

Alcohol use in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland

A summary of regional data from the New Zealand Health Survey, 2017–2020

Background

This report provides a snapshot of alcohol use within the Auckland region. It's based on the New Zealand Health Survey data produced by Manatū Hauora | Ministry of Health, combined across the years 2017 – 2020.

It looked at:

- Past-year drinking (i.e. drinking any alcohol in the past year).
- Heavy episodic drinking (i.e. drinking six or more drinks on a single occasion) either weekly or monthly.
- Hazardous drinking (i.e. a drinking pattern that carries a high risk to physical or mental health, as measured by a specific questionnaire).

It looked at these indicators by age, ethnicity, gender and neighbourhood socio-economic deprivation.

Key findings



Across different age groups within Auckland:

Past-year drinking was least common in the youngest age group (15–24 years).

Heavy episodic drinking and hazardous drinking were least common among the oldest age group (65+ years).



Across different genders and ethnic groups:

Men and Māori adults were disproportionately affected by heavy episodic drinking and hazardous drinking.

Pacific adults were less likely to be past-year drinkers, but were more likely to report hazardous drinking than non-Pacific adults.

Asian adults were less likely than non-Asian adults to report all patterns of alcohol use.



Across different levels of socio-economic deprivation within Auckland:

Past-year drinking was less common in areas of Tāmaki Makaurau with the highest socio-economic deprivation.

However, hazardous drinking was more common among past-year drinkers in these areas. This trend is known as the 'alcohol harm paradox'.

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Almost **3 in 4** adults reported drinking in the past year.



1 in 6 adults reported drinking to hazardous levels.



Almost **1 in 5** adults reported heavy episodic drinking at least monthly.



1 in 10 adults reported heavy episodic drinking at least weekly.

Implications

The high levels of alcohol use and inequities highlight the need for effective and comprehensive policy interventions for alcohol. Communities should have control over how and when alcohol is sold and marketed within their own neighbourhoods. In particular:

- 1 **Ensuring our communities live in neighbourhoods free from alcohol marketing is key to preventing early or heavy use of alcohol.** This is particularly important for young people, women, Pacific peoples and Asian communities, for whom past-year drinking was less common. It will also help protect our children from being exposed to alcohol marketing.
- 2 **These findings may also support local Māori, iwi, hapū and other community groups to enable tino rangitiratanga in their decision-making around alcohol within their own hāpori (community);** for example, through objections to alcohol licence applications.
- 3 **From June 2024, the alcohol licensing process will become more accessible to communities, increasing opportunities for them to have their voices heard.** This may also increase opportunities for organisations, such as local boards, to amplify community voices. It will be important to monitor whether this law change makes it easier in practice for communities to have a say in the alcohol licensing process.

Download the full report at:
www.arphs.nz/alcohol