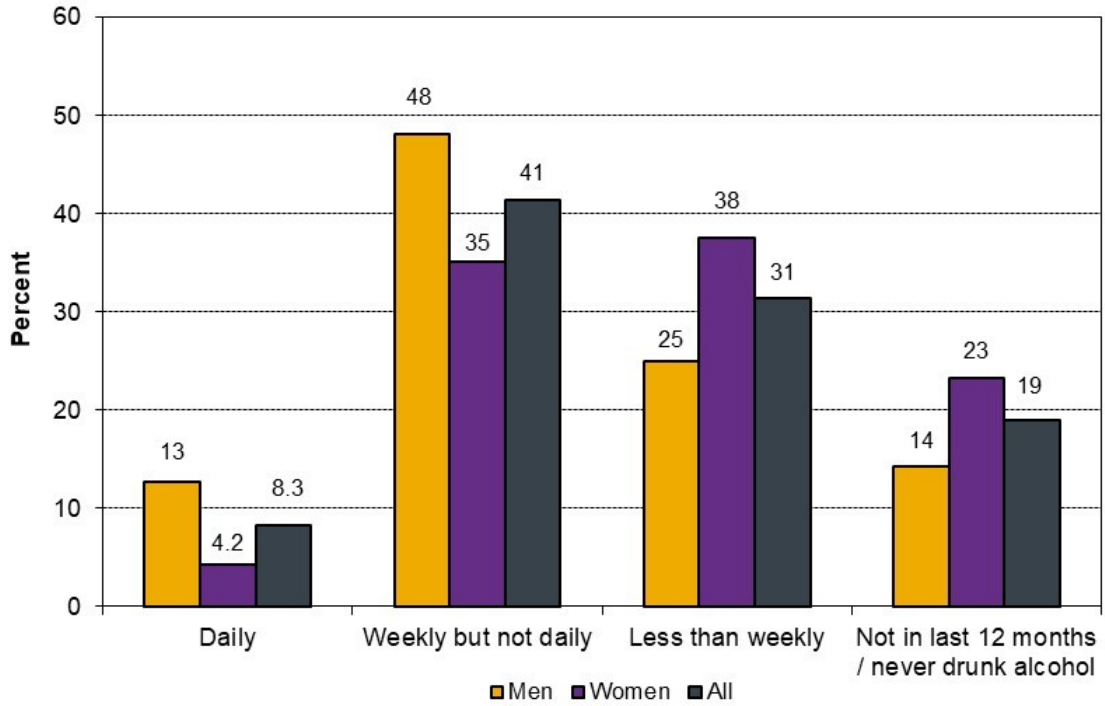
Detailed findings

Alcohol consumption: frequency by sex¹²

- In 2023, 81% of South Australians aged 18 years and over had consumed alcohol at least once in the previous 12 months (41% drank 2-6 days a week and 8.3% daily), and 19% were abstainers¹³. This is consistent with data collected in 2011-2019 and 2021; in 2020 there was a change in the pattern of alcohol consumption with significant decreases between 2011 and 2020 and 2019 and 2020, among both men and women. More information on changes during the COVID-19 pandemic can be found in a previous bulletin¹⁴. *Figure 1*
- In 2023, a significantly higher proportion of men aged 18 years and over consumed alcohol than women (86% compared with 77%), including daily drinking (13% compared with 4.2%) and at least weekly drinking (61% compared with 39%). Men were also significantly less likely to be ex-drinkers (8.6% compared with 15.1%). *Figure 1*
- There were no changes over time in any alcohol consumption among men (87% to 86%) or women (76% to 77%). There were also no changes more recently (83% to 86% for men and 76% to 77% for women). *Figures 1-2*
- There were no changes in at least weekly alcohol consumption over time for either men (61% in both years) or women (39% in both years), and there were no changes more recently (57% to 61% for men and 40% to 39% for women). *Figures 1-2*
- Daily drinking remained stable over time among South Australian men (13% in both years) and women (5% to 4.2%). More recently, there were increases in daily drinking among men (7.8% to 13%) but not women (3.7% to 4.2%).

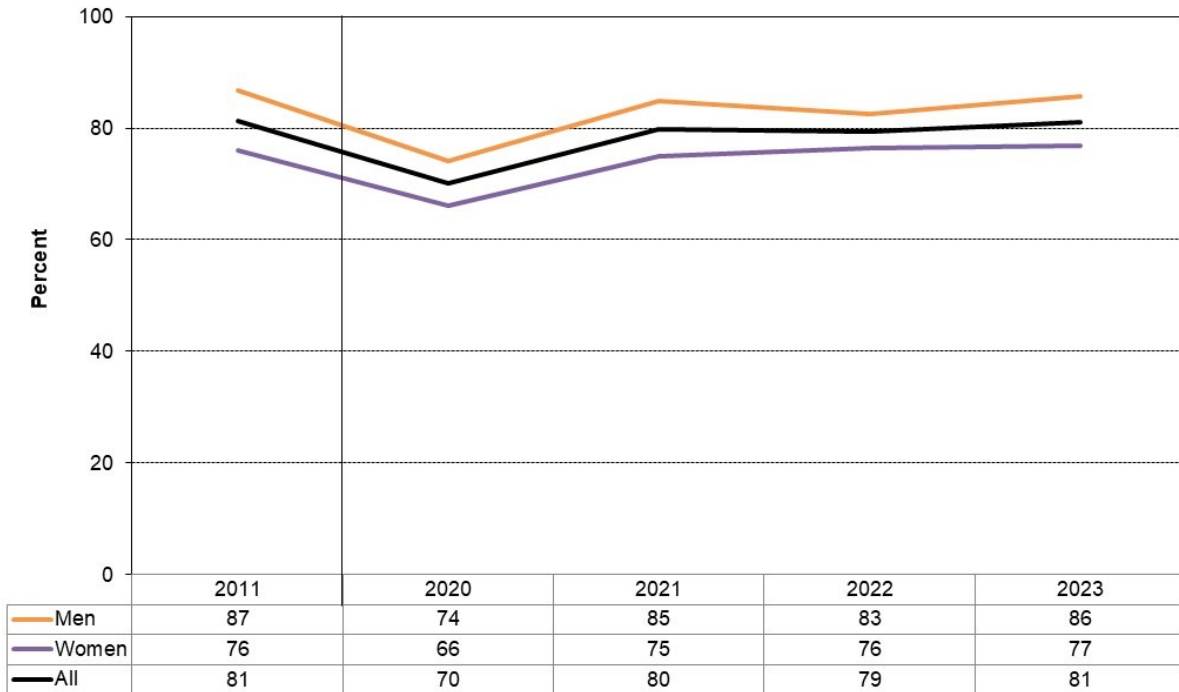
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Figure 1: Alcohol consumption in the previous 12 months among South Australians aged 18 years and over by sex, 2023



Source: South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2023.

Figure 2: Alcohol consumption at least once in the previous 12 months among South Australians aged 18 years and over by sex, 2011-2023

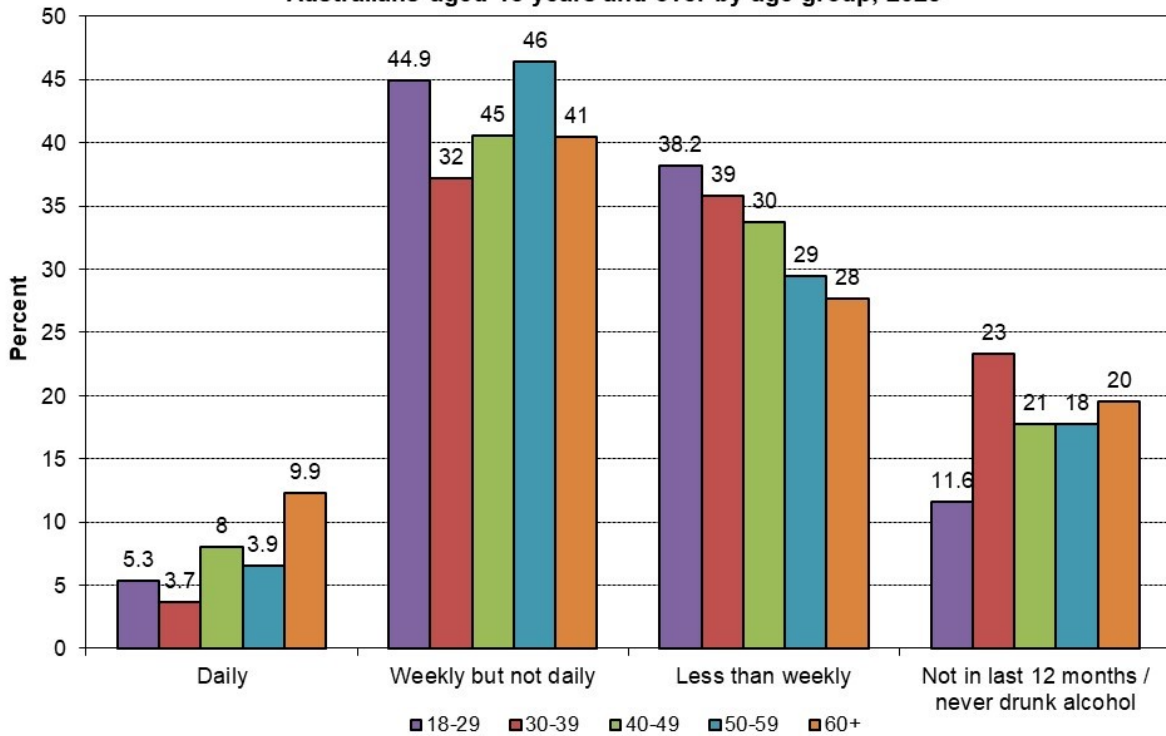


Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011 and South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2020-2023. The vertical line denotes the change in methodology that occurred in 2018.

Alcohol consumption: frequency by age group

- In 2023, older South Australians consumed alcohol more often than younger people, with at least weekly consumption highest among those aged 50-59 years and 60 years and over (both 53%). Daily drinking was highest among those aged 60 years and over (9.9%). *Figure 3*
- There was a decrease in any alcohol consumption among those aged 50-59 years (87% to 83%), but an increase among those aged 60 years and over (74% to 81%). Alcohol consumption more recently remained stable among all age groups. *Figure 4*
- Drinking at least weekly and daily drinking remained unchanged over time among South Australians by age group, except for those aged 50-59 years where there was a significant decrease in daily drinking (13% to 6.6%).
- There were no changes more recently in at least weekly drinking, but daily drinking increased significantly among all age groups except those aged 30-39 years, as follows: 18-29 (0% to 5.2%); 40-49 (3.4% to 8%); 50-59 (3.9% to 6.6%) and 60 years and over (10% to 12.3%).
- There was an increase in the proportion aged 30-39 years that were ex-drinkers (10% to 17%).

Figure 3: Alcohol consumption in the previous 12 months among South Australians aged 18 years and over by age group, 2023

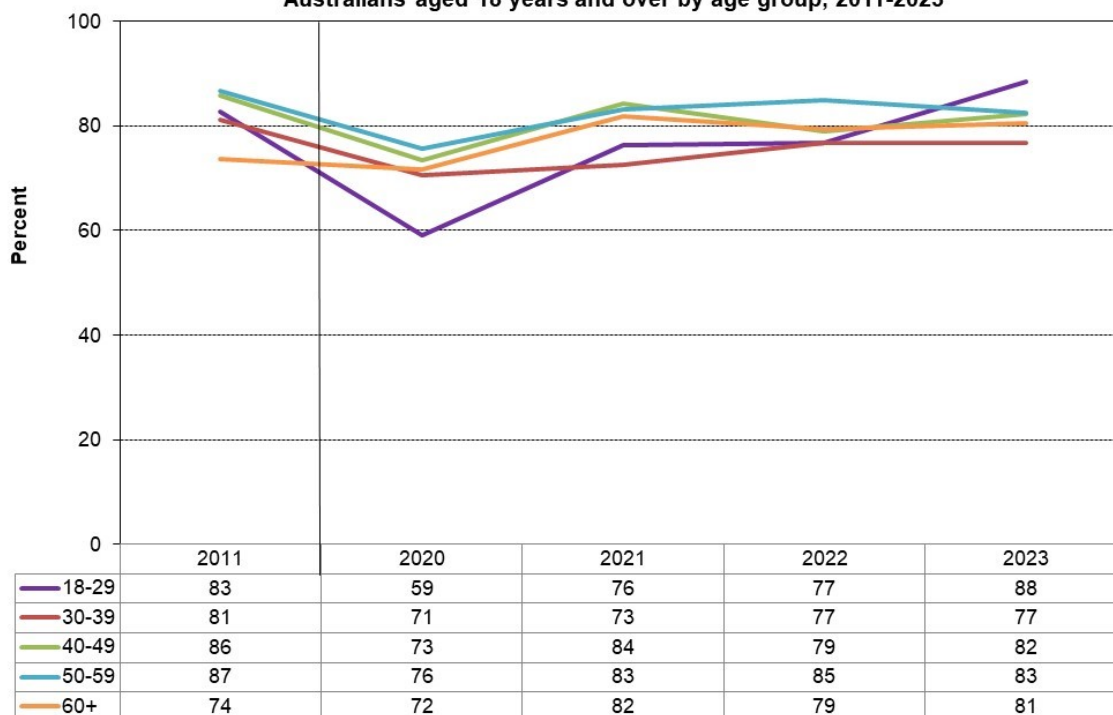


Source: South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2023

Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011 and South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2020-2023. The vertical line denotes the change in methodology that occurred in 2018.

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Figure 4: Alcohol consumption at least once in the previous 12 months among South Australians aged 18 years and over by age group, 2011-2023



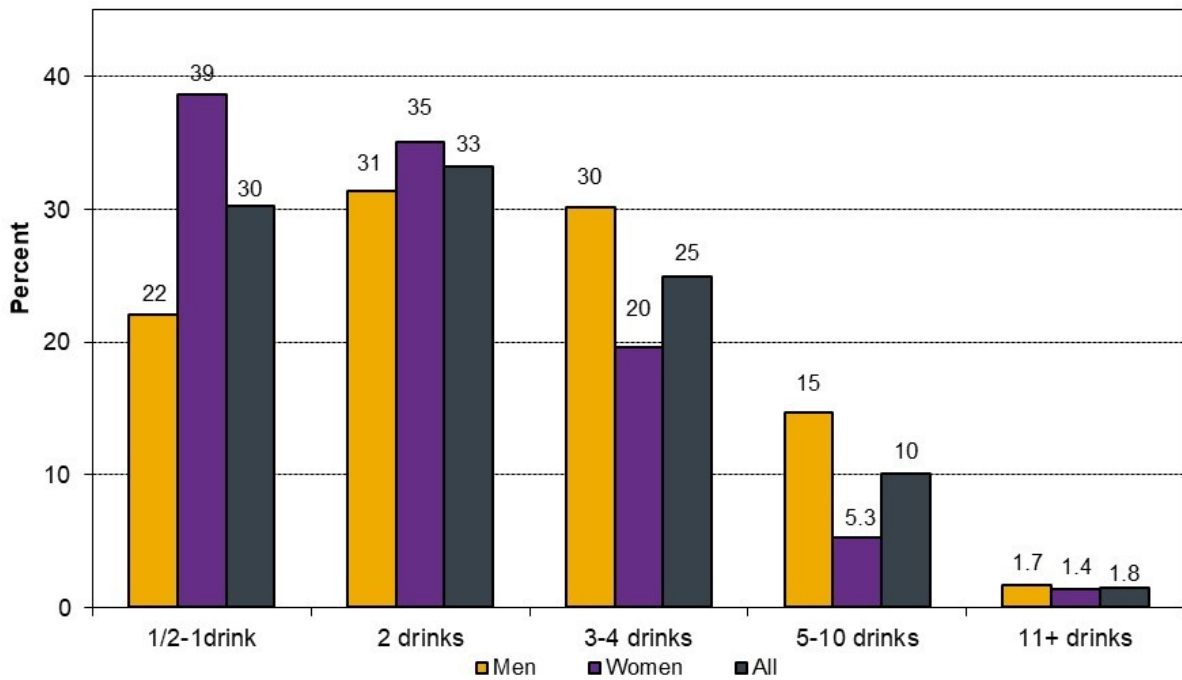
Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011 and South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2020-2023. The vertical line denotes the change in methodology that occurred in 2018.

Alcohol consumption¹⁵: quantity by sex¹⁶

- For the majority (88%) of South Australians aged 18 years and over in 2023, the quantity of alcohol usually consumed in a session fell within the National Guidelines for consumption at levels that would not put them at risk of injury from a single drinking occasion (four drinks or less). *Figure 5*
- The remaining 12% drank at levels that did put them at risk of injury, a significant decrease from 2011 (21% usually consumed more than four drinks), but unchanged from 2022 (12%). *Figure 6*
- In 2023, South Australian men aged 18 years and over were significantly more likely to consume larger quantities of alcohol than women of the same age, with 16% usually consuming more than four drinks (6.7% of women). Of those who drank in the last 12 months, the majority (92%) in 2023 reported having at least one alcohol-free day per week; 87% of men and 96% of women. This is unchanged from previous years. *Figure 6*
- There were significant decreases over time in the proportion of men who reported usually consuming more than four drinks (28% to 16%), as well as decreases in the proportion of women (13% to 6.7%). There were no significant changes more recently. *Figure 6*

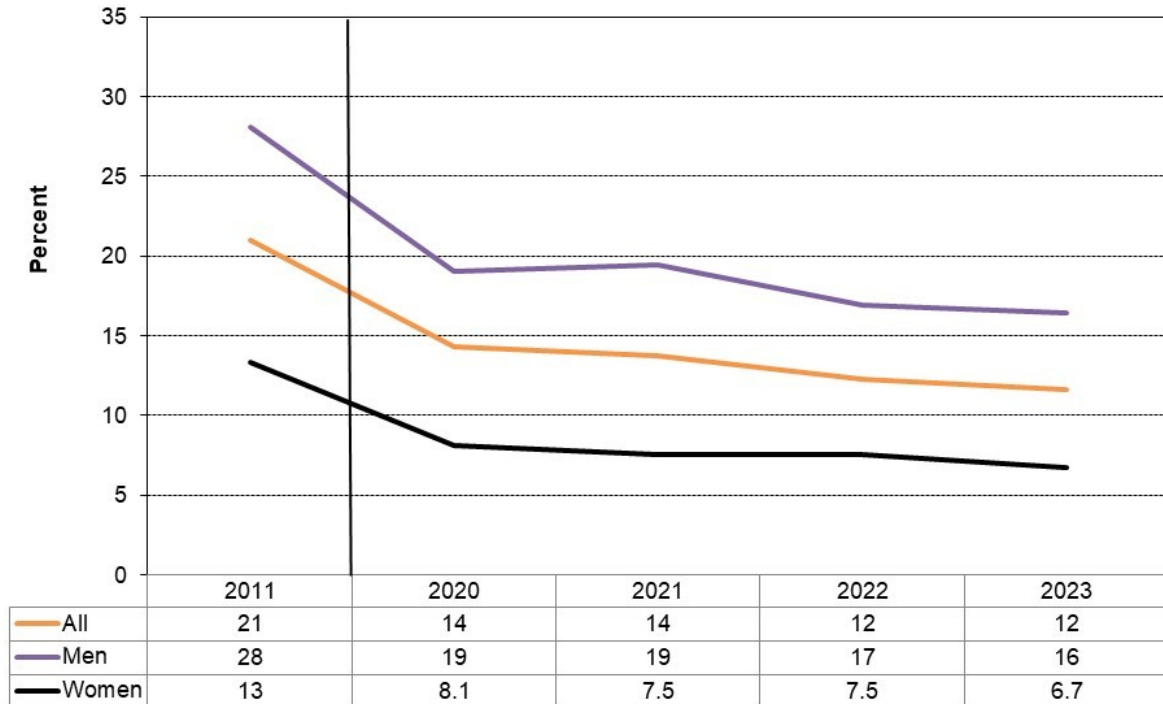
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Figure 5: Number of standard drinks usually consumed by South Australians aged 18 years and over on a drinking day by sex, 2023



Source: South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2023.

Figure 6: Usual consumption of more than four drinks on a drinking day among South Australians aged 18 years and over, 2011-2023



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011 and South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2020-2023. The vertical line denotes the change in methodology that occurred in 2018.

Alcohol consumption: quantity by age group

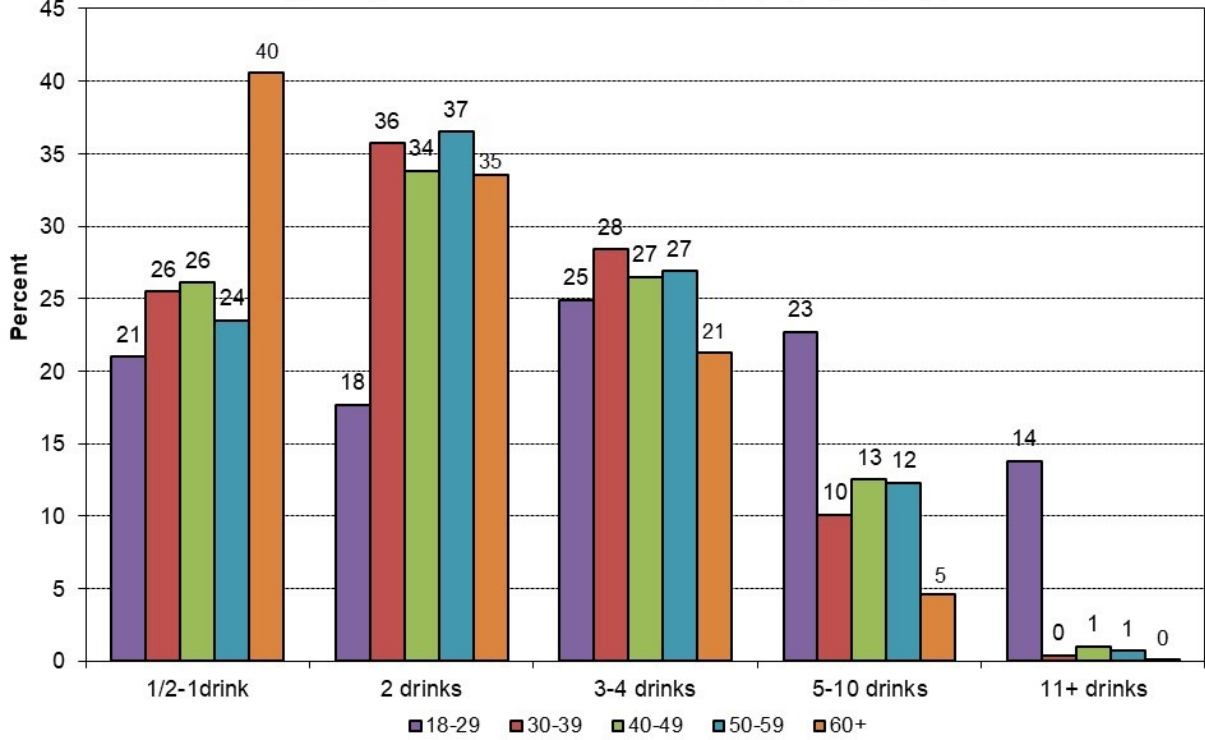
- The proportion of South Australians who usually consumed more than four drinks on a drinking day broadly decreased with age, although in 2023, 30-39-year-olds had a lower proportion than those aged 40-59 years. Thirty-seven percent of those aged 18-29 years consumed more than four drinks, followed by 11% of those aged 30-39 years, 14% of those aged 40-49 years

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and 13% of those aged 50-59 years. Only 4.7% of those aged 60 years and over usually consumed more than four drinks on a drinking day. *Figures 7-8*

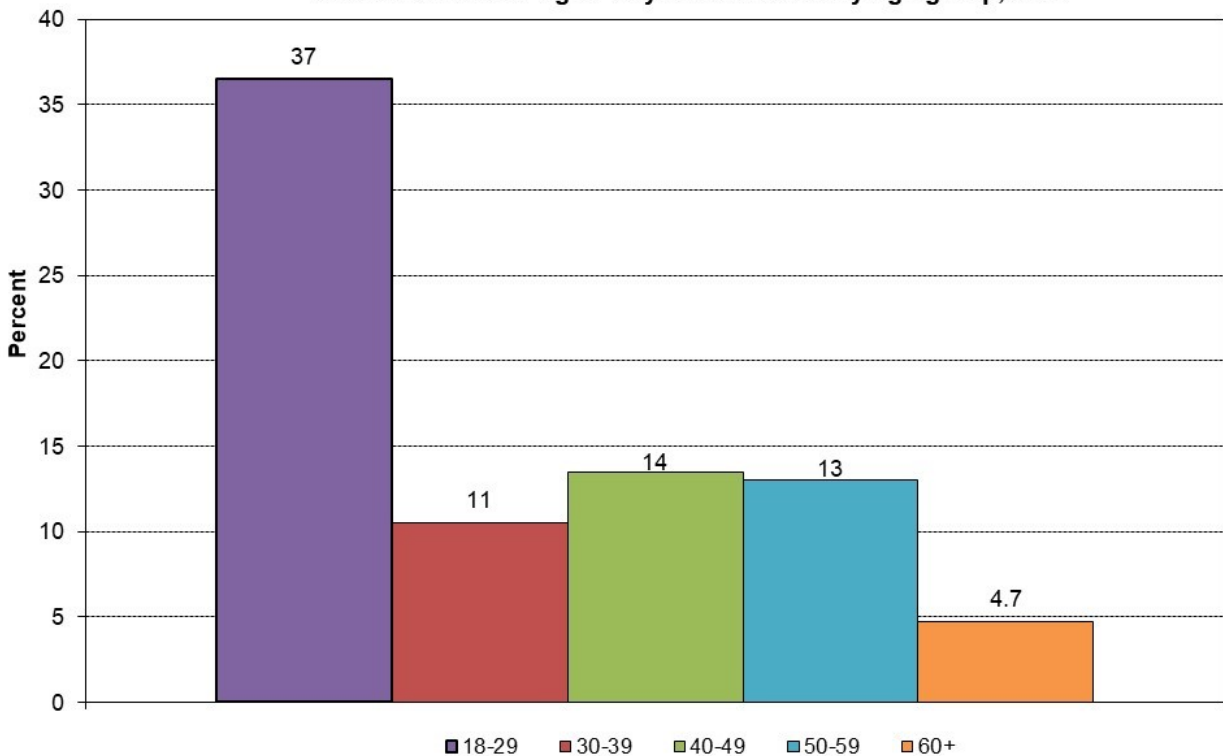
- There were significant decreases over time in the proportion consuming more than four drinks among those aged 30-39 years (23% to 11%) and 60 years and over (8.3% to 4.7%). There was also a significant decrease more recently among 30-39-year-olds (17% to 11%). *Figure 9*

Figure 7: Number of standard drinks usually consumed by South Australians aged 18 years and over on a drinking day by age group, 2023



Source: South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2023.

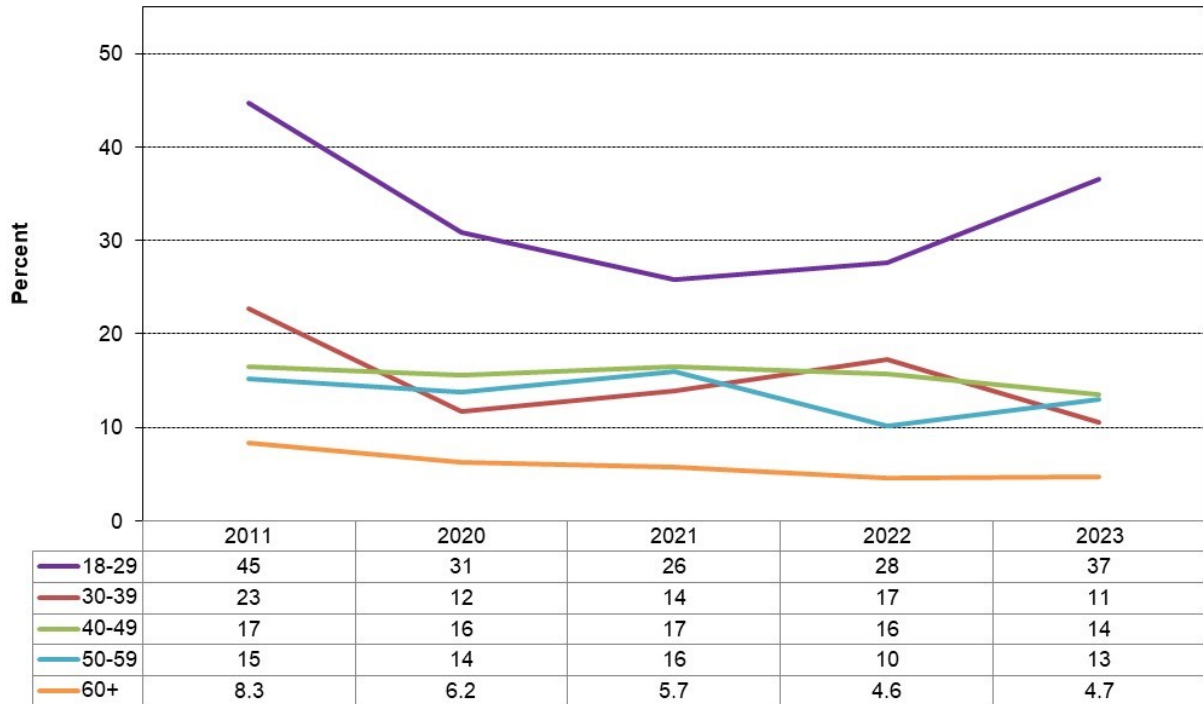
Figure 8: Usual consumption of more than four drinks on a drinking day by South Australians aged 18 years and over by age group, 2023



Source: South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2023.

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Figure 9: Usual consumption of more than four drinks on a drinking day by South Australians aged 18 years and over by age group, 2011-2023



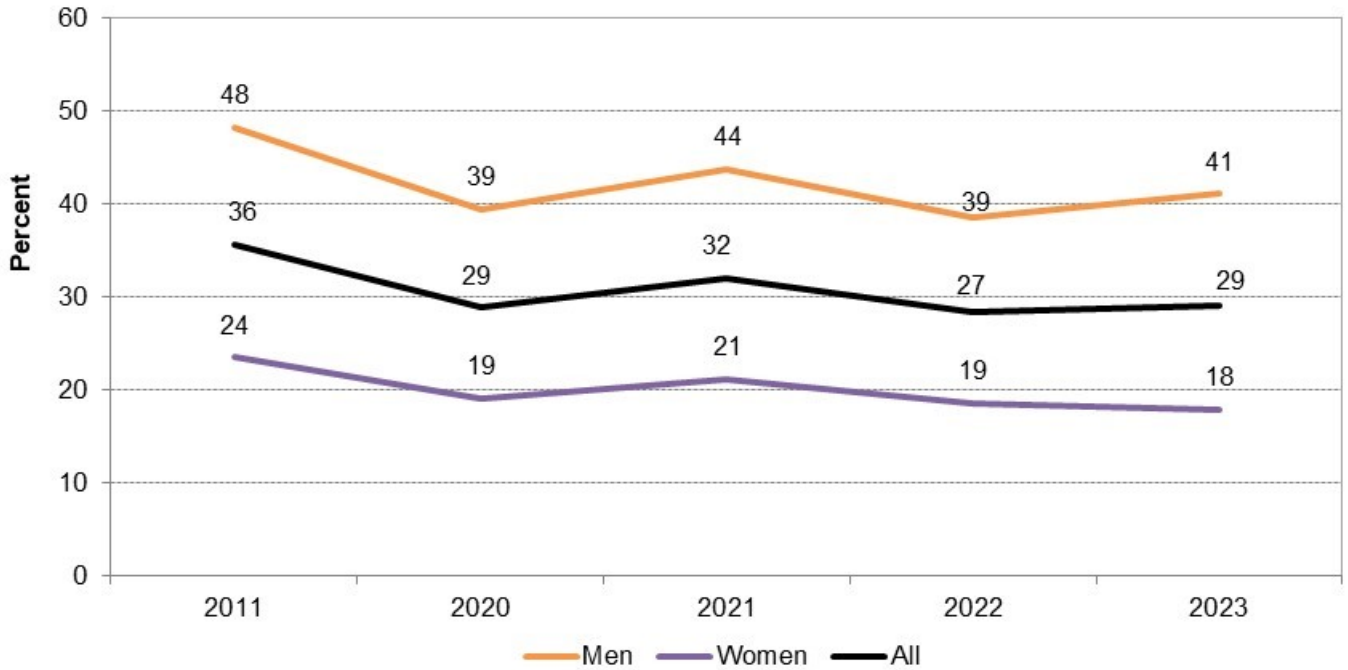
Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011 and South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2020-2023
The vertical line denotes the change in methodology that occurred in 2018.

Guideline 1: No more than 10 standard drinks a week and no more than four standard drinks on a single day

- The proportion of South Australians aged 18 years and over drinking alcohol in ways that increased their risk of alcohol-related disease or injury decreased significantly over time (36% to 29%) but remained stable more recently (27% to 29%). *Figure 10*
- There were significant decreases over time among both men (48% to 41%) and women (24% to 18%), remaining stable more recently (39% to 41% for men and 19% to 18% for women). *Figure 10*
- The age groups with the highest proportion of risky drinkers in 2023 were aged 18-29 years (51%) and 40-49 (33%) years. There was a significant decrease over time for those aged 30-39 years (34% to 22%) and 50-59 years (36% to 28%), with risk remaining stable among the other age groups. There were no changes more recently, although there was a significant increase among those aged 18-29 years between 2020/2021 and 2023 (28% to 51%). *Figure 11*

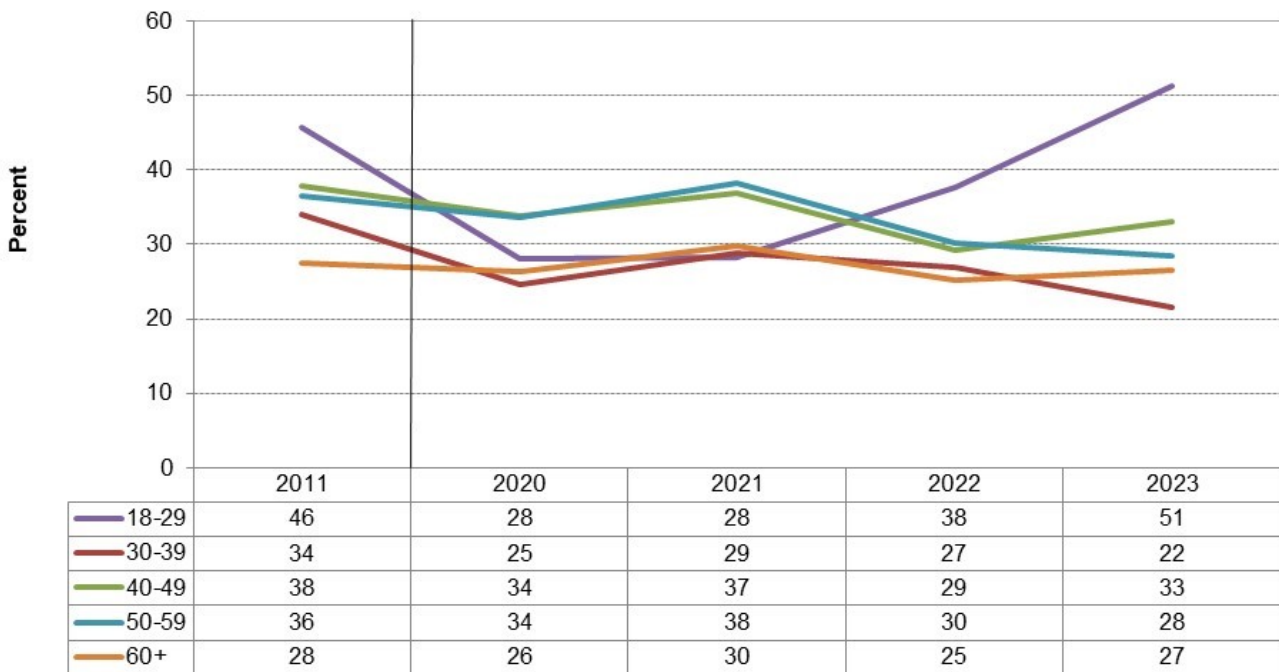
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Figure 10: Risky alcohol consumption according to the 2020 Alcohol Guidelines for South Australians aged 18 years and over by sex, 2011-2023



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011 and South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2020-2023. The vertical line denotes the change in methodology that occurred in 2018.

Figure 11: Risky alcohol consumption according to the 2020 Alcohol Guidelines for South Australians aged 18 years and over by age group, 2011-2023

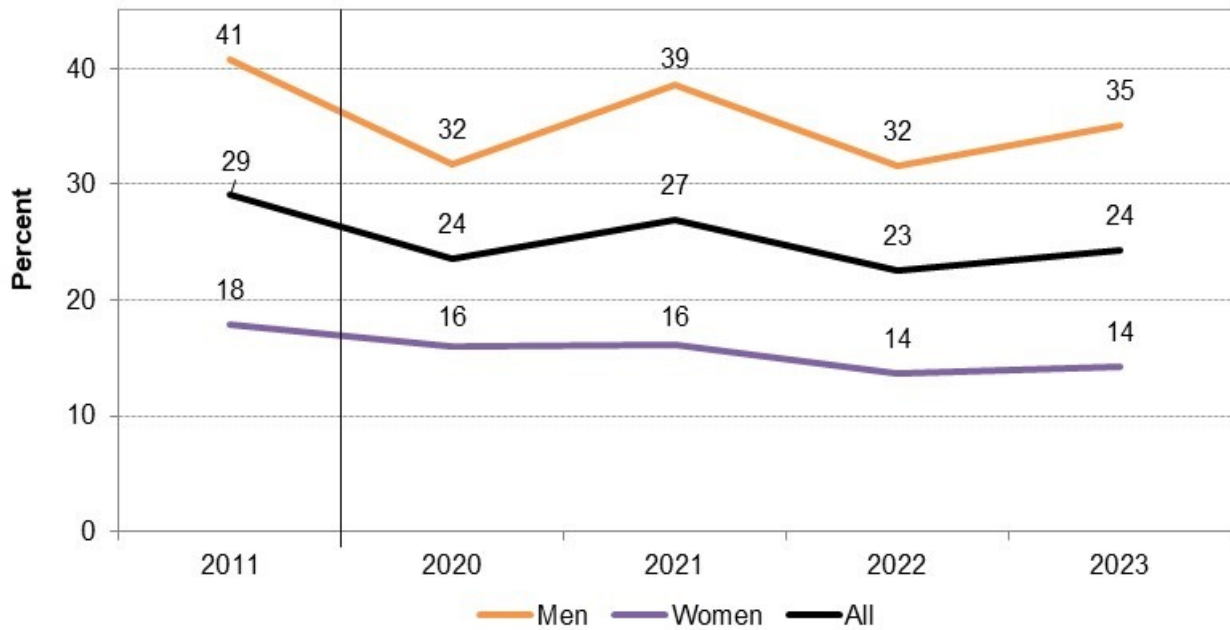


Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011 and South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2020-2023. The vertical line denotes the change in methodology that occurred in 2018.

Consumption of 10 or more drinks per week on average (revised lifetime risk)

- The consumption of 10 or more drinks per week on average over the last 12 months among South Australians aged 18 years and over decreased significantly over time (29% to 23%) but remained stable more recently (29% to 24%). *Figure 12*
- There were significant decreases over time among both men (41% to 35%) and women (18% to 14%). *Figure 12*
- The age groups with the highest proportion drinking this amount in 2023 were aged 18-29 years (35%) and 40-49 years (27%). There were significant decreases over time among those aged 30-39 years (28% to 18%) and 50-59 years (31% to 25%). There were no changes more recently. *Figure 13*

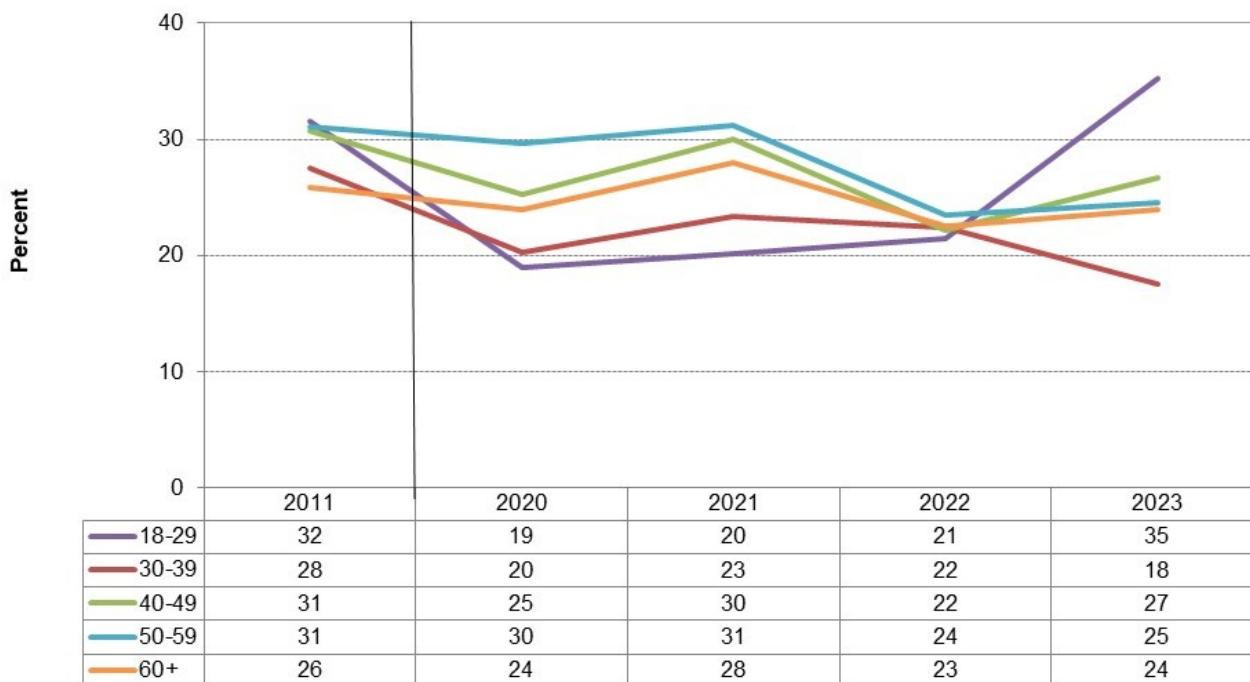
Figure 12: Consumption of 10 or more drinks per week on average for South Australians aged 18 years and over by sex, 2011-2023



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011 and South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2020-2023. The vertical line denotes the change in methodology that occurred in 2018.

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Figure 13: Consumption of 10 or more drinks per week on average for South Australians aged 18 years and over by age group, 2011-2023

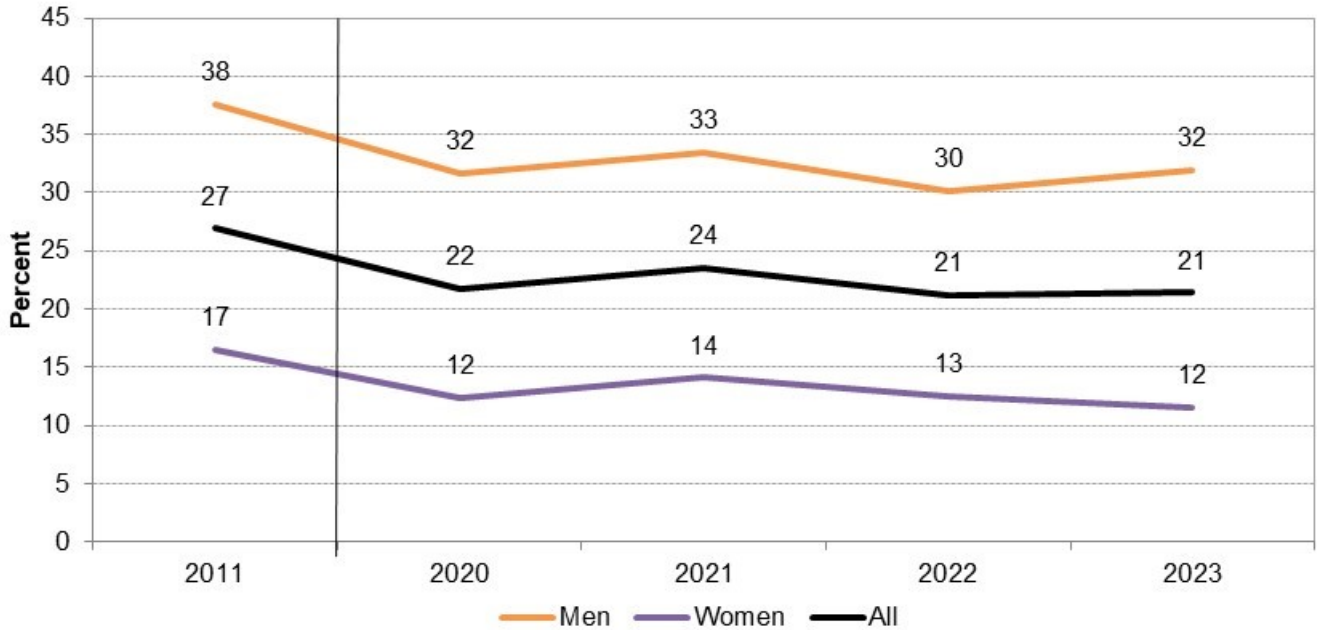


Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011 and South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2020-2023. The vertical line denotes the change in methodology that occurred in 2018.

Consumption of more than four drinks in a single day at least monthly (single occasion risk)

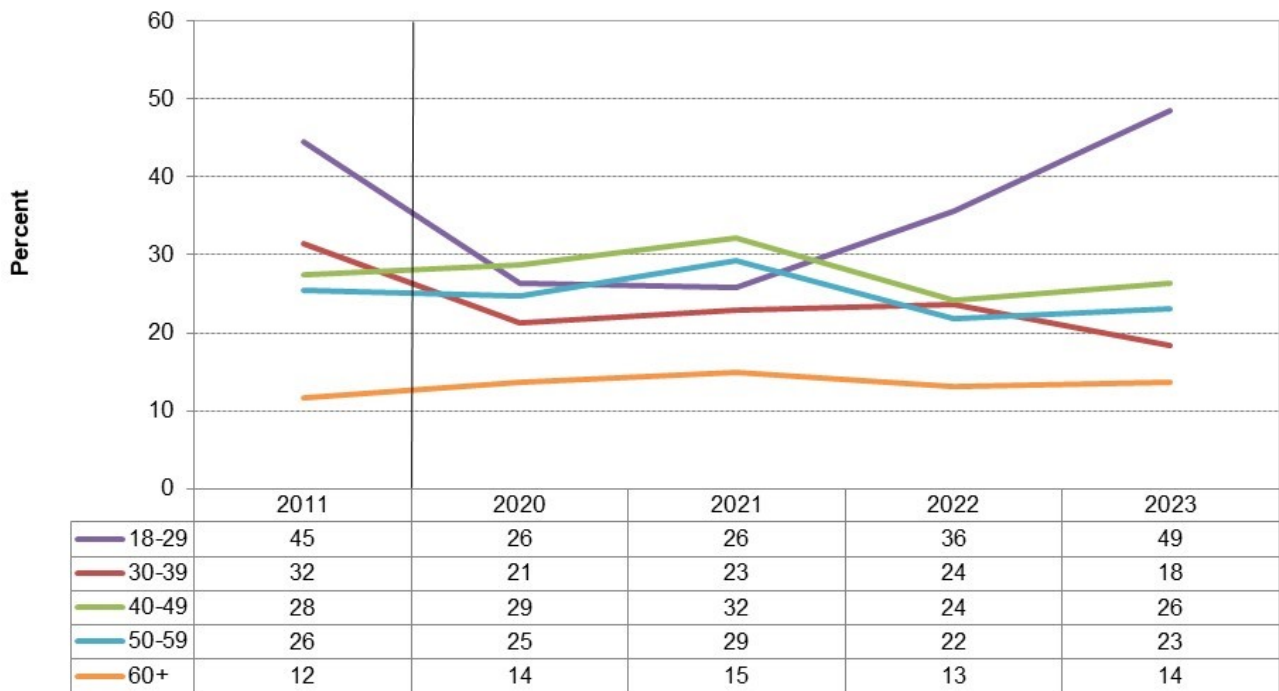
- The consumption of more than four drinks in a single day at least monthly decreased significantly over time among those aged 18 years and over (27% to 21%), remaining stable more recently (21% in both years). *Figure 14*
- There were significant decreases over time among both men (38% to 32%) and women (17% to 12%) but remained stable more recently (30% to 32% for men and 13% to 12% for women). *Figure 14*
- The consumption of more than four drinks in a single day at least **weekly** also decreased significantly over time among men (23% to 17%) and women (6.8% to 4.3%). There were no changes over time among South Australians in the consumption of more than four drinks in a single day at least **yearly** (45% in 2011 and 42% in 2023). There were also no changes more recently.
- The age groups with the highest proportion drinking this amount in 2023 were aged 18-29 years (49%) and 40-49 years (26%). There were significant decreases over time for those aged 30-39 years (32% to 18%). There were no changes more recently. *Figure 15*
- The consumption of more than four drinks in a single day at least **weekly** did not change over time or more recently for any age group. The consumption of more than four drinks in a single day at least **yearly** increased significantly over time among those aged 60 years and over (22% to 28%), but again there were no changes more recently.

Figure 14: Consumption of more than 4 drinks in a single day at least monthly for South Australians aged 18 years and over by sex, 2011-2023



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011 and South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2020-2023. The vertical line denotes the change in methodology that occurred in 2018.

Figure 15: Consumption of more than 4 drinks in a single day at least monthly for South Australians aged 18 years and over by age group, 2011-2023



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011 and South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2020-2023. The vertical line denotes the change in methodology that occurred in 2018.

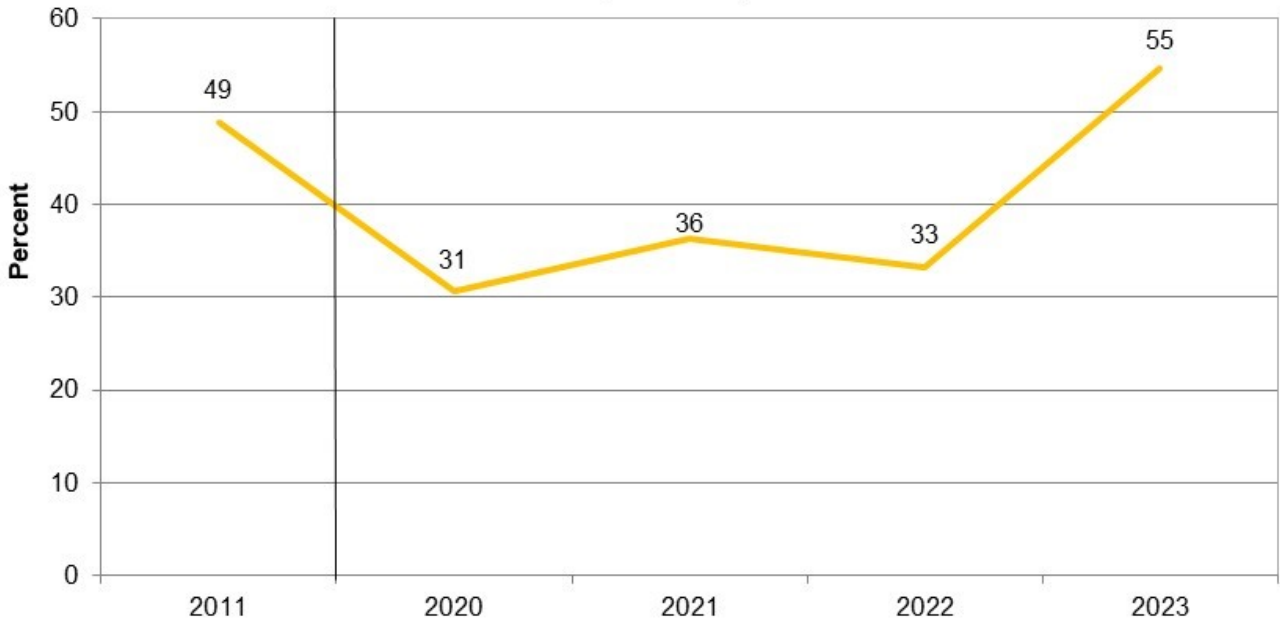
2020 Guideline 2: Alcohol consumption among those aged 15-17 years should be zero¹⁷

- In 2023, more than half (55%) of 15-17-year-old South Australians had consumed alcohol in the last 12 months. This was not significantly different from 49% in 2011. Although there was a

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substantial increase more recently (33% to 55%), this was also not significant, likely due to the small sample size. These data should be interpreted with caution. *Figure 16*

Figure 16: Consumption of alcohol in the last 12 months among South Australians aged 15-17 years, 2011-2023



Source: South Australian Health Omnibus Survey 2011 and South Australian Population Health Survey Module System 2020-2023. The vertical line denotes the change in methodology that occurred in 2018.

For more information

This Bulletin was produced by Marie Longo and Richard Cooke, Analytics and Research, Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia.

For more information, please contact:
Richard Cooke, Manager, Analytics and Research
Telephone: 08 7425 5101
Email: richard.cooke@sa.gov.au

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¹ More information on the survey can be found here:

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/resources/dassa+statistical+bulletin+number+18>

² <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/resources/dassa+statistical+bulletin+number+18>

³ The NDSHS is conducted triennially by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) since 1995. The survey provides information on drug use patterns, attitudes and behaviours among South Australians aged 12 years and over. Go to <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/illicit-use-of-drugs/ndshs-2016-key-findings/contents/summary>

⁴ Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol. National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council and Universities Australia. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2021. Measuring risky drinking according to the Australian alcohol guidelines. Cat. no. PHE 284. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 16 March 2021, <https://pp.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/measuring-risky-drinking-aus-alcohol-Guidelines>

⁶ <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/resources/dassa+statistical+bulletin+number+20>

⁷ Over time refers to comparisons between 2011 and 2023.

⁸ More recently refers to comparisons between 2022 and 2023.

⁹ Statistical tests include: The Pearson chi-squared statistic and linear regression. The Pearson chi-squared is corrected for the survey design with the second-order correction of Rao & Scott (1984: On chi-squared tests for multi-way contingency tables with cell proportions estimated from survey data. *Annals of Statistics* 12: 46-60) and is converted into an F statistic. Statistical significance was accepted at $p < 0.05$. All figures presented in this report are rounded to one decimal place in graphs and to zero decimal places in the text unless values fall below 10%. Comparisons over time are made between 2011 vs 2022, 2020 vs 2022 and 2021 vs 2022; significance testing is only carried out for those two time-points unless otherwise stated, rather than including all years.

¹⁰ Changes described here include statistically significant results only.

¹¹ Abstainers comprise both ex-drinkers (no longer consume alcohol and/or have not consumed alcohol in the last 12 months) and non-drinkers (have never consumed alcohol).

¹² 'In the last 12 months, how often did you have an alcoholic drink of any kind?'

¹³ Abstainers include both ex-drinkers who had not consumed alcohol in the last 12 months, or those who had never consumed alcohol.

¹⁴ <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/resources/dassa+statistical+bulletin+no+22>

¹⁵ 'On a day that you drink, how many standard drinks do you usually have?'

¹⁶ This section excludes participants who had not consumed alcohol in the last 12 months or had never consumed alcohol.

¹⁷ These data should be interpreted with caution due to unreliable estimates, and further breakdowns by sex were not possible.