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**Department of Health and Ageing**

**RESEARCH REPORT**

**Alcohol consumption patterns among Australian 15-17 year olds  
from 2000 to 2004**

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Elizabeth King  
Jenny Taylor  
Tom Carroll

**- Research and Marketing Group -**

Australian Government  
Department of Health and Ageing  
GPO Box 9848  
Sydney NSW 2001  
Phone: (02) 9263 3542

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Contributions of each author to this report are as follows:

**Elizabeth King**

Research Manager: Data analysis, drafting and finalisation of report.

**Jenny Taylor**

Director: Strategic advice on the report, and comments on drafts.

**Tom Carroll, PhD**

Senior Adviser: Strategic advice on the report, and comments on drafts.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report discusses the alcohol consumption patterns of teenagers aged 15 to 17 years, based on the findings of five national surveys that were conducted each February starting in 2000 and continuing up to 2004. This data on teenage alcohol consumption was gathered as part of the evaluation of the National Alcohol Campaign, launched in February 2000.

The evaluation surveys discussed in this report include February 2000 (F<sub>00</sub>), February 2001 (F<sub>01</sub>), February 2002 (F<sub>02</sub>), February 2003 (F<sub>03</sub>) and February 2004 (F<sub>04</sub>). All surveys consisted of face-to-face interviews with at least 800 teenagers, with an equal representation of gender and age, and a proportional representation of 15 to 17 year olds across states and territories.

This report is based on analysis of data relating to alcohol consumption. The objective of this report is to identify patterns of alcohol consumption amongst Australian teenagers who drink alcohol, as well as other contextual factors, such as teenagers' perceptions of parental rules on drinking, how they obtain alcohol and where they consume it.

### **Parental rules on drinking and teenagers' discussions about alcohol**

#### Teenagers' perceptions of parental rules on drinking

All teenagers were asked to rate their parents' rules regarding drinking alcohol. Approximately four in ten teenagers rated their parents' rules on drinking as moderate (F<sub>04</sub>: 36%) while about three in ten rated them as strict (F<sub>04</sub>: 29%). Two in ten teenagers rated their parents' rules on drinking as very strict (F<sub>04</sub>: 19%), while one in twenty stated that their parents had no rules on drinking (F<sub>04</sub>: 4%).

#### Teenagers' discussions about alcohol with peers, parents and teachers

Approximately three in five teenagers (F<sub>04</sub>: 56%) reported that in the previous three months, they had had discussions with someone about what could happen when they drink alcohol, with more females than males stating that they had done so.

Approximately half of those teenagers who had had discussions in the past three months reported that these discussions were with their friends (F<sub>04</sub>: 48%). About one in three stated they were with their parents (F<sub>04</sub>: 33%), and roughly three in ten stated that these discussions had been with their teachers at school (F<sub>04</sub>: 27%). When prompted, about three in five reported they had discussions with their parents in the past three months (F<sub>04</sub>: 61%).

The two most commonly cited reasons for the discussions were having a class discussion at school (F<sub>04</sub>: 32%), or following an incident involving drinking too much alcohol (F<sub>04</sub>: 17%).

The most common themes for the discussions related to the bad things that can happen when you drink too much (F<sub>04</sub>: 44%), not drinking too much (F<sub>04</sub>: 15%) and the need to be careful when drinking (F<sub>04</sub>: 13%).

## **An overview of teenage drinking in Australia**

### Recency of consumption

Those respondents who had ever consumed an alcoholic drink or part thereof (not including just a few sips) were asked how long it had been since they had their last alcoholic drink. These figures are reported as a proportion of the total sample.

In 2004 about two in three respondents reported consuming alcohol within the last twelve months (F<sub>04</sub>: 66%); three in five within the last three months (F<sub>04</sub>: 59%); and about one-quarter within the last two weeks (F<sub>04</sub>: 26%) and the last seven days (F<sub>04</sub>: 23%). There was a decline across the surveys in the proportion of teenagers that had consumed alcohol within these four time periods.

The proportions of males and females that had consumed alcohol in the last three months have been relatively similar across surveys. However males were more likely than females in the February 2001 and 2004 survey to report having consumed alcohol within the last twelve months, three months, two weeks and seven days.

### Type of alcohol consumed

Teenagers who reported having consumed alcohol within the previous three months (ie drinkers) were asked to describe the type of alcoholic drinks they consumed on their most recent drinking occasion.

Just over half of male drinkers reported in the 2004 survey that they consumed spirits and/or beer on their last drinking occasion (F<sub>04</sub>: spirits 54%, beer 55%). Across the surveys, there has been a decrease in the proportion of male drinkers reporting that they had consumed beer, and an increase in those reporting that they had consumed spirits.

In the 2004 survey more than three in four female drinkers reported having consumed spirits on their last drinking occasion (F<sub>04</sub>: 77%), one in six reported consuming liqueurs (F<sub>04</sub>: 16%), and less than one in seven reporting having consumed wine (F<sub>04</sub>: 14%), beer (F<sub>04</sub>: 13%) and/or alcoholic soda/cider/coolers (F<sub>04</sub>: 10%). Over three in five female drinkers reported consuming pre-mixed spirits on their last drinking occasion in 2004 (F<sub>04</sub>: 62%). There has been a large increase across surveys in the proportion of female drinkers consuming spirits, including pre-mixed spirits, and a decrease in the two most recent surveys in the proportion consuming alcoholic soda/cider/coolers.

## **Analysis of drinking patterns for lower and higher risk teenage drinkers**

In the absence of specific volumetric guidelines regarding alcohol consumption for youth under 18 years of age, the Australian (adult) alcohol guidelines for episodic drinking have been adopted as a framework for analysis. Thus, in this report, lower risk drinking is defined as the equivalent of less than seven standard drinks for males and less than five standard drinks for females on their last drinking occasion. Higher risk drinking is defined as the equivalent of seven or more standard drinks for males and five or more standard drinks for females.

### Prevalence of lower and higher risk drinking among teenagers

Across surveys, a greater proportion of both male and female drinkers consumed alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion. This is true for all surveys, except for males in the February 2001 survey where an equal proportion of male drinkers reported consuming alcohol at lower and higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion.

In the 2004 survey, the proportion of male drinkers reporting having consumed alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion has significantly increased when compared to the previous surveys, excluding 2003 (F<sub>00</sub>: 57%, F<sub>01</sub>: 50%, F<sub>02</sub>: 56%, F<sub>03</sub>: 63%, F<sub>04</sub>: 66%). This trend was not apparent among female drinkers (lower risk drinking: F<sub>00</sub>: 58%, F<sub>01</sub>: 53%, F<sub>02</sub>: 57%, F<sub>03</sub>: 59%, F<sub>04</sub>: 56%).

### Type of alcohol consumed by respondents drinking at lower and higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion

Trends in the consumption of different beverage categories were investigated to ascertain which beverage categories were most likely to be consumed by lower and higher risk drinkers. In this section of the report, spirits and liqueurs have been categorised so that pre-mixed spirits and pre-mixed liqueurs are grouped together in the analysis, and ‘other’ spirits (ie any spirit that is not pre-mixed) and ‘other’ liqueurs are also analysed together.

Among male drinkers consuming alcohol at lower risk levels, the most frequently reported beverage category consumed was beer, although there was a decline in this choice in the February 2002 survey (F<sub>00</sub> & F<sub>01</sub>: 54%, F<sub>02</sub>: 42%, F<sub>03</sub>: 52%, F<sub>04</sub>: 58%). The proportion who reported having consumed pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs increased across surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 13%, F<sub>01</sub>: 15%, F<sub>02</sub>: 21%, F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 26%), while the proportion reporting to have consumed other spirits/liqueurs decreased in the two recent surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 26%, F<sub>01</sub>: 30%, F<sub>02</sub>: 31%, F<sub>03</sub>: 21%, F<sub>04</sub>: 16%).

Among male drinkers consuming alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion, different trends in consumption are apparent. In the 2004 survey, nearly six in ten male drinkers reported consuming beer, more than half reported consuming pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs and just less than half reported consuming other spirits/liqueurs. Across surveys there have been major shifts in consumption of different beverage types, including: the proportion consuming beer has declined across surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 77%, F<sub>01</sub>: 70%, F<sub>02</sub>: 74%, F<sub>03</sub>: 65%, F<sub>04</sub>: 59%); the proportion who consumed pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs on their last drinking occasion doubled between 2002 and 2003 (F<sub>00</sub>: 18%, F<sub>01</sub>: 28%, F<sub>02</sub>: 24%, F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 51%), and the proportion consuming alcoholic soda/cider/coolers has decreased sharply in the most recent survey (F<sub>00</sub>: 11%, F<sub>01</sub>: 20%, F<sub>02</sub>: 11%, F<sub>03</sub>: 15%, F<sub>04</sub>: 2%).

Among females drinking at lower risk levels in the 2004 survey, more than half reported consuming pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs on their last drinking occasion, while one in five reported consuming other spirits/liqueurs and/or wine. There have been striking shifts in the proportion of female drinkers consuming the different beverage types across surveys, such as: a four-fold increase in those reporting to have consumed pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs (F<sub>00</sub>: 10%, F<sub>01</sub>: 18%, F<sub>02</sub>: 32%, F<sub>03</sub>: 44%,

F<sub>04</sub>: 54%), a reduction in those consuming other spirits/liqueurs (F<sub>00</sub>: 38%, F<sub>01</sub>: 40%, F<sub>02</sub>: 28%, F<sub>03</sub>: 27%, F<sub>04</sub>: 20%), and a reduction in those reporting to have consumed alcoholic soda/cider/coolers (F<sub>00</sub>: 30%, F<sub>01</sub>: 29%, F<sub>02</sub>: 27%, F<sub>03</sub>: 19%, F<sub>04</sub>: 13%).

Similar but more pronounced trends were found among females drinking at higher risk levels. That is, among females drinking at higher risk on their last drinking occasion, there was a dramatic increase in those reporting to have consumed pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs (F<sub>00</sub>: 21%, F<sub>01</sub>: 34%, F<sub>02</sub>: 49%, F<sub>03</sub>: 60%, F<sub>04</sub>: 78%), and a reduction in those consuming other spirits/liqueurs (F<sub>00</sub>: 67%, F<sub>01</sub>: 48%, F<sub>02</sub>: 43%, F<sub>03</sub>: 51%, F<sub>04</sub>: 45%) and alcoholic soda/cider/coolers (F<sub>00</sub>: 41%, F<sub>01</sub>: 43%, F<sub>02</sub>: 50%, F<sub>03</sub>: 30%, F<sub>04</sub>: 7%).

#### The mean number of standard drinks consumed by lower and higher risk drinkers

The average number of standard drinks consumed by male and female drinkers was investigated according to whether individuals were consuming alcohol at lower or higher risk levels<sup>1</sup> on their last drinking occasion.

The average number of standard drinks consumed by males drinking at lower risk levels has remained relatively constant over the surveys, averaging at around 3 standard drinks. Over this same time period, the average number of standard drinks consumed by males drinking at higher risk levels has varied by approximately one standard drink over the surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 12.5, F<sub>01</sub>: 12.3, F<sub>02</sub>: 11.3, F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 12.4).

The average number of standard drinks consumed by females drinking at lower risk levels has remained relatively constant across surveys, averaging at around 2.4 standard drinks. The average number of standard drinks consumed by females drinking at higher risk levels appeared to have declined between 2000 and 2001 by approximately one standard drink and stayed at that level until 2004 where it increased slightly to 9 standard drinks (F<sub>00</sub>: 9.5, F<sub>01</sub>: 8.2, F<sub>02</sub>: 8.4, F<sub>03</sub>: 8.3, F<sub>04</sub>: 9.0).

#### The mean number of standard drinks consumed by beverage category and lower and higher risk drinker status

Findings regarding the number of standard drinks consumed by beverage category should be viewed as indicative only, due to the relatively small numbers of teenagers within the higher and lower risk drinker groups who reported consuming each beverage category. Among male drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion, a similar average number of standard drinks were consumed across surveys for each beverage category (ranging between 1.0 and 3.5 standard drinks).

Among male drinkers who consumed alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion there has been some fluctuation in the average number of standard drinks within each beverage category consumed across surveys, such as a drop in the average amount of alcoholic soda/cider/coolers consumed, and variability across surveys in the average amount of other spirits/liqueurs consumed. In the February 2004 survey the average number of standard drinks consumed by male higher risk

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<sup>1</sup> Those respondents who reported consuming twenty-five or more standard drinks on their last drinking occasion were excluded from this analysis.

drinkers on their last drinking occasion, for the three most commonly consumed beverage categories, were as follows:

- Those who drank beer (n=46) consumed an average of 8.9 standard drinks of beer;
- Those who drank pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs (n=38) consumed an average of 8.5 standard drinks of pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs; and
- Those who drank other spirits/liqueurs (n=35) consumed an average of 7.6 standard drinks of other spirits/liqueurs.

Among female drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion, a similar pattern in the average number of standard drinks consumed by beverage category across surveys was seen (ranging between 1.0 and 3.3 standard drinks).

Among female drinkers who consumed alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion there has been some fluctuation in the average number of standard drinks consumed within each beverage category across the surveys, such as a gradual decline in the average amount of alcoholic soda/cider/coolers consumed, and a peak in the average amount of beer consumed in February 2002 and 2004. In the February 2004 survey the average number of standard drinks consumed by female higher risk drinkers, for the three most commonly consumed beverage categories, were as follows:

- Those who drank pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs (n=77) consumed an average of 6.4 standard drinks of pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs;
- Those who drank other spirits/liqueurs (n=42) consumed an average of 5.3 standard drinks of other spirits/liqueurs; and
- Those who drank beer (n=18) consumed an average of 6.6 standard drinks of beer.

#### Total amount of alcohol consumed

The total number of standard drinks consumed by male and female drinkers on their last drinking occasion was calculated, to identify the total amount of alcohol reported to have been consumed by lower and higher risk drinkers. Among males in the study samples drinking at lower risk on their last drinking occasion, a total of between 417 and 512 standard drinks were reported to have been consumed, on that occasion, across each of the surveys. Amongst the higher risk drinking males, the total number of standard drinks consumed on their last drinking occasion varied across surveys, from a high of 1,615 standard drinks in 2001 to a low of 1,078 standard drinks in the 2003 survey. Amongst females in the study samples, the number of standard drinks consumed by lower risk female drinkers on their last drinking occasion declined steadily across surveys, from 397 standard drinks in 2000 to 269 standard drinks in 2004. Amongst female higher risk drinkers, the greatest number of standard drinks consumed on their last drinking occasion was reported in 2000 (1,086 drinks) and decreased to 738 standard drinks in the 2003 survey.

#### Share of consumption across beverage categories

The share of consumption for each beverage category consumed by male and female drinkers on their last drinking occasion was examined to further investigate

consumption trends amongst lower and higher risk teenage drinkers. The share of consumption across alcoholic beverages was calculated by summing the number of standard drinks of each beverage type that were consumed by teenage drinkers on their last drinking occasion, and expressing this as a proportion of the total number of standard drinks consumed. Results are shown by gender for those drinking at lower and higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion.

#### Males – lower risk consumption

Beer represents approximately half of the share of consumption of lower risk male drinkers. The share of pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs has increased across surveys from 9 per cent in 2000 to 30 per cent in 2004, while the share of consumption for other spirits/liqueurs has decreased across surveys from about 24 per cent in 2000 down to 16 per cent in 2004. Wine and alcoholic soda/cider/coolers' share of consumption has decreased slightly across the surveys, to less than 5 per cent of the market share respectively in 2004.

#### Males – higher risk consumption

Among higher risk male drinkers there have been quite dramatic shifts in the share of consumption for the various beverages. The beer share of consumption has decreased across the five surveys, from 58 per cent in 2000 to 37 per cent in 2004. The share for pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs has increased, particularly in the 2003 and 2004 surveys, to over a third of the share of consumption. The share of consumption for other spirits/liqueurs has been quite consistent across all of the surveys, at approximately 25 per cent of the share, excluding February 2003 where it dipped down to 12 per cent. The share of alcoholic soda/cider/coolers has declined from 7 per cent in 2001 to less than 1 per cent in 2004, and the wine share was consistently low across surveys representing no more than 2 per cent of total alcohol consumed for this group of male drinkers.

#### Females – lower risk consumption

The share of consumption for pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs among lower risk female drinkers has increased markedly across surveys, from 10 per cent of the share in 2000 to 60 per cent in 2004. During this time period both other spirits/liqueurs and alcoholic soda/cider/coolers have experienced a decline in their share of consumption: from 37 per cent in 2000 to 18 per cent in 2004 for other spirits/liqueurs; and from 26 per cent in 2000 to 7 per cent in 2004 for alcoholic soda/cider/coolers.

#### Females – higher risk consumption

Similar trends are noticeable in the share of consumption for pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs, other spirits/liqueurs and alcoholic soda/cider/coolers for higher risk female drinkers over the surveys. That is, the share of consumption for pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs has increased across surveys, from 11 per cent in 2000 to 55 per cent in 2004. Similar to lower risk female drinkers, the share for other spirits/liqueurs has declined across surveys, from 35 per cent in 2000 to 24 per cent in 2004, and for alcoholic soda/cider/coolers from 29 per cent in 2000 to 3 per cent in 2004.

Among higher risk female drinkers, beer represents more of the share of consumption than wine, at approximately 14 per cent, whilst among lower risk drinkers this trend is reversed, with wine representing 10 per cent of the share.

### **Situations in which alcohol was consumed and ways in which teenagers obtained alcohol**

#### Situations in which alcohol was consumed by teenage drinkers

Teenagers who had consumed alcohol within the last three months were provided with a list of possible places where alcohol is consumed, and asked to consider whether they consumed alcohol in any of these places on their last drinking occasion. They were also asked to comment on whether their drinking in any of these places was under adult supervision.

- In 2004 approximately a third of teenage drinkers reported having consumed alcohol either at a friend's house (35%), at a party (33%) or while at home with their parents or parents' friends (30%).
- Those teenagers who reported drinking alcohol at a friend's house or at a party on their last drinking occasion were more likely to have consumed alcohol at higher risk than at lower risk levels.

#### Situations in which alcohol was consumed by teenage drinkers with adult supervision

In the February 2004 survey teenage drinkers were most likely to report having consumed alcohol with adult supervision when they were at home with their parents or parent's friends (29%), followed by at a friend's house (26%) and at a party (23%).

- Teenagers who reported drinking alcohol under adult supervision at home with their parents or parents' friends were more likely to report having consumed alcohol at lower risk (36%) than higher risk levels (18%).
- Teenagers who reported drinking alcohol at a party or at a friend's house where there was adult supervision were more likely to report having consumed alcohol at higher risk (party: 31%, friend's house: 32%) than lower risk levels (party: 18%, friend's house: 22%).

#### Ways in which alcohol was obtained by teenage drinkers and the greatest amount of alcohol they consumed

In February 2003 a new set of questions were introduced exploring where teenage drinkers obtained the alcohol they consumed on their most recent drinking occasion, and the source of alcohol that represented the greatest amount of alcohol that they consumed on that occasion.

- More than four in ten teenage drinkers reported that older friends or siblings provided their alcohol for them on their last drinking occasion, and among this group, about 90 per cent reported it was the greatest source of alcohol on that occasion. These teens were more likely to be higher risk drinkers, however no differences were noted among these teenagers regarding their perceptions of parental rules about their drinking.
- Approximately four in ten teenagers reported that their parents provided the alcohol for them to drink under their supervision, and among this group, about 80

per cent reported it was their greatest source of alcohol on that occasion. These drinkers were more likely to have consumed alcohol at lower risk on this drinking occasion and were more likely to report strict parental rules on drinking. Nevertheless, in the 2004 survey, 22 per cent of higher risk drinkers obtained the greatest amount of alcohol that they consumed on that occasion from their parents to drink under their supervision.

- One in five teenagers reported that they obtained the alcohol they consumed on their last drinking occasion from friends of the same age, and among this group, about 65 per cent reported this to be the greatest source of the alcohol they had obtained.
- Teenagers who obtained their own alcohol on their last drinking occasion were equally likely to drink at lower or higher risk levels.

### **Changes or intended changes to alcohol consumption**

#### Drinking intentions regarding the past three months

All teenagers were asked to consider their drinking behaviour, from the point of view of any attempts they may have made or intentions they may have regarding the amount of alcohol they drink. Five intention statements were presented to teenagers for them to consider, comprising of: make no change to my drinking as I don't drink alcohol; make no change to my drinking as I don't get drunk now; get drunk less often; get drunk more often; and get drunk as much as I did before.

- Nearly seven in ten teenagers reported that they did not intend to make changes to their drinking because they either didn't drink alcohol or don't get drunk now. In the two most recent surveys a greater proportion of teenagers reported that they don't drink alcohol than in the earlier surveys.
- About one in five respondents reported that they planned to get drunk less often, with the proportion reporting this decreasing across surveys, reflecting the increased proportion of respondents stating that they don't drink alcohol in the later surveys.
- In the February 2004 survey, 8 per cent of teenagers reported that they would get drunk as much as they did before, while only 2 per cent reported that they would plan to get drunk more often.

#### Drinking intentions regarding the next three months

The findings regarding teenagers' intentions for the next three months reflected the findings seen regarding the previous three months.

- As would be expected, a similar proportion of teenagers (ie 7 in 10) reported that they didn't intend to make changes to their drinking in the next three months because they either didn't drink alcohol or they don't get drunk now.
- About one in six respondents (17%) reported that they planned to get drunk less often in coming months; one in fourteen (7%) reported they would get drunk as much as they did before and only two per cent reported they planned to get drunk more often.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Alcohol consumption is associated with significant levels of harm amongst young Australians (AIHW, 2000), contributing to a range of negative health and social consequences, including violence and high-risk sexual activity. In the 2001 National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS) it was found that 80 per cent of the alcohol consumed by males and 85 per cent of the alcohol consumed by females aged 14 to 17 years was done so at risky or high risk levels for acute harm (ie more than six standard drinks for males and four standard drinks for females) (Chikritzhs et al., 2003). Approximately 25 per cent of females and 21 per cent of males in this age group reported having consumed alcohol at risky or high risk levels for acute harm at least monthly (ibid).

The National Alcohol Campaign was launched on 20 February 2000, with a second phase of activity commencing in November 2000 and continuing through to February 2001. A third phase of activity commenced in June 2002 and continued through to the end of September 2002. A partnership with the Australian music industry was developed to extend the campaign messages to young people over the 2002/2003 summer period. The aim of the campaign is to contribute, along with the range of education, policy and regulatory initiatives under the National Alcohol Strategy, to a reduction in alcohol-related harm amongst young Australians.

The campaign communication strategy for teenagers seeks to increase consideration of potential negative consequences of drinking decisions, to increase motivation to avoid these negative alcohol-related consequences, and to model and promote ways of avoiding this harm. At the same time, the campaign strategy seeks to promote greater engagement amongst parents towards reducing harmful teenage drinking. The campaign consists of a mass media component supported by other communication activities, and provides a framework within which a range of initiatives at the national, State/Territory or community level can be undertaken.

Evaluation surveys have been undertaken to monitor the target audience's response to the campaign, and to monitor trends in teenage drinking behaviour. These surveys include: a benchmark survey completed in February 2000 prior to the launch of the campaign; a survey following the launch phase of the campaign in June 2000; a survey in February 2001 following the second (booster) campaign; a survey in February 2002 to monitor campaign awareness and trends in alcohol consumption, a survey in August 2002 following the third phase of the campaign, a survey in February 2003 following the partnership with the Australian Music Industry, and a February 2004 survey.

This series of national surveys were administered using a consistent methodology and data is comparable across surveys. To date five surveys with teenagers have been conducted at a similar time of year (ie February) to control for any seasonal effects in drinking habits. This report is based on analysis of consumption patterns and related data from the five annual February surveys. The objective of this report is to identify patterns of alcohol consumption amongst Australian teenagers who drink alcohol.

This report is a behavioural monitor and has been divided into four sections, investigating the following issues relating to teenage alcohol consumption:

- Teenagers' perceptions of their parents' rules on drinking alcohol and discussions teenagers have had about alcohol;
- An overview of teenage alcohol consumption, including how many teenagers have consumed alcohol in their life, how recently, and how much and what type of alcohol was consumed on their last drinking occasion;
- Analysis of drinking patterns among teenagers, consistent with the lower and higher risk drinking definitions outlined in the Australian Alcohol Guidelines<sup>2</sup> (2001); and
- Situations in which alcohol was consumed by teenagers on their last drinking occasion, with and without supervision, ways in which this alcohol was obtained by teenagers<sup>3</sup>, and drinking intentions.

Another report resulting from the National Alcohol Campaign evaluation examines parental opinions and behaviour with respect to teen drinking, titled:

King, E., Taylor, J. and Carroll, T ( 2005) *Parental opinions and behaviour regarding teenage alcohol consumption*. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra.

These reports can be found on the campaign website under the research tab at [www.nationalalcoholcampaign.health.gov.au](http://www.nationalalcoholcampaign.health.gov.au).

The studies described in this report were designed and managed by the Australian Department of Health and Ageing's Research and Marketing Group. NCS Pearson was commissioned to conduct the fieldwork for the first three surveys included in this report, and Roy Morgan Research was commissioned to conduct the February 2003 and 2004 surveys.

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<sup>2</sup> As described in section 2.3 of the report, the Australian Alcohol Guidelines relate to adult consumption of alcohol. In the absence of guidelines for teenagers, this report explores teenage drinking according to these guidelines, whilst being mindful that there is no evidence supporting safe drinking levels for teenagers.

<sup>3</sup> These questions were first included in the February 2003 (F<sub>03</sub>) survey.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

Face-to-face interviews were conducted within households that were randomly sampled within selected locations to ensure geographic coverage was similar across surveys. Locations were chosen to ensure the broadest possible coverage, taking into account availability of IQCA<sup>4</sup> accredited interviewers and cost-effectiveness. The start points for the interview locations were randomly drawn from the electronic white pages. Interviews were conducted after school and on weekends, with up to 3 call backs made for eligible respondents. For each survey the interview only proceeded when parental approval, or that of a guardian, had been attained.

This same methodology was replicated across each evaluation survey for the National Alcohol Campaign, including the five February surveys. To assist the reader in understanding the shorthand for this report, the number in the subscript represents the year in which the February survey was undertaken (eg February 2000 benchmark survey is shown as F<sub>00</sub>).

- A pre-campaign benchmark survey (F<sub>00</sub>) involving 808 face-to-face interviews with youth 15-17 year olds. Fieldwork dates: 5 - 19 February 2000.
- An evaluation of the second phase of the campaign (F<sub>01</sub>) involving 806 face-to-face interviews with youth 15-17 years. Fieldwork dates: 10 February - 3 March 2001.
- A campaign monitor survey (F<sub>02</sub>) involving 802 face-to-face interviews with youth 15-17 years. Fieldwork dates: 15 February - 1 March 2002.
- A campaign monitor survey (F<sub>03</sub>) involving 818 face-to-face interviews with youth 15-17 years. Fieldwork dates: 8 February - 6 March 2003.
- A campaign monitor survey (F<sub>04</sub>) involving 816 face-to-face interviews with youth 15-17 years. Fieldwork dates: 7 February - 14 March 2004.

Table 1 provides an overview of the youth surveys that will be discussed in this report.

**Table 1: Overview of the youth surveys**

	<b>February 2000 F<sub>00</sub></b>	<b>February 2001 F<sub>01</sub></b>	<b>February 2002 F<sub>02</sub></b>	<b>February 2003 F<sub>03</sub></b>	<b>February 2004 F<sub>04</sub></b>
<b>Fieldwork Dates</b>	5 – 19 February 2000	10 February – 3 March 2001	15 February – 1 March 2002	8 February – 6 March 2003	7 February – 14 March 2004
<b>Sample size</b>	808	806	802	818	816
<b>Consultant</b>	NCS Australasia	NCS Pearson <sup>a</sup>	NCS Pearson <sup>a</sup>	Roy Morgan Research	Roy Morgan Research

<sup>a</sup> NCS Pearson formerly known as NCS Australasia.

<sup>4</sup> Interviewer Quality Control Standards is a system which ensures participating companies operate to specified standards of fieldwork and is administered by Market Research Quality Assurance Incorporated.

## 2.1. SAMPLE DESIGN

Table 2 shows the sample characteristics for the five February surveys.

**Table 2: Sample characteristics for the surveys**

	Feb 2000 F <sub>00</sub> (n=808)		Feb 2001 F <sub>01</sub> (n=806)		Feb 2002 F <sub>02</sub> (n=802)		Feb 2003 F <sub>03</sub> (n=818)		Feb 2004 F <sub>04</sub> (n=816)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>GENDER</b>										
Male	403	50	399	50	406	51	407	50	400	49
Female	405	50	407	50	396	49	411	50	416	51
<b>AGE</b>										
15 years	277	34	278	34	272	34	275	34	275	34
16 years	264	33	268	33	270	34	284	35	271	33
17 years	267	33	260	33	260	32	259	32	270	33
<b>LOCATION</b>										
City/Major Regional	643	80	629	78	626	78	653	80	589	72
Rural	165	20	177	22	176	22	165	20	227	28
<b>STATE</b>										
NSW/ACT	265	33	275	34	271	34	263	32	267	33
Vic/Tas	211	26	211	26	210	26	209	26	199	24
Qld	163	20	161	20	160	20	186	23	196	24
SA	80	10	80	10	81	10	64	8	60	7
WA	89	11	79	10	80	10	96	12	94	12
<b>LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME</b>										
English	632	78	672	83	641	80	763	93	746	91
Language other than English	176	22	134	17	161	20	55	7	70	9

It can be seen that across all surveys, there is a similar proportion of males and females and youth aged 15, 16 and 17 years. The sample distribution for geographic location was comparable across surveys, reflecting population variance between jurisdictions. The proportion of the sample who speak a language other than English at home was lower in the two most recent surveys when compared to the first three February surveys. The data was then weighted by age, gender and location using census data to accurately reflect the total population.

## 2.2. CALCULATION OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Respondents were asked whether they had consumed alcohol in the three months prior to the survey, and then asked to report on the type and amount of alcohol they consumed on their last drinking occasion. Given that the majority of teenage drinkers consume alcohol on only one or two days per week, it is more sensitive to use a measure of amount of alcohol consumed on the most recent drinking occasion, rather than a measure of amount of alcohol consumed on the previous day, which is often used to measure adult drinking. Including only those teenagers who reported drinking within the last three months is of interest as they are more likely to be regular drinkers than those who didn't consume alcohol within the previous three month period, and

are more likely to recall what and how much they drank on their last drinking occasion. As such, the drinking patterns of this group of respondents are worthy of further analysis.

To increase accuracy of estimations of consumption, respondents were asked to report, for each alcoholic beverage they had consumed on their last drinking occasion, the container size and the number of each of these containers they drank. Data for each respondent was then computed to generate the number of standard drinks of alcohol consumed, using NHMRC definitions of a standard drink.

### **2.3. CALCULATION OF LOWER AND HIGHER RISK DRINKING**

Alcohol consumption amongst youth has been examined in this report and categorised as representing ‘lower risk’ or ‘higher risk’ drinking levels. To minimise risks in the short term, the Australian Alcohol Guidelines (NHMRC, 2001) recommend that adult males consume no more than six standard drinks on any one day, and that adult females consume no more than four standard drinks on any one day. To minimise risks in the long term, the guidelines recommend that adult males consume no more than four standard drinks on an average day, and that adult females consume no more than two standard drinks on an average day.

These guidelines specifically state that for young people aged under 18 years:

- if they choose not to drink, others should support their decision;
- in settings where alcohol is available to young people, they should be under adult supervision at all times;
- they should keep their drinking to a minimum;
- most importantly, they should not drink to become intoxicated; and
- for young people to become responsible adult drinkers, a gradual, supervised introduction to alcohol is recommended (NHMRC, 2001, p15).

The rationale for these recommendations is based on several factors such as: younger people’s physical size; their stage of development; their lack of experience with drinking and its effects, and their lack of a physiological tolerance to alcohol. Based on this rationale, it is recognised that the guidelines for adults are an overestimate of the recommended maximum levels of alcohol young people should consume. However, in the absence of guidelines relating to the specific quantities of alcohol that can be consumed by young people safely, this report has applied the guidelines for adults relating to low risk of harm in the short-term from the consumption of alcohol as the framework for the analysis of young people’s drinking behaviour (ie low risk episodic drinking guidelines for adults). In practice these guidelines mean no more than six drinks for males and no more than four drinks for females on any one day.

In this report lower risk drinking is defined as the equivalent of less than seven standard drinks for males, and less than five standard drinks for females on their last drinking occasion. Higher risk drinking is defined in this report as the equivalent of seven or more standard drinks for males and five or more standard drinks for females on their last drinking occasion. The classification of each drinker (ie drank within the

previous three months) as either a lower risk or higher risk drinker is based solely on the level of consumption on their most recent drinking occasion.

In sections 3.3.3 to 3.3.6 of the report, respondents who reported consuming twenty-five or more standard drinks on their last drinking occasion were excluded from the analysis. Twenty-five standard drinks of alcohol is equivalent to consuming more than a full bottle of spirits<sup>5</sup>. These cases were excluded from the analysis because of the potential for these extreme reports, which varied in number and degree across surveys, to erroneously skew results. The sections of the report where the extreme cases of alcohol consumption were excluded examine the average number of drinks consumed (sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.4) and the total share of consumption by beverage category (sections 3.3.5 and 3.3.6).

Alcoholic beverages consumed by teenagers have been presented in this report according to beverage categories and sub-categories. A full description of alcoholic beverage categories used in this report is shown in Tables 3 and 4.

## **2.4. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

Statistical tests were conducted in order to establish whether differences in responses within surveys and across the previous studies were statistically significant. For the results shown for the total sample, there is 95 per cent confidence that each result lies  $\pm 3.5\%$  of the figures shown at the 50 per cent level. Differences between proportions were tested on independent samples and differences between means were tested using a two-tailed t-test. In this report, where increases and decreases are reported in the text, a significant difference at a 95 per cent confidence level has been established.

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<sup>5</sup> A 750ml bottle of spirits with 40 per cent alcohol volume is the equivalent of 24 standard drinks of alcohol.

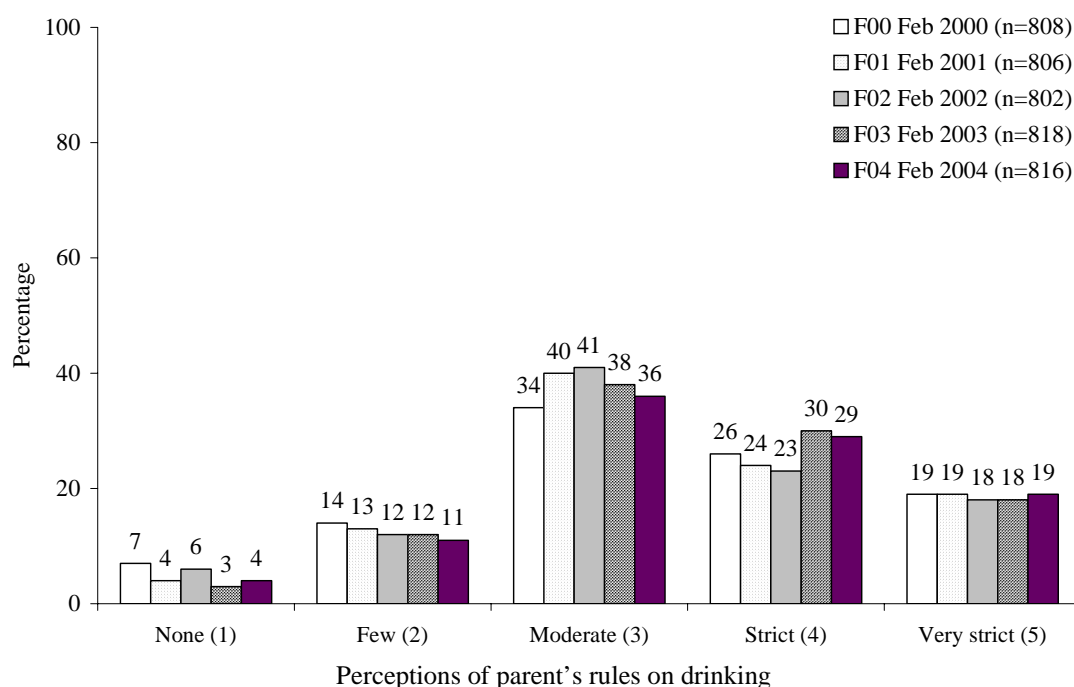
### 3.0 RESULTS

#### 3.1 PARENTAL RULES ON DRINKING ALCOHOL AND DISCUSSIONS ABOUT ALCOHOL (INCLUDING WITH PARENTS)

##### 3.1.1 Teenagers' perceptions of their parents' rules on drinking

All teenagers surveyed were asked about the rules their parents set on drinking alcohol, to investigate the potential impact these rules could have on teenage drinking behaviour. Responses were recorded on a five-point scale, where 1 represented no rules about drinking and 5 represented very strict rules about drinking. Figure 1 shows these results.

**Figure 1: Teenagers' perceptions of their parents' rules on drinking alcohol**



Base: All respondents.

From Figure 1 it can be seen that across all February surveys, the most frequently reported rating that teenagers gave their parents regarding their rules about drinking was 3, representing the mid-point on the scale, indicating that these teenagers perceived their parents' rules on drinking alcohol to be moderate (F<sub>00</sub>: 34%, F<sub>01</sub>: 40%, F<sub>02</sub>: 41%, F<sub>03</sub>: 38%, F<sub>04</sub>: 36%).

- The proportion of teenagers rating their parents' rules as moderate increased between February 2000 and 2002 (F<sub>00</sub>: 34%, F<sub>02</sub>: 41%), but had decreased again by 2004 (F<sub>04</sub>: 36%).

The second most frequently reported rating of parental rules regarding drinking alcohol was 4, representing the perception of strict rules towards drinking (F<sub>00</sub>: 26%, F<sub>01</sub>: 24%, F<sub>02</sub>: 23%, F<sub>03</sub>: 30%, F<sub>04</sub>: 29%).

- This perception of strict rules towards drinking was higher in February 2003 and 2004 when compared to February 2001 and 2002 results (F<sub>01</sub>: 24%, F<sub>02</sub>: 23%, F<sub>03</sub>: 30%, F<sub>04</sub>: 29%).

Teenagers were more likely to report that their parents had strict rules (ie a rating of 4 or 5) towards their drinking than they were to say that they were lenient (ie rating of 1 or 2):

- Across all surveys more teenagers perceived their parents' rules as strict – ie a rating of 4 or 5 (F<sub>00</sub>: 45%, F<sub>01</sub>: 43%, F<sub>02</sub>: 41%, F<sub>03</sub>: 48%, F<sub>04</sub>: 48%) than lenient – ie a rating of 1 or 2 (F<sub>00</sub>: 21%, F<sub>01</sub>: 17%, F<sub>02</sub>: 18%, F<sub>03</sub>: 15%, F<sub>04</sub>: 15%).

Teenagers' ratings of parental rules did not vary according to the gender of the teenager, however age and English speaking status of the household appeared to be an influence.

- Across the five surveys, younger teenagers were more likely to rate their parents' rules towards drinking as strict (ie a rating of 4 or 5) than were older teenagers (15 year olds: F<sub>00</sub> 51%, F<sub>01</sub> 59%, F<sub>02</sub> 52%, F<sub>03</sub> 57%, F<sub>04</sub> 58%; 17 year olds: F<sub>00</sub> 35%, F<sub>01</sub> 31%, F<sub>02</sub> 32%, F<sub>03</sub> 38%, F<sub>04</sub> 40%).
- Likewise, older teenagers were more likely to report a perception of their parents' rules as lenient (ie a rating of 1 or 2) than were younger teenagers (17 year olds: F<sub>00</sub> 32%, F<sub>01</sub> 23%, F<sub>02</sub> 28%, F<sub>03</sub> 20%, F<sub>04</sub> 22%; 15 year olds: F<sub>00</sub> 14%, F<sub>01</sub> 9%, F<sub>02</sub> 7%, F<sub>03</sub> 9%, F<sub>04</sub> 12%).
- In the February 2001, 2003 and 2004 surveys, older teenagers were more likely to rate their parents' rules regarding drinking as moderate than were younger teenagers (17 year olds: F<sub>01</sub> 47%, F<sub>03</sub> 42%, F<sub>04</sub> 37%; 15 year olds: F<sub>01</sub> 32%, F<sub>03</sub> 33%, F<sub>04</sub> 29%).
- Across all surveys, teenagers from non-English speaking (NES) families were more likely to report strict rules (ie a rating of 4 or 5) towards drinking than were teenagers from English speaking (ES) families (NES: F<sub>00</sub> 57%, F<sub>01</sub> 58%, F<sub>02</sub> 59%, F<sub>03</sub> 69%, F<sub>04</sub> 76%; ES: F<sub>00</sub> 42%, F<sub>01</sub> 41%, F<sub>02</sub> 37%, F<sub>03</sub> 46%, F<sub>04</sub> 45%).

Teenagers' ratings of parental rules on drinking will be included in the analysis of other sections of this report, such as drinking behaviour.

### **3.1.2 Teenagers' discussions about alcohol**

Approximately three in five teenagers reported that in the last three months they had had discussions about what could happen to them when they drink alcohol (F<sub>00</sub>: 55%, F<sub>01</sub>: 62%, F<sub>02</sub>: 57%, F<sub>03</sub>: 59%, F<sub>04</sub>: 56%). The proportion who reported having these discussions increased between February 2000 and 2001, but decreased in the February 2004 survey back to that seen initially in 2000 (F<sub>00</sub>: 55%, F<sub>01</sub>: 62%, F<sub>04</sub>: 56%).

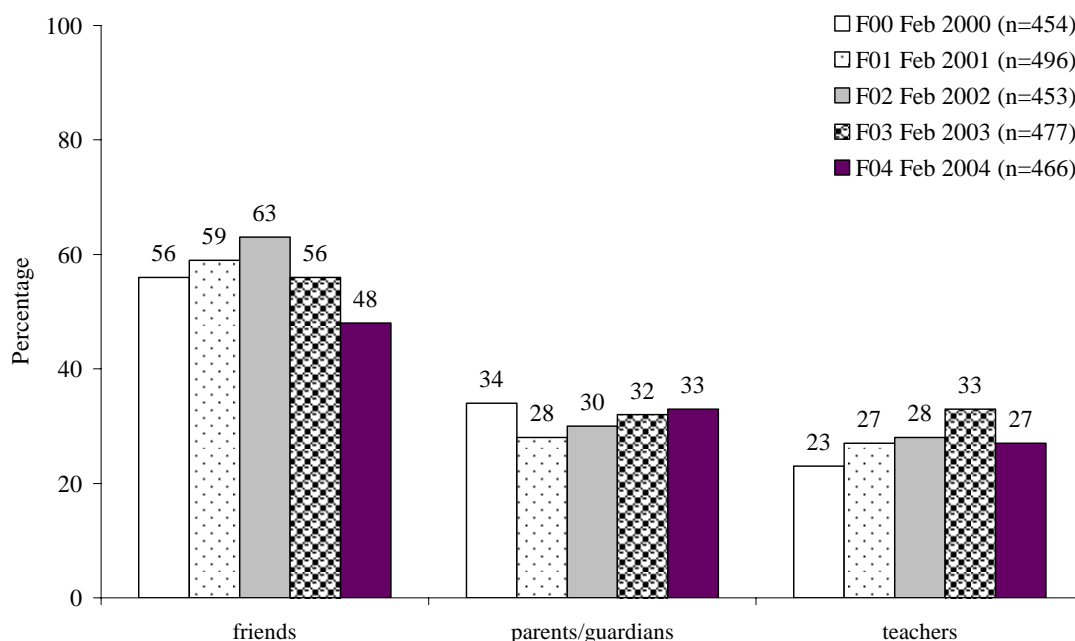
- Females were more likely than males to report having had these discussions (females: F<sub>01</sub> 66%, F<sub>02</sub> 63%, F<sub>03</sub> 63%, F<sub>04</sub> 62%; males: F<sub>01</sub> 57%, F<sub>02</sub> 51%, F<sub>03</sub> 55%, F<sub>04</sub> 51%).

The following data is based on those teenagers who reported having had discussions about alcohol in the last three months.

Who the discussions were with

Figure 2 shows, among those who had discussions about alcohol, who those discussions were with.

**Figure 2: Who teenagers spoke to when they had discussions about alcohol**



Base: Teenagers who had discussions about alcohol within the previous three months.

In the 2004 survey, teenagers most commonly reported that their discussions about alcohol were with their friends (F<sub>04</sub>: 48%), followed by parents or guardians (F<sub>04</sub>: 33%) and teachers (F<sub>04</sub>: 27%). Compared to the previous surveys:

- The proportion of teenagers who reported having conversations with their friends increased between February 2000 and 2002, but declined in the two most recent surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 56%, F<sub>02</sub>: 63%, F<sub>03</sub>: 56%, F<sub>04</sub>: 48%).
- The proportion of teenagers who reported having conversations about alcohol with their parents or legal guardians decreased between February 2000 and 2001 (F<sub>00</sub>: 34%, F<sub>01</sub>: 28%, F<sub>02</sub>: 30%, F<sub>03</sub>: 32%, F<sub>04</sub>: 33%).
- There was an increase in the proportion of teenagers who reported having conversations with teachers between February 2000 and 2003 (F<sub>00</sub>: 23%, F<sub>03</sub>: 33%).

However differences among teenagers were noted according to gender and drinking status.

- Females were more likely than males to report having had these discussions about alcohol with their friends (females: F<sub>00</sub> 61%, F<sub>01</sub> 63%, F<sub>03</sub> 60%, F<sub>04</sub> 53%; males: F<sub>00</sub> 50%, F<sub>01</sub> 53%, F<sub>03</sub> 52%, F<sub>04</sub> 42%);

- Males were more likely than females to report having had these discussions with their parents (males: F<sub>00</sub> 41%, F<sub>01</sub> 35%, F<sub>02</sub> 33%; females: F<sub>00</sub> 28%, F<sub>01</sub> 22%, F<sub>02</sub> 24%).
- Teenagers who consumed alcohol at lower risk on their last drinking occasion were more likely to have discussions with teachers about alcohol than were higher risk drinkers (lower risk: F<sub>00</sub> 29%, F<sub>01</sub> 35%, F<sub>02</sub> 31%, F<sub>03</sub> 37%, F<sub>04</sub> 32%; higher risk: F<sub>00</sub> 10%, F<sub>01</sub> 12%, F<sub>02</sub> 21%, F<sub>03</sub> 21%, F<sub>04</sub> 15%).
- Teenagers who consumed alcohol at higher risk on their last drinking occasion were more likely to have discussions with their parents about alcohol than were lower risk drinkers (higher risk: F<sub>00</sub> 42%, F<sub>01</sub> 35%, F<sub>02</sub> 37%, F<sub>04</sub> 41%; lower risk: F<sub>00</sub> 30%, F<sub>01</sub> 24%, F<sub>02</sub> 27%, F<sub>04</sub> 29%).

Those teenagers who had reported having discussions about alcohol in the past three months were then prompted as to whether any of these discussions had been with their parents<sup>6</sup>. Approximately three in five of these teenagers reported having had a discussion with their parents about alcohol in the past three months (F<sub>02</sub>: 62%, F<sub>03</sub>: 64%, F<sub>04</sub>: 61%).

- Females were more likely than males to report having had discussions with their parents in the February 2003 survey (F<sub>03</sub>: females 69%, males 59%), while in the February 2004 survey, 15 year olds were less likely than 16 and 17 year olds to report having had these discussions (F<sub>04</sub>: 15 years 53%, 16 years 67%, 17 years 65%).

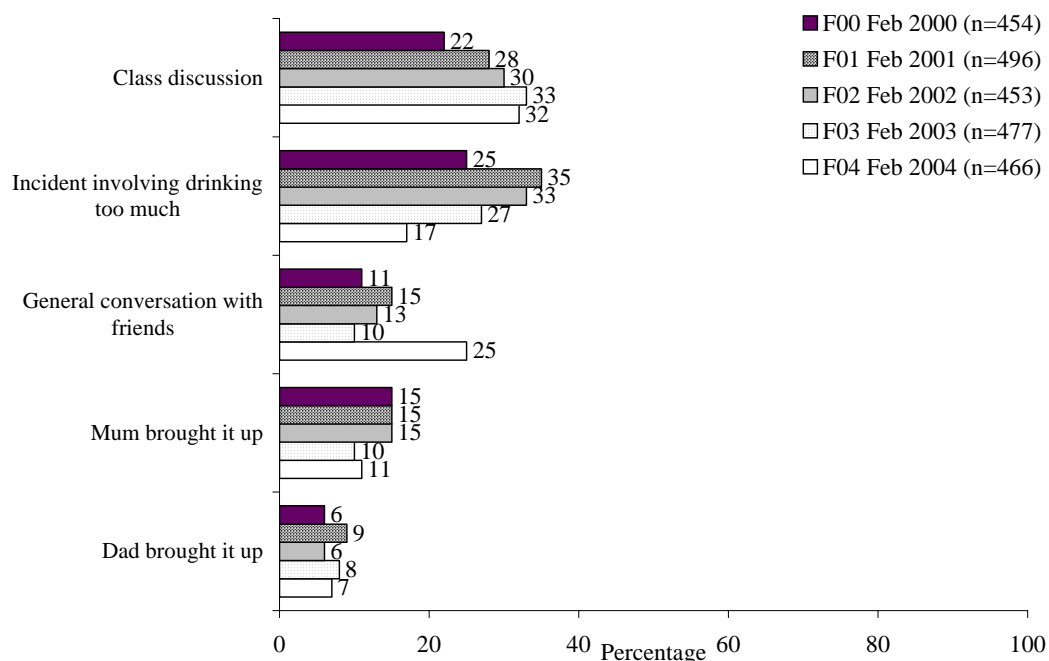
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<sup>6</sup> This question was first asked in the February 2002 survey.

The reason for the discussion

Teenagers were asked to consider what had prompted the discussion about alcohol. Figure 3 shows these results.

**Figure 3: The reason that prompted the discussion on alcohol**



Base: Teenagers who had discussions about alcohol within the previous three months.

Teenagers most commonly reported that the discussion resulted from a class discussion at school (F<sub>00</sub>: 22%, F<sub>01</sub>: 28%, F<sub>02</sub>: 30%, F<sub>03</sub>: 33%, F<sub>04</sub>: 32%), the reporting of which increased across surveys. In 2004, a quarter of teenagers reported that discussions about alcohol were part of their general conversations with friends (F<sub>00</sub>: 11%, F<sub>01</sub>: 15%, F<sub>02</sub>: 13%, F<sub>03</sub>: 10%, F<sub>04</sub>: 25%), which was a greater proportion than that seen in the earlier surveys. Less than one in five (17%) reported these discussions following an incident involving drinking too much in 2004, which was lower than that seen in the previous surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 25%, F<sub>01</sub>: 35%, F<sub>02</sub>: 33%, F<sub>03</sub>: 27%). And across most of the surveys, teenagers were more likely to report that their Mum brought up the discussion rather than their Dad (Mum: F<sub>00</sub>, F<sub>01</sub> & F<sub>02</sub> 15%, F<sub>03</sub> 10%, F<sub>04</sub> 11%; Dad: F<sub>00</sub> 6%, F<sub>01</sub> 9%, F<sub>02</sub> 6%, F<sub>03</sub> 8%, F<sub>04</sub> 7%).

Trends among the reasons behind these discussions were noted according to gender, age and drinking status for some of the surveys:

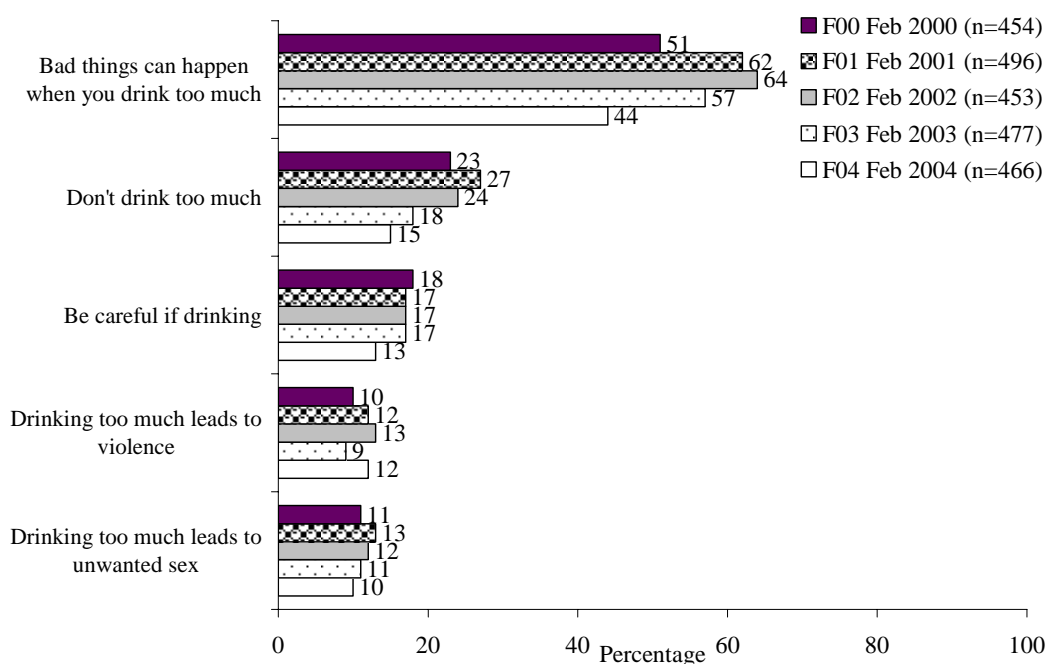
- Females were more likely than males to state that the discussions were prompted by an incident involving drinking too much (females: F<sub>00</sub> 32%, F<sub>02</sub> 39%, F<sub>03</sub> 31%; males: F<sub>00</sub> 18%, F<sub>02</sub> 26%, F<sub>03</sub> 23%) or when something bad happened after drinking (females: F<sub>02</sub> 17%, F<sub>03</sub> 13%, F<sub>04</sub>: 9%; males: F<sub>02</sub> 8%, F<sub>03</sub> 5%, F<sub>04</sub> 4%).
- Males were more likely than females to report that their parents brought it up ('Mum brought it up' males: F<sub>00</sub> 20%, F<sub>02</sub> 19%; females: F<sub>00</sub> 10%, F<sub>02</sub> 12%; 'Dad brought it up' males: F<sub>01</sub> 14%, F<sub>02</sub> 9%, F<sub>03</sub> 10%, F<sub>04</sub> 10%; females F<sub>01</sub> & F<sub>02</sub> 4%, F<sub>03</sub> 5%, F<sub>04</sub> 4%).

- Younger teenagers were more likely than older teens to report having a class discussion at school about drinking alcohol (15 year olds: F<sub>00</sub> 29%, F<sub>01</sub> 43%, F<sub>02</sub> 45%, F<sub>03</sub> 47%, F<sub>04</sub> 46%; 17 year olds: F<sub>00</sub> 16%, F<sub>01</sub> 13%, F<sub>02</sub> 14%, F<sub>03</sub> 23%, F<sub>04</sub> 22%).
- Lower risk drinkers were more likely to report a class discussion at school than were higher risk drinkers (lower risk: F<sub>01</sub> 36%, F<sub>02</sub> 35%, F<sub>03</sub> 37%, F<sub>04</sub> 37%; higher risk: F<sub>01</sub> 14%, F<sub>02</sub> 19%, F<sub>03</sub> 22%, F<sub>04</sub> 20%).
- Older teens were more likely than younger teens to report that the discussion followed an incident involving either drinking alcohol or drinking too much alcohol (17 year olds: F<sub>01</sub> 44%, F<sub>02</sub> 46%, F<sub>03</sub> 33%, F<sub>04</sub> 23%; 15 year olds: F<sub>01</sub> 27%, F<sub>02</sub> 23%, F<sub>03</sub> 20%, F<sub>04</sub> 13%), while the prevalence of these discussions for both age groups decreased across surveys.
- Higher risk drinkers were more likely to report discussions following an incident involving drinking than were lower risk drinkers (higher risk: F<sub>02</sub> 40%, F<sub>04</sub> 25%; lower risk: F<sub>02</sub> 30%, F<sub>04</sub> 13%), while the prevalence of these discussions for higher and lower risk drinkers declined across surveys.

### What the discussion was about

The topics covered in the discussions about alcohol are shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Topics covered when discussing alcohol**



Base: Teenagers who had discussions about alcohol within the previous three months.

In 2004 teenagers most typically reported that discussions were about the bad things that can happen when you drink too much (44%), about not drinking too much (15%), about being careful when drinking (13%), and the concept of drinking too much leading to violence (12%) or unwanted sex (10%). Discussions about the bad things that can happen when you drink too much were lower in 2004 when compared to all surveys except that conducted in 2000 (F<sub>00</sub>: 51%, F<sub>01</sub>: 62%, F<sub>02</sub>: 64%, F<sub>03</sub>: 57%, F<sub>04</sub>: 44%). Similarly, the proportion of teenagers who reported discussions about not

drinking too much were lower in 2004 when compared to previous surveys in 2000, 2001 and 2002 (F<sub>00</sub>: 23%, F<sub>01</sub>: 27%, F<sub>02</sub>: 24%, F<sub>03</sub>: 18%, F<sub>04</sub>: 15%).

Trends in gender and drinking status were found with respect to the topics of discussion that were covered:

- Females were more likely than males to state that the discussion was about ‘drinking too much leading to unwanted sex’ (females: F<sub>00</sub> 15%, F<sub>01</sub> 17%, F<sub>02</sub> 17%, F<sub>04</sub> 14%; males: F<sub>00</sub> 7%, F<sub>01</sub> 8%, F<sub>02</sub> 5%, F<sub>04</sub> 5%).
- Males were more likely than females to report discussions about ‘drinking too much leading to violence’ in the February 2003 survey (F<sub>03</sub>: males: 14%, females: 5%) but not in other surveys.
- In some of the surveys, higher risk drinkers were more likely to report conversations about ‘not drinking too much’ and being ‘careful when drinking’ than were lower risk drinkers (‘don’t drink too much’ - higher risk drinkers: F<sub>01</sub> 36%, F<sub>02</sub> 31%; lower risk drinkers: F<sub>01</sub> 22%, F<sub>02</sub> 21%; ‘be careful when you are drinking’ - higher risk drinkers: F<sub>02</sub> 23%; lower risk drinkers: F<sub>02</sub> 14%).

## **3.2. OVERVIEW OF TEENAGE DRINKING IN AUSTRALIA**

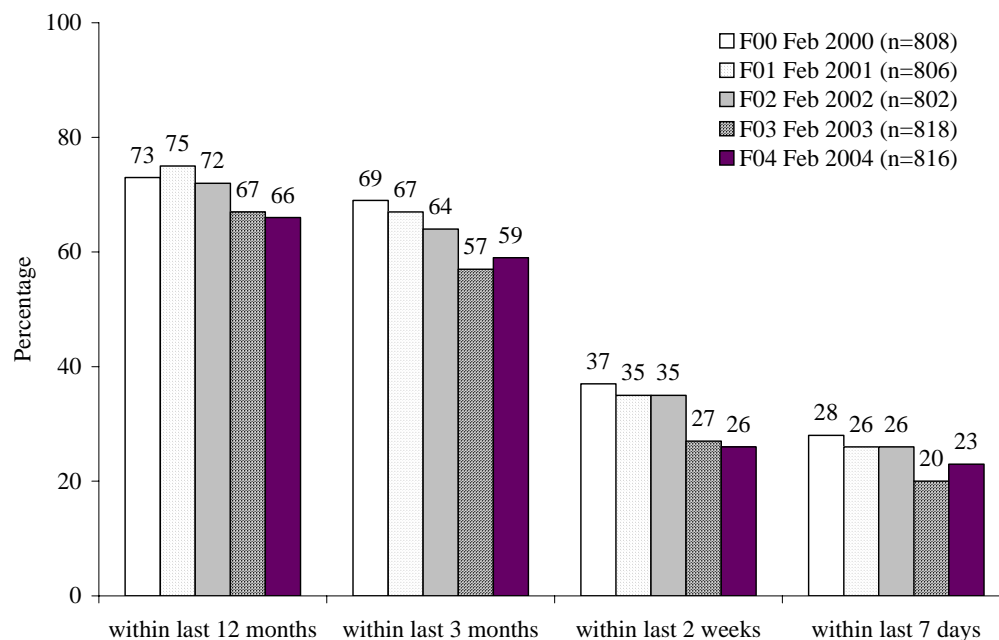
### **3.2.1. Recency of consumption**

Respondents who reported having ever consumed more than a few sips of alcohol in their lifetime were asked how long it had been since they had their last alcoholic drink. These results have been reported as a proportion of the total sample of 15 to 17 year olds to indicate how recently the total sample had consumed alcohol.

Total sample

Figure 5 shows the recency of alcohol consumption amongst the total sample of males and females over the past twelve month period.

**Figure 5: Recency of alcohol consumption amongst the total sample**



Base: All respondents.

From Figure 5 it can be seen that there has been a gradual decline in the proportion of teenagers who reported consuming alcohol within the four time periods. Specifically:

- In the 2004 survey, approximately two in three (F<sub>04</sub>: 66%) teenagers reported having consumed an alcoholic drink during the previous twelve months (F<sub>00</sub>: 73%, F<sub>01</sub>: 75%, F<sub>02</sub>: 72%, F<sub>03</sub>: 67%). The proportion of teenagers who reported having consumed alcohol in the last twelve months has declined since the February 2001 survey (F<sub>01</sub>: 75%, F<sub>04</sub>: 66%).
- In the 2004 survey, approximately three in five (F<sub>04</sub>: 59%) teenagers reported having consumed alcohol in the last three months (F<sub>00</sub>: 69%, F<sub>01</sub>: 67%, F<sub>02</sub>: 64%, F<sub>03</sub>: 57%). This proportion has declined gradually between 2000 and 2004 (F<sub>00</sub>: 69%, F<sub>04</sub>: 59%).
- Approximately a quarter (F<sub>04</sub>: 26%) of respondents reported having consumed alcohol within the last two weeks in the 2004 survey (F<sub>00</sub>: 37%, F<sub>01</sub> & F<sub>02</sub>: 35%, F<sub>03</sub>: 27%). The proportion of teenagers who consumed alcohol in the previous two weeks in the February 2003 and 2004 surveys was lower than that seen across previous surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 37%, F<sub>01</sub> & F<sub>02</sub>: 35%, F<sub>03</sub>: 27%, F<sub>04</sub>: 26%).
- Approximately a quarter (F<sub>04</sub>: 23%) of respondents reported having consumed alcohol within the last seven days (F<sub>00</sub>: 28%, F<sub>01</sub> & F<sub>02</sub>: 26% and F<sub>03</sub>: 20%). Similar to the other trends seen, the proportion of teenagers that had consumed alcohol within the last seven days has declined across surveys, with fewer teenagers reporting having consumed alcohol within the last seven days in the 2003 and 2004 survey than in the 2000 survey (F<sub>00</sub>: 28%, F<sub>03</sub>: 20%, F<sub>04</sub>: 23%).

Among those respondents who reported drinking in the two weeks prior to the survey:

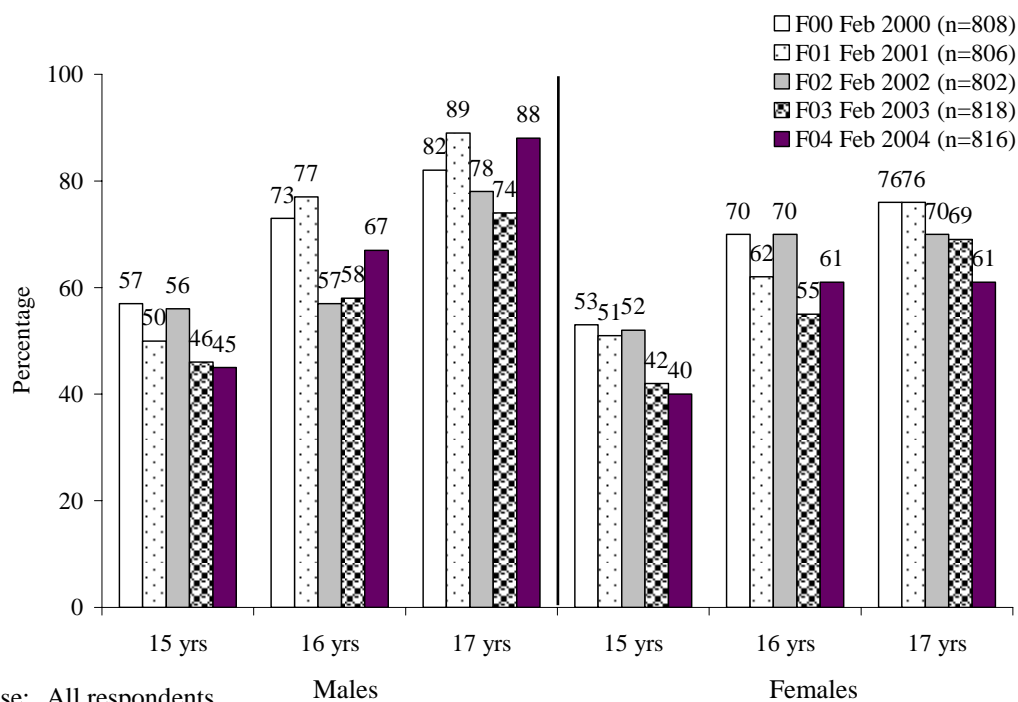
- The majority of those had drunk on one or two days only (F<sub>00</sub>: 70%, F<sub>01</sub>: 77%, F<sub>02</sub>: 73%, F<sub>03</sub>: 76%, F<sub>04</sub>: 74%).

Trends in recency of consumption were noted by age, gender and amongst those teenagers who perceived more stringent family rules about drinking.

- The proportion of 15 year olds reporting that they consumed alcohol within the previous twelve months, three months and two weeks declined across surveys (12 months: F<sub>00</sub> 61%, F<sub>04</sub> 49%; 3 months: F<sub>00</sub> 56%, F<sub>04</sub> 43%; 2 weeks: F<sub>00</sub> 24%, F<sub>04</sub> 13%).
- Among 16 year olds there was a decline between February 2000 and February 2003 in the proportion who reported consuming alcohol in the previous 3 months (F<sub>00</sub>: 72%, F<sub>03</sub>: 56%) but not across any other time periods.
- Among 17 year olds, there was a decline in the proportion who reported consuming alcohol within the previous three months, two weeks and seven days (3 months: F<sub>01</sub> 82%, F<sub>02</sub> 74%, F<sub>03</sub> 72%, F<sub>04</sub> 73%; 2 weeks: F<sub>00</sub> 55%, F<sub>01</sub> 50%, F<sub>02</sub> 47%, F<sub>03</sub> 39%, F<sub>04</sub> 37%; 7 days: F<sub>00</sub> 47%, F<sub>01</sub> 41%, F<sub>02</sub> 38%, F<sub>03</sub> 29%, F<sub>04</sub> 32%).
- In the February 2001 and 2004 surveys, males were more likely than females to report having consumed alcohol within the last twelve months, three months, two weeks and seven days (Males: 12 months: F<sub>01</sub> 79%, F<sub>04</sub> 72%; 3 months: F<sub>01</sub> 71%, F<sub>04</sub> 65%; 2 weeks F<sub>01</sub> 39%, F<sub>04</sub> 31%; 7 days F<sub>01</sub> 33%, F<sub>04</sub> 27%. Females: 12 months: F<sub>01</sub> 71%, F<sub>04</sub> 61%; 3 months: F<sub>01</sub> 63%, F<sub>04</sub> 55%; 2 weeks: F<sub>01</sub> 31%, F<sub>04</sub> 22%; 7 days: F<sub>01</sub> 20%, F<sub>04</sub> 18%).
- Teenagers who perceived their parents to have strict rules on drinking alcohol (ie a rating of 4 or 5) were less likely to have consumed alcohol within the previous three months than were teenagers with the perception of lenient parental rules on drinking (ie a rating of 1 or 2) (Strict rules: F<sub>00</sub> 52%, F<sub>01</sub> 51%, F<sub>02</sub> 46%, F<sub>03</sub> 42%, F<sub>04</sub> 44%, lenient rules F<sub>00</sub> 83%, F<sub>01</sub> 86%, F<sub>02</sub> 77%, F<sub>03</sub> 75%, F<sub>04</sub>: 74%). Similar differences were found among teenagers with strict and lenient parental rules on drinking with respect to those who had consumed alcohol within the previous twelve months, two weeks and the previous seven days.

Figure 6 shows the distribution of teenagers who consumed alcohol within the last three months by age and gender.

**Figure 6: The prevalence of teenagers consuming alcohol in the last three months by age and gender.**



Base: All respondents.

Figure 6 shows that, in general, the proportion of both males and females who had consumed alcohol within the last three months increased with age.

- For example, in the February 2004 survey, 45 per cent of 15 year old males reported consuming alcohol within the last three months, which increased with age to 67 per cent for 16 year old males and 88 per cent for 17 year old males.
- Among females in the February 2004 survey, 40 per cent of 15 year olds reported having consumed alcohol within the previous three months, which increased to 61 per cent among both 16 and 17 year old females.
- For both males and females there was a significant difference in the proportion who had consumed alcohol within the previous three months among those aged 15 and 16 years ( $F_{04}$  males: 15 years 45%, 16 years 67%;  $F_{04}$  females: 15 years 40%, 16 years 61%). No such difference was seen when comparing the proportion of 16 and 17 year old females, however among males, more 17 year olds than 16 year olds had consumed alcohol within the previous three months ( $F_{04}$  males: 16 years 67%, 17 years 88%).

The data also show, in general, a decline over time in the proportion of teenagers within gender and age group, reporting to have consumed alcohol within the previous three months. That is:

- For males and females aged 15 years, there was a decline in the proportion who had consumed alcohol within the previous three months between February 2000 and 2004 (males:  $F_{00}$  57%,  $F_{04}$  45%; females:  $F_{00}$ : 53%,  $F_{04}$ : 40%).
- For males aged 16 years, there was a reduction in the proportion who reported having consumed alcohol within the previous three months when comparing the

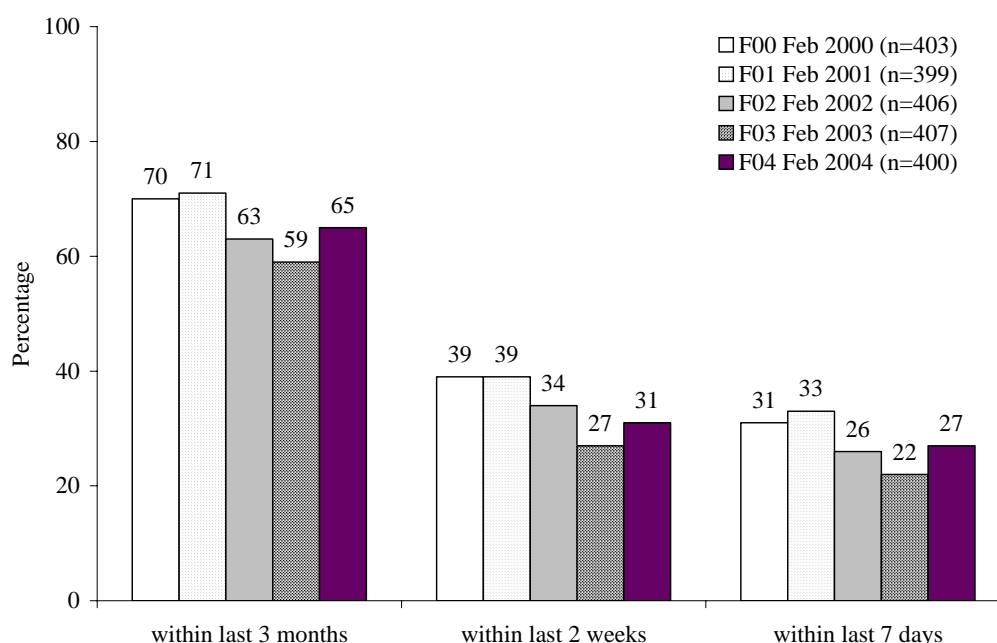
February 2000 and 2001 surveys with the February 2002 and 2003 surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 73%, F<sub>01</sub>: 77%, F<sub>02</sub>: 57%, F<sub>03</sub>: 58%).

- For 17 year old females, there was a reduction in the proportion who had consumed alcohol within the previous three months when comparing the February 2000 and 2001 surveys to the February 2004 survey (F<sub>00</sub> & F<sub>01</sub>: 76%, F<sub>04</sub>: 61%).

## Males

Figure 7 shows the recency of alcohol consumption amongst males.

**Figure 7: Recency of alcohol consumption among males**



Base: All male respondents.

In the February 2004 survey, about two in three males had consumed alcohol within the previous three months (F<sub>04</sub>: 65%); approximately three in ten had consumed alcohol within the previous two weeks (F<sub>04</sub>: 31%); and more than one-quarter had consumed alcohol within the previous seven days (F<sub>04</sub>: 27%). The 2004 findings contrast with relatively consistent declines in drinking participation by teenage males across surveys up until that point.

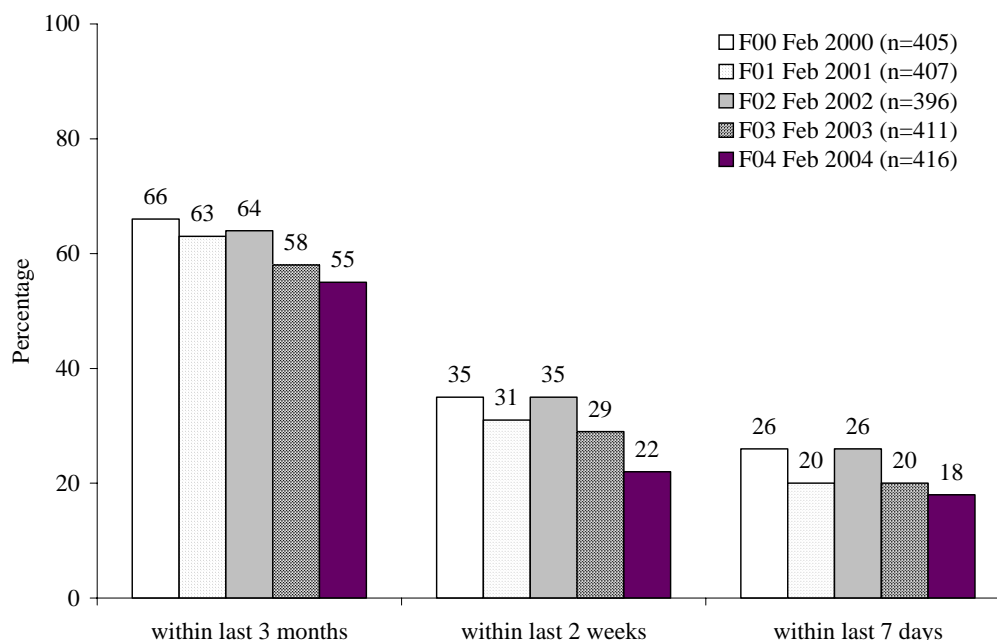
Specific findings include:

- Fewer males had consumed alcohol within the previous three months in the February 2002 and 2003 surveys when compared to the February 2000 and 2001 surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 70%, F<sub>01</sub>: 71%, F<sub>02</sub>: 63%, F<sub>03</sub>: 59%).
- Similarly, there has been a reduction over time in the proportion of males consuming alcohol within the last two weeks in the two most recent surveys when compared to the first two surveys (F<sub>00</sub> & F<sub>01</sub>: 39%, F<sub>03</sub>: 27%, F<sub>04</sub>: 31%).
- Fewer males reported having consumed alcohol within the previous seven days in 2003 when compared to the first two surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 31%, F<sub>01</sub>: 33%, F<sub>03</sub>: 22%).

Females

Figure 8 shows the recency of alcohol consumption amongst females.

**Figure 8: Recency of alcohol consumption amongst females**



Base: All female respondents.

In the February 2004 survey, more than half of all teenage females had consumed alcohol within the previous three months (F<sub>04</sub>: 55%); less than one-quarter had drunk alcohol within the previous two weeks (F<sub>04</sub>: 22%); and approximately one in five females had consumed alcohol within the previous seven days (F<sub>04</sub>: 18%).

In the 2004 survey there were less females reporting that they had consumed alcohol within the previous two weeks and the previous seven days than males (F<sub>04</sub>: previous two weeks: females 22%, males 31%; previous seven days: females 18%, males 27%).

There was a decline in the recency of consumption across some surveys for females:

- When compared to the February 2000 survey, in the 2003 and 2004 surveys there was a reduction in the proportion of females who consumed alcohol within the last three months (F<sub>00</sub>: 66%, F<sub>03</sub>: 58%, F<sub>04</sub>: 55%).
- When compared to the February 2000 and 2002 surveys, in the most recent survey there was a reduction in the proportion of females who consumed alcohol within the last two weeks (F<sub>00</sub> & F<sub>02</sub>: 35%, F<sub>04</sub>: 22%).
- The proportion of females who reported consuming alcohol within the last seven days was greater in the February 2000 and 2002 surveys when compared to the three other February surveys (F<sub>00</sub> & F<sub>02</sub>: 26%, F<sub>01</sub> & F<sub>03</sub>: 20%, F<sub>04</sub>: 18%).

### 3.2.2. Type of alcohol consumed

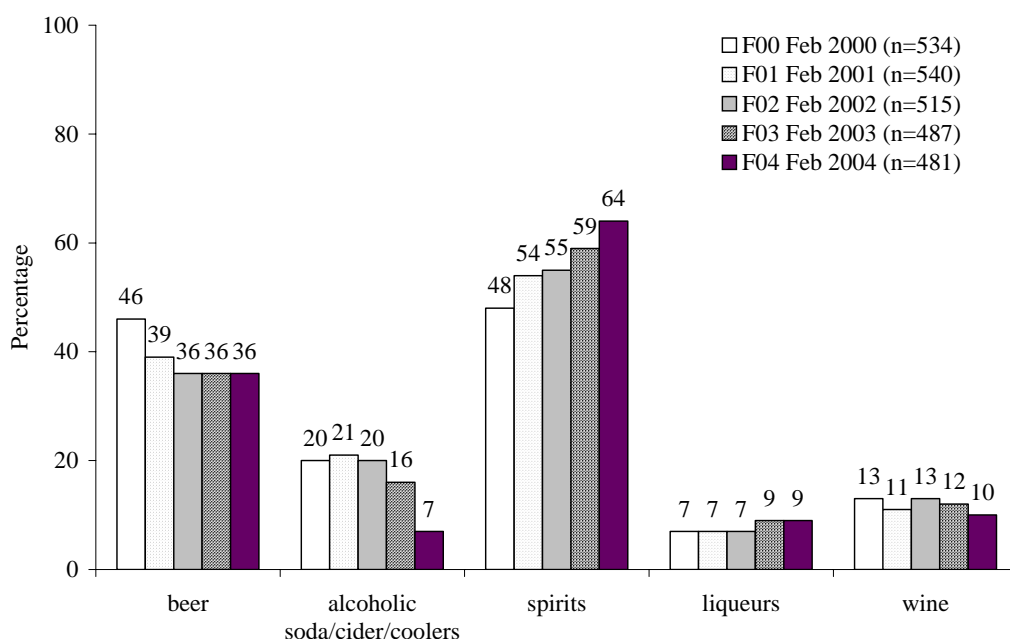
Those respondents who reported drinking within the last three months were asked to describe the type of alcoholic drinks they consumed on their last drinking occasion. This segment of the sample has been selected for more in depth analysis because they are more likely to recall what and how much they drank on their last drinking occasion and are also more likely to be regular drinkers than those who had not consumed alcohol within the previous three months. For this reason, the following results have been reported as a proportion of respondents who consumed alcohol within the three months prior to the survey.

Those respondents who had consumed alcohol within the previous three months have been referred to in this report as ‘drinkers’.

#### Type of alcohol consumed – all respondents

Figure 9 shows the patterns of alcohol consumption by beverage category for teenage drinkers across the February surveys. The proportions shown here represent the number of teenagers who reported consuming at least one drink of that beverage category on their last drinking occasion.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 9: Types of alcohol consumed by teenage drinkers on their last drinking occasion**



Base: Teenagers who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

In the February 2004 survey, amongst all the respondents who had consumed alcohol within the last three months (n=481), approximately two in three drinkers reported consuming spirits on their last drinking occasion (64%), and approximately one in three drinkers reported consuming beer (36%). One in ten drinkers reported

<sup>7</sup> The proportions in Figures 9 to 21 do not sum to 100 per cent as more than one drink category could have been consumed on the last drinking occasion.

consuming wine (10%), while 9 per cent reported consuming liqueurs and 7 per cent reported consuming alcoholic soda/cider/coolers on their last drinking occasion.

- Over the five February surveys there has been an increase in the proportion of teenage drinkers consuming spirits (F<sub>00</sub>: 48%, F<sub>01</sub>: 54%, F<sub>02</sub>: 55%, F<sub>03</sub>: 59%, F<sub>04</sub>: 64%).
- The proportion of teenage drinkers consuming beer declined between February 2000 and 2001, and remained at that level over the subsequent surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 46%, F<sub>01</sub>: 39%, F<sub>02</sub>, F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 36%).
- The proportion of teenage drinkers consuming alcoholic soda/cider/coolers declined in the most recent survey (F<sub>00</sub>: 20%, F<sub>01</sub>: 21%, F<sub>02</sub>: 20%, F<sub>03</sub>: 16%, F<sub>04</sub>: 7%).

The patterns of alcohol consumption by beverage category are shown by gender in Figures 10 and 16. Detailed analysis of alcohol consumption by beverage sub-categories is also shown in Figures 11 to 15 for males and Figures 17 to 21 for females, to illustrate trends across surveys in the proportion of teenagers who reported having consumed a particular beverage on their last drinking occasion. The following table summarises the net beverage categories and sub-categories shown in these figures.

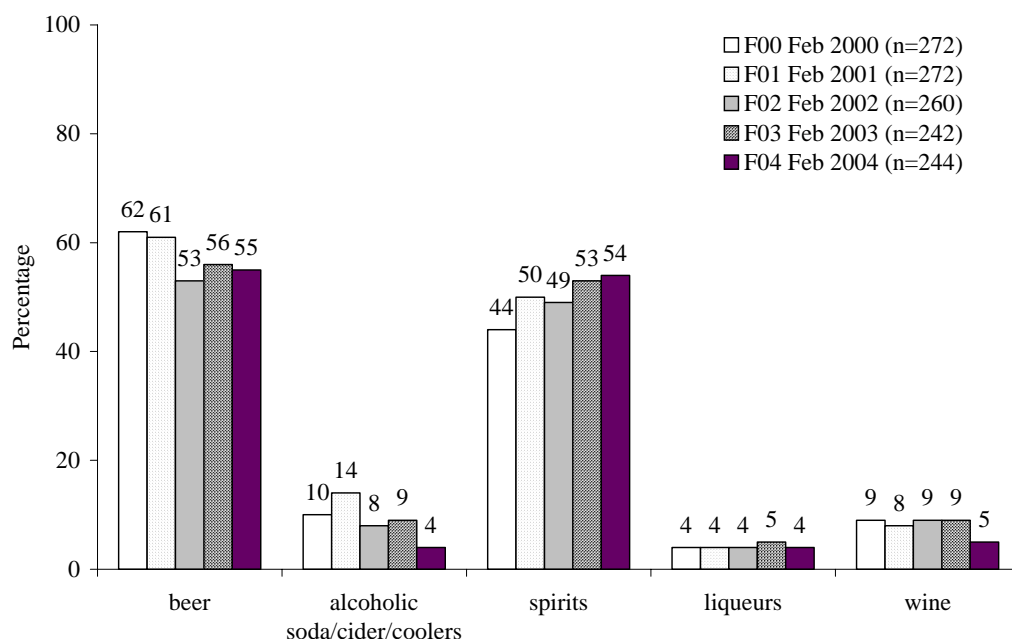
**Table 3: Summary of the beverage categories and sub-categories examined in section 3.2.2**

Net Category <sup>8</sup>	Sub-category
Beer	Low alcohol beer Mid-strength beer Full-strength beer
Alcoholic soda, cider, cooler	Alcoholic soda Alcoholic cider Alcoholic cooler
Spirits	Spirits drunk on their own or with ice Spirits mixed by self/someone else with non-alcoholic drinks Spirits pre-mixed with non-alcoholic drinks
Liqueurs	Liqueurs drunk on their own or with ice Liqueurs mixed by self/someone else with non-alcoholic drinks Liqueurs pre-mixed with non-alcoholic drinks
Wine	Still wine Champagne Fortified wine

<sup>8</sup> In Figures 10 to 21 the net category represents the proportion of drinkers who consumed at least one drink within the sub category of that beverage type on their last drinking occasion.

Males

**Figure 10: Types of alcohol consumed by male drinkers on their last drinking occasion**



Base: Males who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

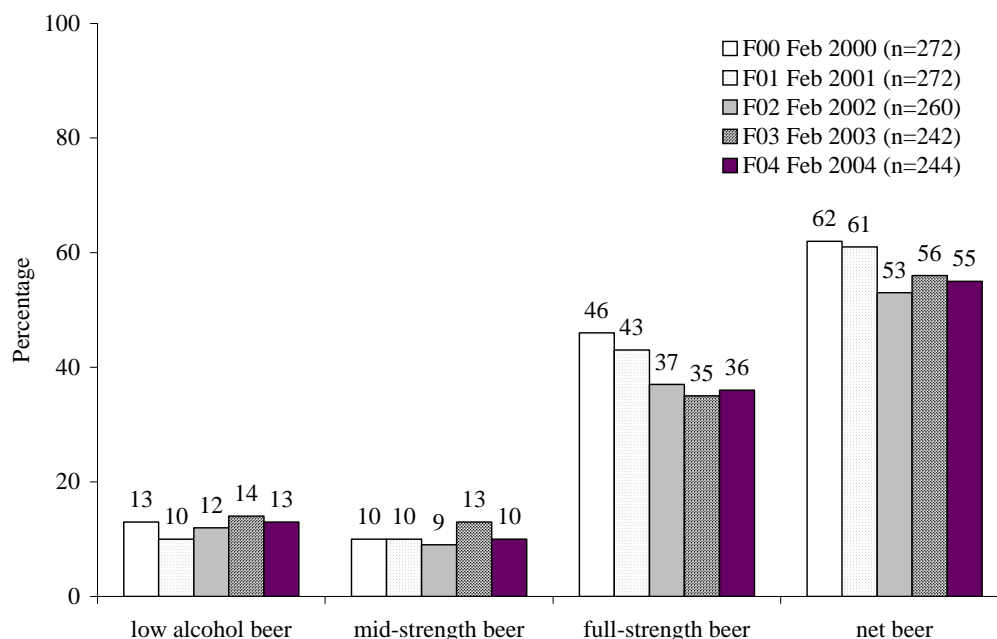
In the February 2004 survey amongst all male drinkers (n=244), more than half reported consuming beer or spirits on their last drinking occasion (beer 55%; spirits 54%). Approximately one in twenty male drinkers reported consuming wine (5%), alcoholic soda/cider/coolers (4%) or liqueurs (4%).

The trends in consumption of liqueurs and wine by male drinkers on their last drinking occasion were relatively consistent across surveys. Findings regarding other beverage categories were as follows:

- The proportion of male drinkers consuming beer decreased between February 2000 and 2002 (F<sub>00</sub>: 62%, F<sub>02</sub>: 53%).
- There was an increase in the proportion of male drinkers consuming spirits between February 2000 and 2003 (F<sub>00</sub>: 44%, F<sub>03</sub>: 53%).
- There was a decline in the proportion of male drinkers consuming alcoholic soda/cider/coolers between February 2001 and 2002 and between 2003 and 2004 (F<sub>01</sub>: 14%, F<sub>02</sub>: 8%, F<sub>03</sub>: 9%, F<sub>04</sub>: 4%).

The following five figures show trends in male drinker consumption of the sub-categories of beer, alcoholic soda/cider/coolers, spirits, liqueurs and wine.

**Figure 11: Sub-categories of beer consumed by male drinkers on their last drinking occasion**

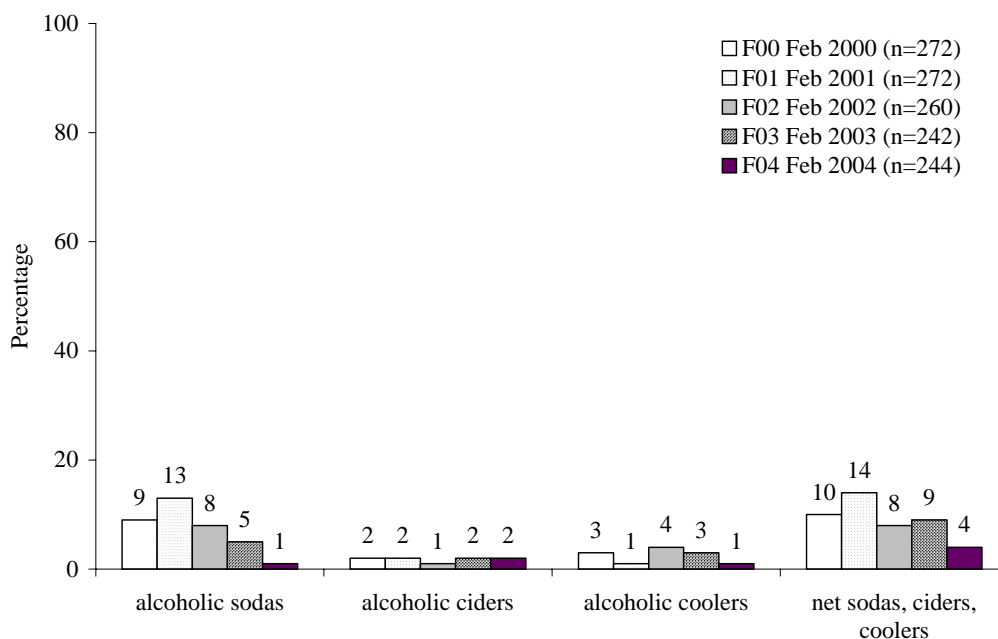


Base: Males who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

Figure 11 shows that in February 2004 the majority of male drinkers who reported consuming beer on their last drinking occasion had consumed full-strength beer (F<sub>04</sub>: 36%). A similar proportion of male drinkers reported consuming low alcohol and/or mid-strength beer in the February 2004 survey (F<sub>04</sub>: low alcohol 13%; mid-strength 10%).

- Over the five surveys, there has been a gradual decline in the proportion of male drinkers who reported consuming full-strength beer on their last drinking occasion (F<sub>00</sub>: 46%, F<sub>01</sub>: 43%, F<sub>02</sub>: 37%, F<sub>03</sub>: 35%, F<sub>04</sub>: 36%). This decline is reflected in the reduced proportion of males consuming 'net' beer.

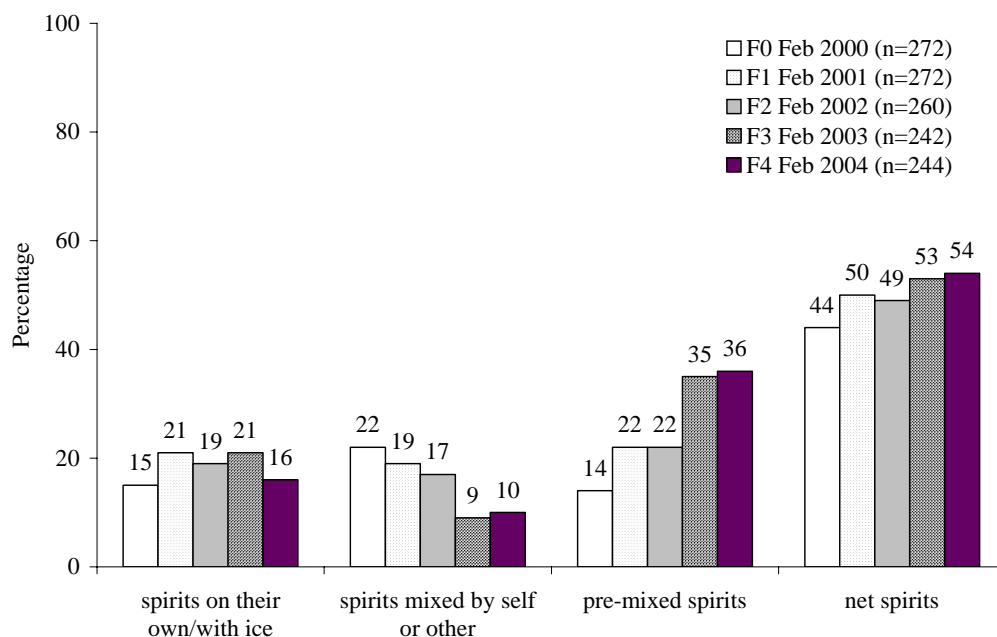
**Figure 12: Sub-categories of alcoholic soda/cider/coolers consumed by male drinkers on their last drinking occasion**



Base: Males who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

From Figure 12 it can be seen that in February 2004, less than one in twenty male drinkers reported consuming a beverage within the net alcoholic soda, cider, cooler category (F<sub>04</sub>: 4%). The major shift in consumption of this beverage category can be seen in the alcoholic soda sub-category, where consumption has declined in the most recent surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 9%, F<sub>01</sub>: 13%, F<sub>02</sub>: 8%, F<sub>03</sub>: 5%, F<sub>04</sub>: 1%). Across the surveys very few males reported consuming alcoholic ciders or coolers.

**Figure 13: Sub-categories of spirits consumed by male drinkers on their last drinking occasion**

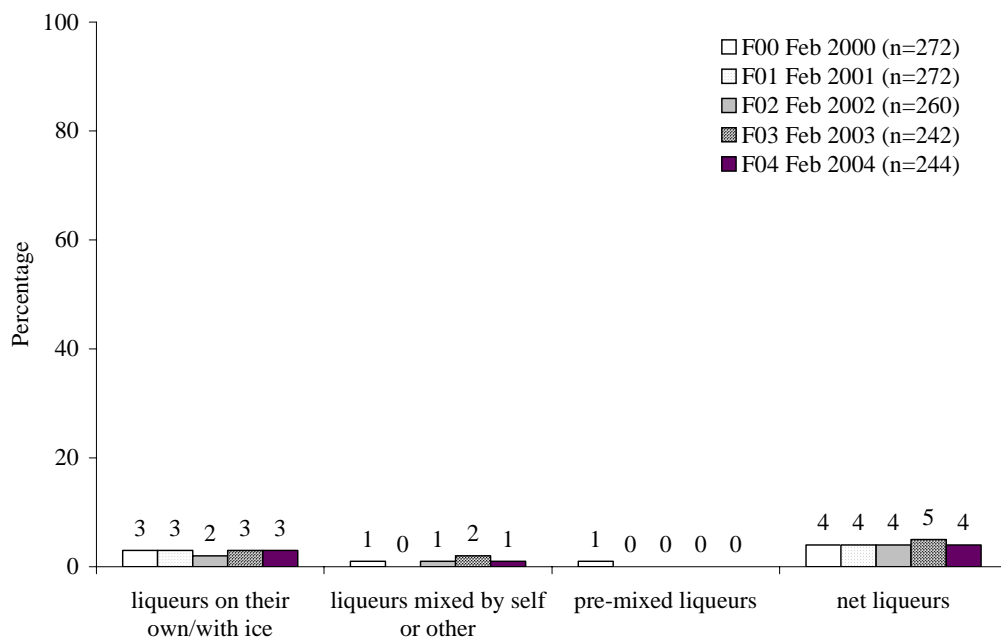


Base: Males who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

In February 2004, the most frequently reported spirit sub-categories consumed by male drinkers were pre-mixed (F<sub>04</sub>: 36%), followed by spirits on their own or with ice (F<sub>04</sub>: 16%), and spirits mixed with non-alcoholic drinks by self or other (F<sub>04</sub>: 10%).

- There was a large increase in the proportion of male drinkers consuming pre-mixed on their most recent drinking occasion across surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 14%, F<sub>01</sub> & F<sub>02</sub>: 22%, F<sub>03</sub>: 35%, F<sub>04</sub>: 36%).
- There was a decline in male drinkers reporting having consumed spirits mixed with non-alcoholic drinks by themselves or others when comparing the first three surveys to the 2003 and 2004 surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 22%, F<sub>01</sub>: 19%, F<sub>02</sub>: 17%, F<sub>03</sub>: 9%, F<sub>04</sub>: 10%).

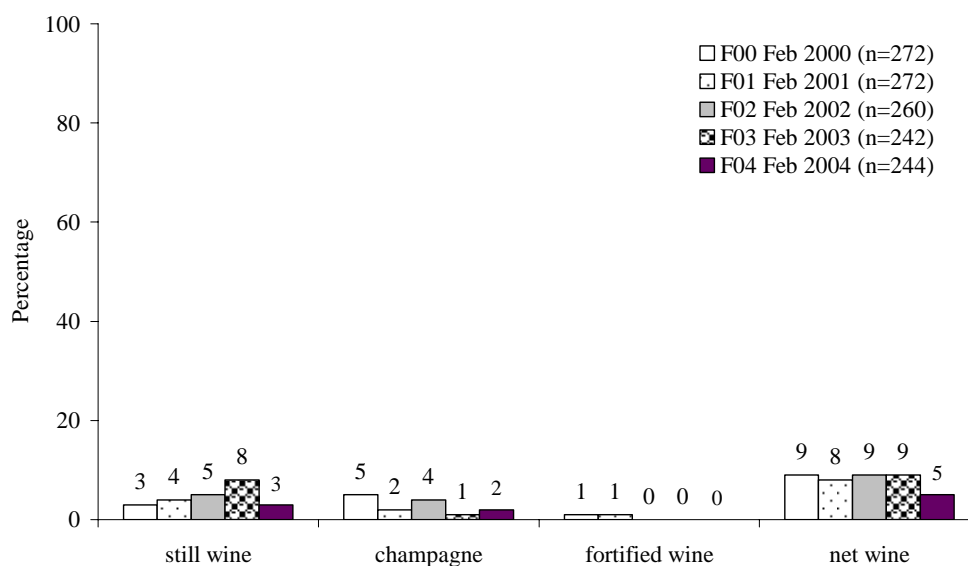
**Figure 14: Sub-categories of liqueurs consumed by male drinkers on their last drinking occasion**



Base: Males who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

Compared to the attraction of spirits to male drinkers, liqueurs have not rated highly as a beverage of choice among this group. Three per cent of male drinkers reported consuming liqueurs on their own or with ice in 2004, 1 per cent reported consuming liqueurs mixed with non-alcoholic drinks by self or another person and none reported consuming pre-mixed liqueurs. No differences across surveys were observed.

**Figure 15: Sub-categories of wine consumed by male drinkers on their last drinking occasion**



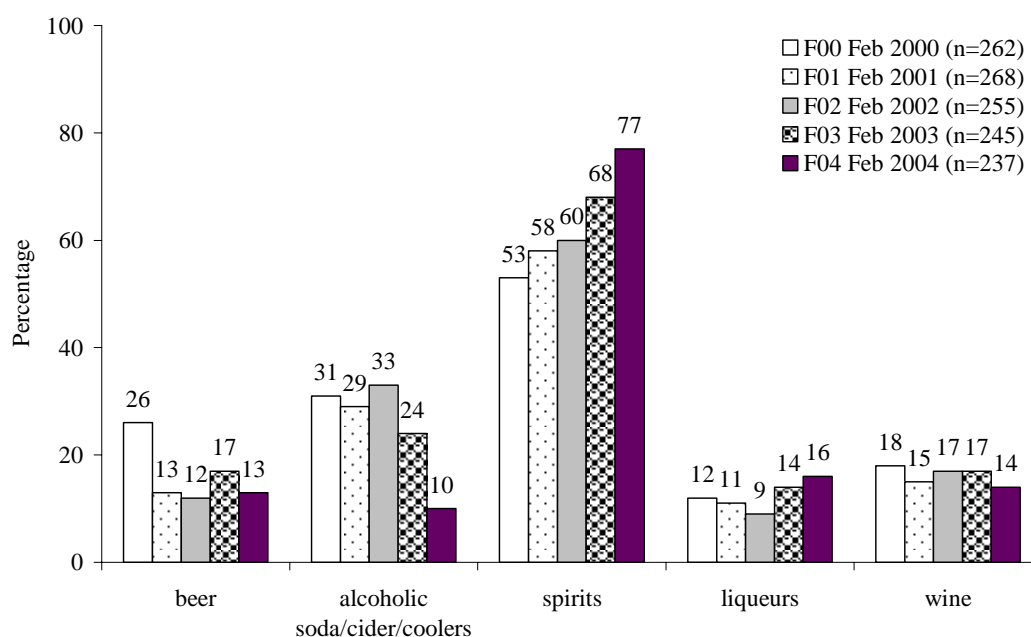
Base: Males who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

In 2004, 3 per cent of male drinkers reported consuming still wine on their last drinking occasion, 2 per cent reported consuming champagne, and none reported consuming fortified wine. There was a reduction in the proportion of male drinkers who consumed still wine in 2004 when compared to 2003 (F<sub>03</sub>: 8%, F<sub>04</sub>: 3%). No other differences were observed.

### Females

Figure 16 shows the proportion of female drinkers who reported having consumed particular beverage categories on their last drinking occasion.

**Figure 16: Types of alcohol consumed by female drinkers on their last drinking occasion**



Base: Females who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

In the February 2004 survey amongst all female drinkers (n=237), more than three-quarters reported consuming spirits on their last drinking occasion (77%). Less than one in six female drinkers reported consuming beverages in each of the other categories: liqueurs (16%), wine (14%), beer (13%) and alcoholic soda/cider/coolers (10%).

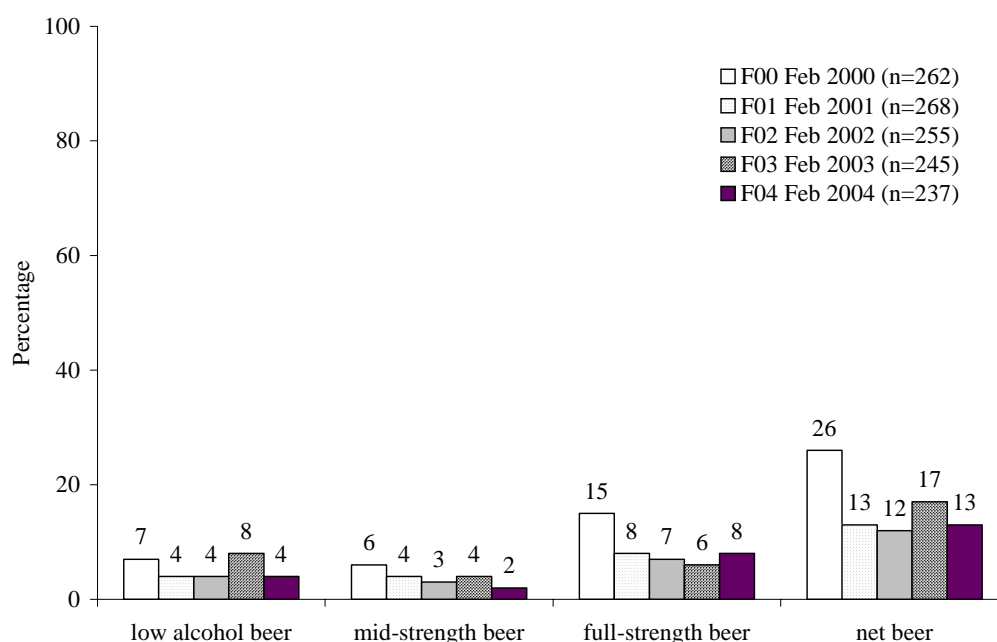
Several trends in consumption of different beverage categories by female drinkers on their last drinking occasion can be seen, including:

- There was a large increase in the consumption of spirits across surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 53%, F<sub>01</sub>: 58%, F<sub>02</sub>: 60%, F<sub>03</sub>: 68%, F<sub>04</sub>: 77%).
- The proportion consuming alcoholic soda/cider/coolers decreased between February 2002 and 2003, and February 2003 and 2004 (F<sub>02</sub>: 33%, F<sub>03</sub>: 24%, F<sub>04</sub>: 10%).
- The proportion consuming beer in the February 2000 survey was greater than that seen in any of the subsequent surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 26%, F<sub>01</sub>: 13%, F<sub>02</sub>: 12%, F<sub>03</sub>: 17%, F<sub>04</sub>: 13%).

- The proportion consuming liqueurs has increased between the 2002 and 2004 surveys (F<sub>02</sub>: 9%, F<sub>04</sub>: 16%).

As shown for male drinkers, the following five figures detail the trends in consumption by female drinkers, of each beverage category by sub-category, as outlined in Table 3.

**Figure 17: Sub-categories of beer consumed by female drinkers on their last drinking occasion**

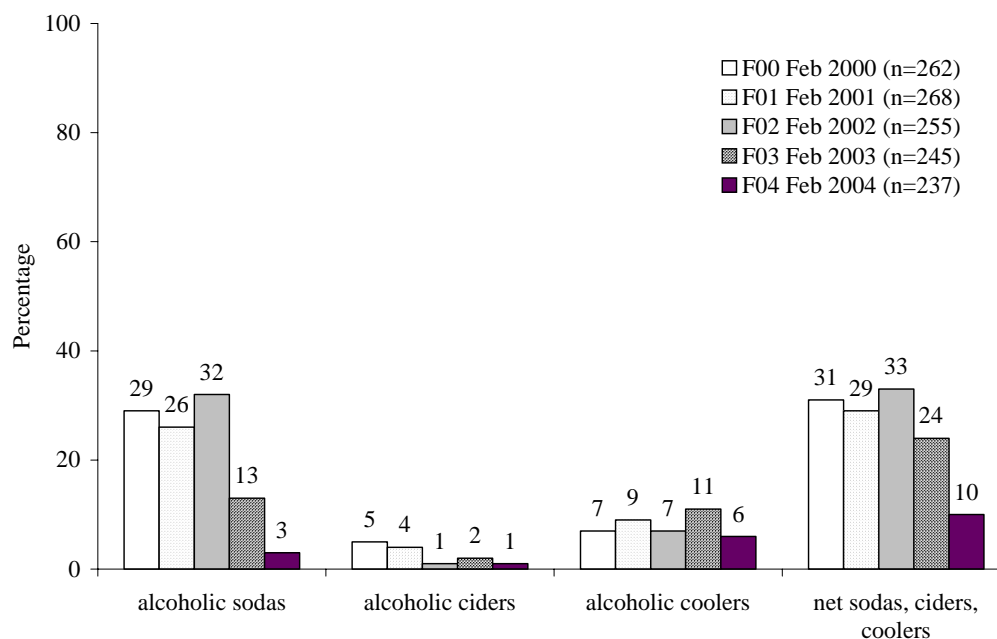


Base: Females who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

Within the low levels of beer consumption among females on their last drinking occasion in 2004, female drinkers were most likely to report consuming full-strength beer (8%), followed by low alcohol beer (4%) and mid-strength beer (2%).

- The proportion of females drinking beer has remained relatively consistent since 2001. With respect to full-strength beer consumption, February 2000 figures have been significantly greater than all subsequent surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 15%, F<sub>01</sub>: 8%, F<sub>02</sub>: 7%, F<sub>03</sub>: 6%, F<sub>04</sub>: 8%), which is reflected in the ‘net’ beer trends (F<sub>00</sub>: 26%, F<sub>01</sub>: 13%, F<sub>02</sub>: 12%, F<sub>03</sub>: 17%, F<sub>04</sub>: 13%).

**Figure 18: Sub-categories of alcoholic soda/cider/coolers consumed by female drinkers on their last drinking occasion**

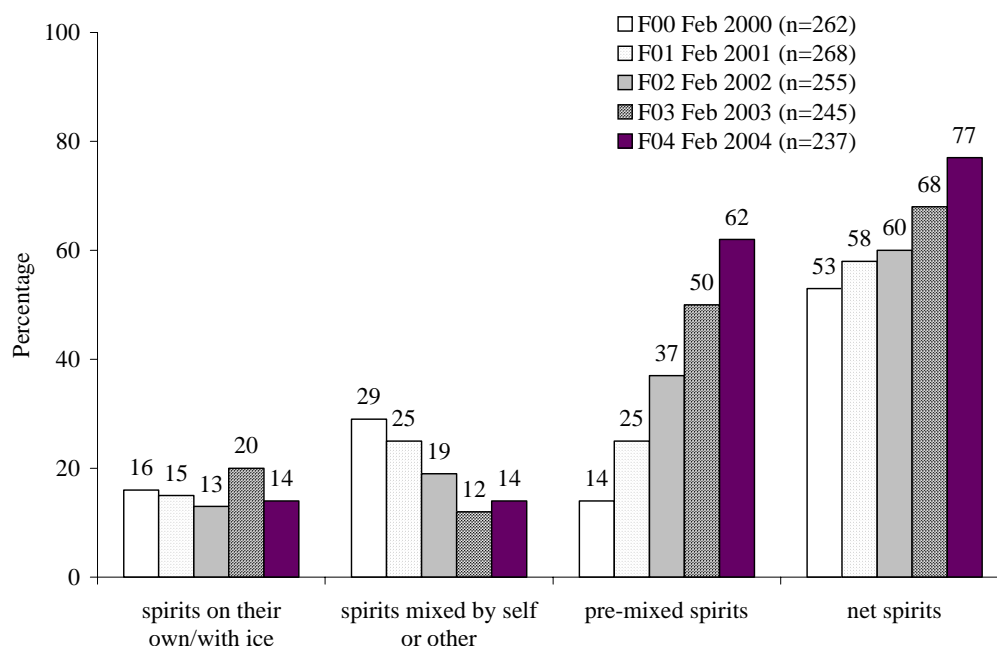


Base: Females who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

In the February 2004 survey 6 per cent of female drinkers reported consuming alcoholic coolers, 3 per cent consumed alcoholic sodas, and 1 per cent reported consuming alcoholic ciders.

- Compared with previous surveys, there has been a large decline in the proportion of females consuming alcoholic sodas, particularly between February 2002 and 2003, and February 2003 and 2004 (F<sub>02</sub>: 32%, F<sub>03</sub>: 13%, F<sub>04</sub>: 3%).
- The proportion of female drinkers consuming alcoholic ciders appears to be exhibiting a downward trend across surveys, although differences were not significant.

**Figure 19: Sub-categories of spirits consumed by female drinkers on their last drinking occasion**

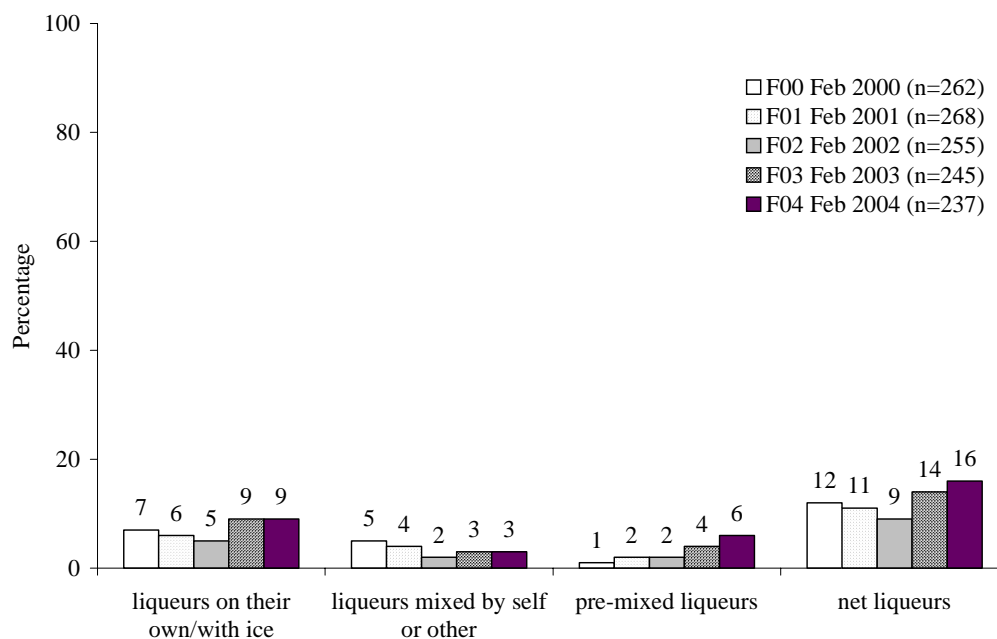


Base: Females who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

In February 2004 it can be seen that close to two in three female drinkers consumed pre-mixed spirits on their last drinking occasion (62%), while one in seven reported consuming spirits on their own or with ice (14%), or spirits mixed with non-alcoholic drinks by themselves or another person (14%).

- Over the five February surveys there has been an increase in the proportion of female drinkers consuming spirits in general, from just over half of female drinkers (F<sub>00</sub>: 53%) to more than three-quarters of female drinkers (F<sub>04</sub>: 77%).
- This increase in the proportion of female drinkers who reported consuming spirits is due to the sizeable increase in the proportion who reported having consumed pre-mixed spirits on their last drinking occasion (F<sub>00</sub>: 14%, F<sub>01</sub>: 25%, F<sub>02</sub>: 37%, F<sub>03</sub>: 50%, F<sub>04</sub>: 62%).
- Over the February surveys, there has been a decline in the proportion of female drinkers consuming spirits mixed with non-alcoholic drinks by themselves or another person (F<sub>00</sub>: 29%, F<sub>01</sub>: 25%, F<sub>02</sub>: 19%, F<sub>03</sub>: 12%, F<sub>04</sub>: 14%).
- The proportion of female drinkers consuming spirits on their own or with ice was relatively consistent across the surveys, except for an increase in the proportion who consumed these spirits between the 2002 and 2003 surveys (F<sub>02</sub>: 13%, F<sub>03</sub>: 20%).

**Figure 20: Sub-categories of liqueurs consumed by female drinkers on their last drinking occasion**

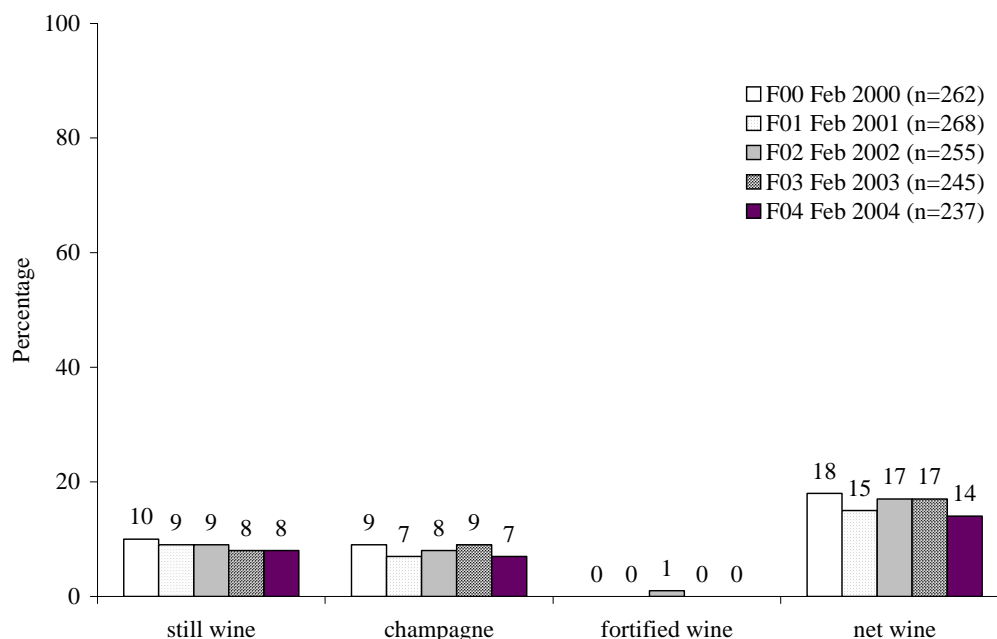


Base: Females who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

In the February 2004 survey, close to one in ten female drinkers reported consuming liqueurs on their own or with ice (9%), with approximately one in twenty reporting having consumed pre-mixed liqueurs (6%) or liqueurs mixed with non-alcoholic drinks by themselves or another person (3%).

- There was an increase in overall consumption of liqueurs between the February 2002 and 2004 surveys (F<sub>02</sub>: 9%, F<sub>04</sub>: 16%).

**Figure 21: Sub-categories of wine consumed by female drinkers on their last drinking occasion**



Base: Females who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

In the February 2004 survey, female drinkers who consumed wine on their last drinking occasion drank either still wine (8%) or champagne (7%). Trends in wine consumption amongst female drinkers were consistent across the February surveys, with no females reporting the consumption of fortified wines in four of the five surveys (F<sub>00</sub> & F<sub>01</sub>: 0%, F<sub>02</sub>: 1%, F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 0%).

### 3.3. ANALYSIS OF DRINKING PATTERNS FOR LOWER AND HIGHER RISK TEENAGE DRINKERS

This section of the report examines the drinking behaviour of males and females in further detail. As stated previously, those respondents who had consumed alcohol within the three months prior to the respective survey have been referred to as ‘drinkers’ in this report. All of the data shown in this section relates to those respondents who were classified as drinkers and investigates the amount and type of alcohol they consumed on their last drinking occasion.

Alcohol consumption amongst youth is also examined in this section of the report in relation to those drinking at lower and higher risk levels<sup>9</sup>. Lower risk drinking is defined in this report as the equivalent of less than seven standard drinks for males and less than five standard drinks for females on their last drinking occasion. Higher risk drinking is defined in this report as the equivalent of seven or more standard

<sup>9</sup> As stated in section 2.3 (p13), the Australian Alcohol Guidelines for episodic drinking relate to adult alcohol consumption, not young people less than 18 years of age. In the absence of specific consumption quantity guidelines for 15 to 17 year olds, the guidelines for adults were adopted as a framework for the analysis undertaken in this report.

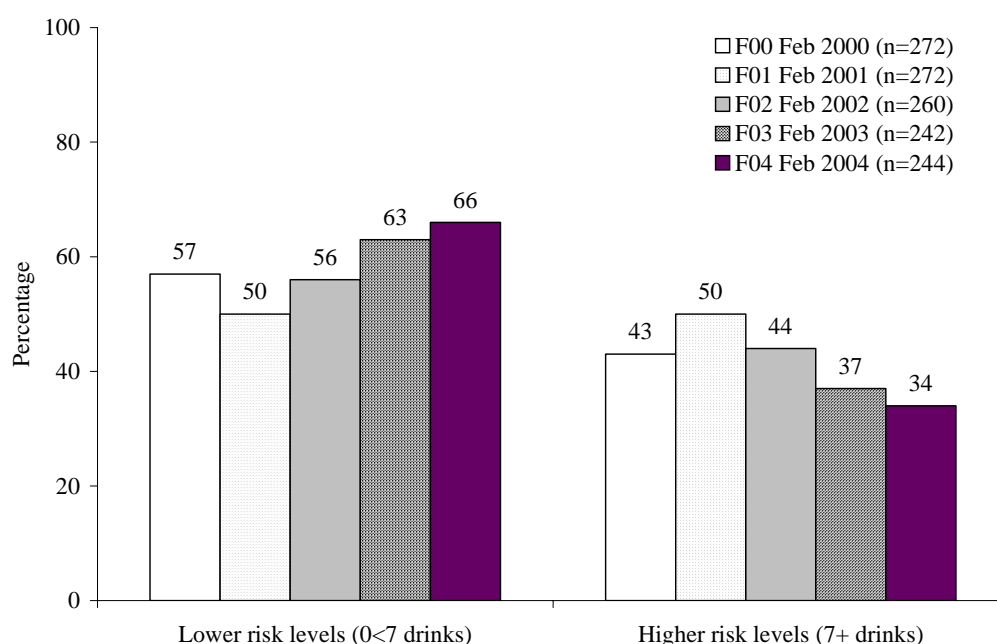
drinks for males and five or more standard drinks for females on their last drinking occasion.

### 3.3.1 Prevalence of lower and higher risk drinking among teenagers

The proportions of male and female drinkers surveyed who consumed alcohol at lower and higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion was examined. Figures 22 and 23 show these results.

#### Males

**Figure 22: The proportion of male drinkers consuming alcohol at lower and higher risk levels**



Base: Males who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

In February 2004, more male drinkers reported consuming alcohol at lower risk than higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion (lower risk 66%, higher risk 34%).

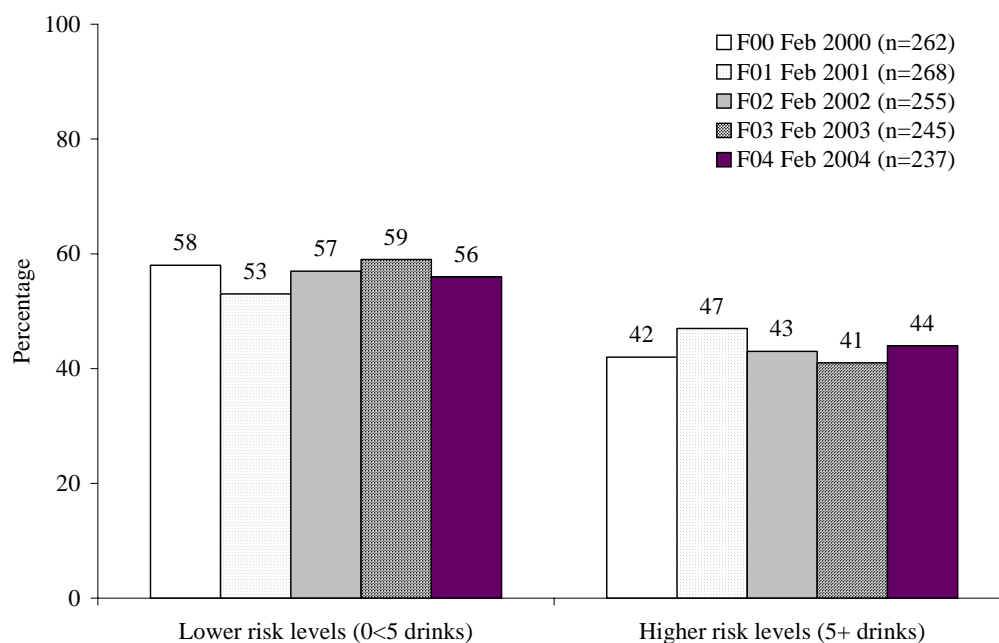
- The proportion consuming alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion was significantly greater in this most recent survey than all of the previous February surveys excluding 2003 (F<sub>00</sub>: 57%, F<sub>01</sub>: 50%, F<sub>02</sub>: 56%, F<sub>04</sub>: 66%).
- In the same way, among male drinkers it can be seen that the lowest level of high risk drinking on their last drinking occasion was observed in February 2004, which was significantly lower than the February 2000, 2001 and 2002 surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 43%, F<sub>01</sub>: 50%, F<sub>02</sub>: 44%, F<sub>04</sub>: 34%).
- Across all of the surveys, male lower risk drinkers were more likely to report strict parental rules on drinking (ie a rating of 4 or 5) than lenient rules (ie a rating of 1 or 2) (strict parental rules: F<sub>00</sub> 40%, F<sub>01</sub> 38%, F<sub>02</sub> 36%, F<sub>03</sub> 41%, F<sub>04</sub> 42%; lenient parental rules: F<sub>00</sub> 20%, F<sub>01</sub> 12%, F<sub>02</sub> 19%, F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub> 16%).

- No differences were noted with respect to male higher risk drinkers and their perceived parental rules regarding drinking across surveys.

The reduction in the proportion of males consuming alcohol within the three months prior to the survey, and those drinking at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion has resulted in a smaller number of higher risk males available for analysis of their consumption trends. For example, in the February 2000 survey the number of males consuming alcohol at higher risk was 123; by February 2004 the numbers in the survey had decreased to 83 (F<sub>00</sub>: n=123, F<sub>01</sub>: n=141, F<sub>02</sub>: n=112, F<sub>03</sub>: n=89, F<sub>04</sub>: n=83).

### Females

**Figure 23: The proportion of female drinkers consuming alcohol at lower and higher risk levels**



Base: Females who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

A greater proportion of female drinkers consumed alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion in the February 2004 survey (lower risk 56%, higher risk 44%), although the difference in lower and higher risk drinking was not as great as that seen with males.

- Significant differences in the proportion of female drinkers consuming alcohol at lower and higher risk on their last drinking occasion were also found in the February 2000, 2002 and 2003 surveys (lower risk: F<sub>00</sub>: 58%, F<sub>02</sub>: 57%, F<sub>03</sub>: 59%; higher risk: F<sub>00</sub>: 42%, F<sub>02</sub>: 43%, F<sub>03</sub>: 41%).
- Similar to that seen with males, female drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion were more likely to have reported a perception of strict family rules (ie a rating of 4 or 5) than a perception of lenient family rules (ie a rating of 1 or 2) (strict parental rules: F<sub>00</sub> 40%, F<sub>01</sub> 41%, F<sub>02</sub> 34%, F<sub>03</sub> 42%, F<sub>04</sub> 38%; lenient parental rules: F<sub>00</sub> 26%, F<sub>01</sub> 14%, F<sub>02</sub> 17%, F<sub>03</sub> 17%, F<sub>04</sub> 19%).

- No differences were noted with respect to female higher risk drinkers and their perceptions regarding parental rules on drinking alcohol across surveys.

The reduction in sample size of females who drank within the three months prior to the survey and who consumed alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion across the surveys has been less noticeable than was the case for males. For example, in February 2000 114 female drinkers were classified as drinking at a higher risk level on their last drinking occasion, and in February 2004 this number was 105 (F<sub>00</sub>: n=114, F<sub>01</sub>: n=120, F<sub>02</sub>: n=110, F<sub>03</sub>: n=100, F<sub>04</sub>: n=105).

### **3.3.2 Type of alcohol consumed by respondents drinking at lower and higher risk on their last drinking occasion**

Trends in consumption of different alcoholic beverage types has also been investigated with respect to teenagers drinking at lower and higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion. The following figures show the proportion of male and female drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower and higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion by the particular beverage types they had consumed. These figures are based on teenagers' reports regarding the type of alcoholic drinks they consumed on their most recent drinking occasion.

The way in which beverage categories are grouped in this section of the report is slightly different to that described in Table 3 and shown in Figures 10 and 16 (pp 29 & 34) to describe the types of alcohol consumed by male and female drinkers. The one difference is that spirits and liqueurs have been grouped together according to whether they have been consumed as a pre-mixed packaged drink. As such, the spirits and liqueurs categories are presented as 'pre-mixed spirits or liqueurs' and 'other spirits or liqueurs'. Although fewer drinkers consume liqueurs, there are similarities in the marketing of pre-mixed spirits and pre-mixed liqueurs, and grouping the beverages in this way was viewed as the most logical method of providing an overview of the trends in beverage category consumption. This approach to the categorisation of spirits and liqueurs will be used for the remainder of this report, and is summarised in Table 4.

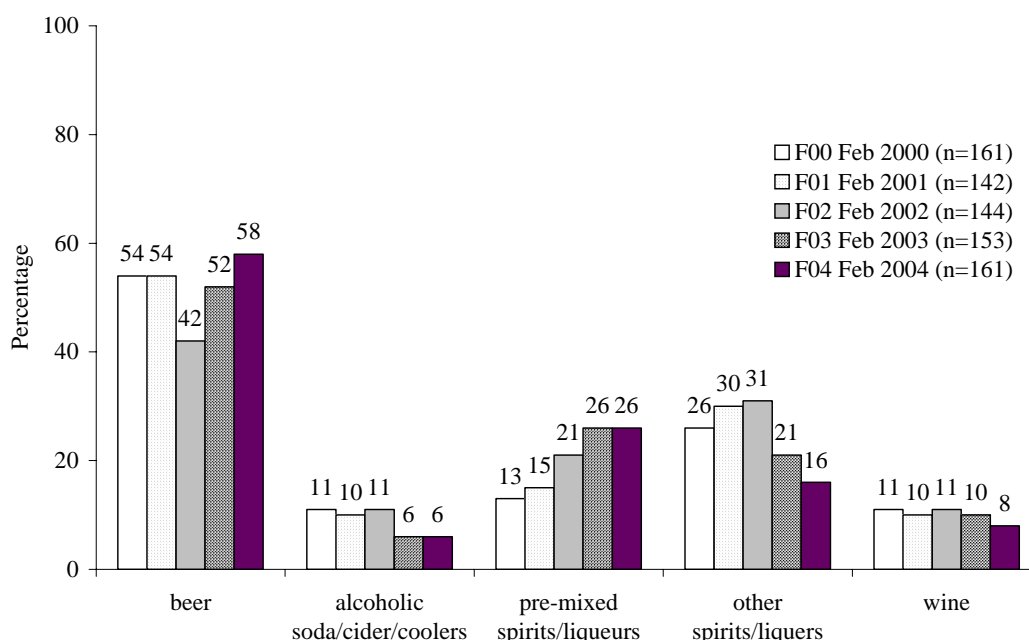
**Table 4: Summary of the beverage categories examined in section 3.3**

Net Category	This category consists of:
Beer	Low strength beer Mid strength beer Full-strength beer
Alcoholic soda/cider/coolers	Alcoholic sodas Alcoholic ciders Alcoholic coolers
Pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs	Spirits pre-mixed with non-alcoholic drinks Liqueurs pre-mixed with non-alcoholic drinks
Other spirits/liqueurs	Spirits or liqueurs mixed by self/someone else with non-alcoholic drinks Spirits or liqueurs drunk on their own or with ice
Wine	Still wine Champagne Fortified wine

### Males

Amongst males who drank at lower risk levels, Figure 24 shows the proportion of drinkers who consumed particular beverage categories.

**Figure 24: Beverage categories consumed by male drinkers consuming alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion<sup>10</sup>**



Base: Males who drank within the last 3 months and drank at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion (ie. less than 7 standard drinks).

<sup>10</sup> The proportions in Figures 24 to 27 do not sum to 100 per cent as more than one drink category could have been consumed on the last drinking occasion.

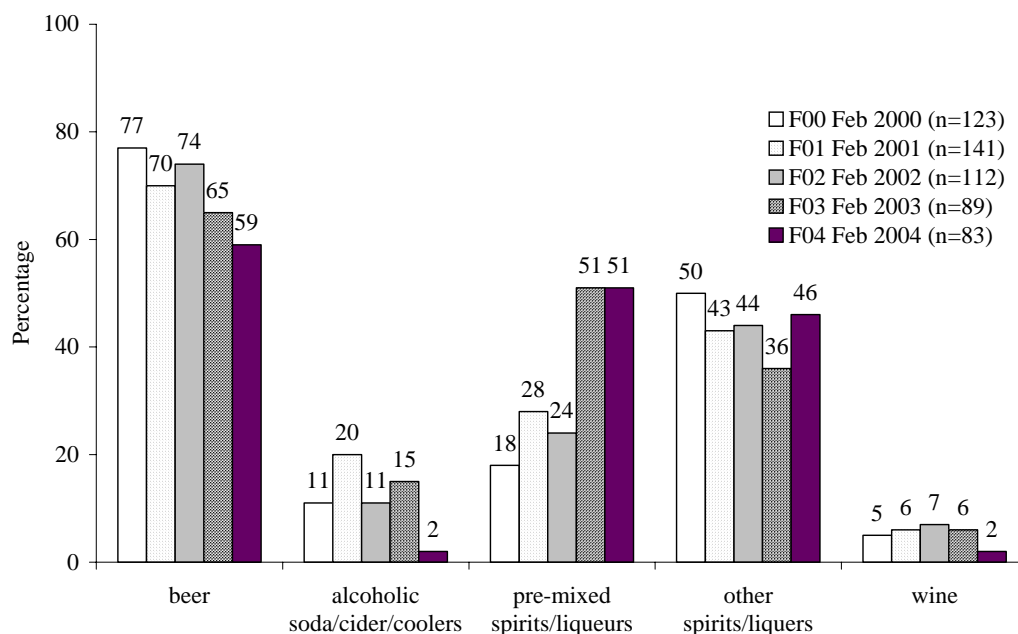
In the February 2004 survey, the most frequently reported beverage category consumed by male drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion was beer (58%), followed by pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs (26%); other spirits/liqueurs (16%); wine (8%), and alcoholic soda/cider/coolers (6%).

There have been some shifts in the pattern in consumption of different beverage categories by male lower risk drinkers across the five February surveys:

- In the February 2002 survey the proportion who consumed beer was lower than that found in all other surveys excluding February 2003 (F<sub>00</sub> & F<sub>01</sub>: 54%, F<sub>02</sub>: 42%, F<sub>04</sub>: 58%).
- The proportion who consumed pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs has increased between February 2000 and 2003 (F<sub>00</sub>: 13%, F<sub>01</sub>: 15%, F<sub>02</sub>: 21%, F<sub>03</sub>: 26%).
- There was a decline in the proportion who reported consuming other spirits/liqueurs in February 2003 and 2004, when compared with February 2001 and 2002 findings (F<sub>01</sub>: 30%, F<sub>02</sub>: 31%, F<sub>03</sub>: 21%, F<sub>04</sub>: 16%).

Figure 25 shows the proportion of male drinkers who consumed alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion and the particular beverage types they drank.

**Figure 25: Beverage categories consumed by male drinkers consuming alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion**



Base: Males who drank within the last 3 months and drank at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion (ie. 7 or more standard drinks).

In the February 2004 survey, the most frequently reported beverage category consumed by male drinkers who consumed alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion was beer (59%), closely followed by pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs (51%) and other spirits/liqueurs (46%). A very small proportion of higher risk male drinkers reported consuming alcoholic soda/cider/coolers or wine on their last drinking occasion (both 2%).

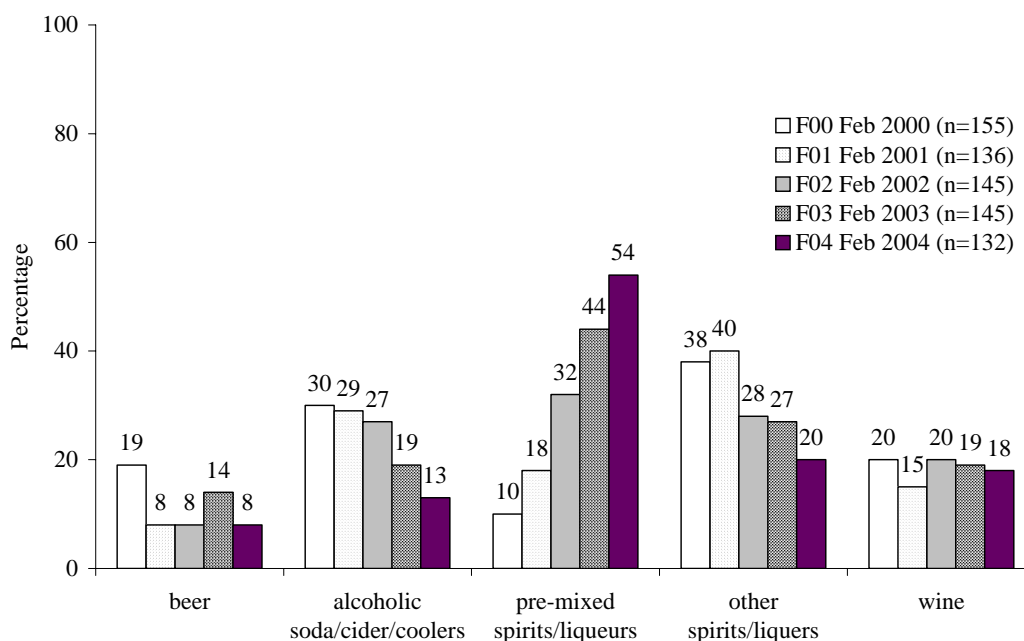
Shifts in the patterns of consumption of different beverage categories by male higher risk drinkers can be seen across the five February surveys:

- In the February 2004 survey the proportion of higher risk male drinkers who consumed beer was the lowest observed thus far (59%), and was significantly lower than the February 2000 and 2002 findings (F<sub>00</sub>: 77%, F<sub>02</sub>: 74%).
- Changes in the proportion of higher risk male drinkers consuming alcoholic soda/cider/coolers has been apparent over several surveys: consumption in the February 2001 survey was much greater than that seen in 2000 and 2002 (F<sub>00</sub>: 11%, F<sub>01</sub>: 20%, F<sub>02</sub>: 11%). There has also been significant reduction in the proportion consuming alcoholic soda/cider/coolers in the most recent survey when compared to all other surveys findings (F<sub>00</sub>: 11%, F<sub>01</sub>: 20%, F<sub>02</sub>: 11% F<sub>03</sub>: 15%, F<sub>04</sub>: 2%).
- There has been a marked increase in the proportion consuming pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs when comparing the two most recent surveys to the findings in the February 2000, 2001 and 2002 surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 18%, F<sub>01</sub>: 28%, F<sub>02</sub>: 24%, F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 51%).
- The proportion consuming other spirits/liqueurs decreased in February 2003 when compared to February 2000 (F<sub>00</sub>: 50%, F<sub>03</sub>: 36%), but increased to the February 2000 level in 2004 (F<sub>04</sub>: 46%).

### Females

Figure 26 shows the proportion of female drinkers consuming alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion and the particular beverage categories they drank.

**Figure 26: Beverage categories consumed by female drinkers consuming alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion**



Base: Females who drank within the last 3 months and drank at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion (ie. less than 5 standard drinks).

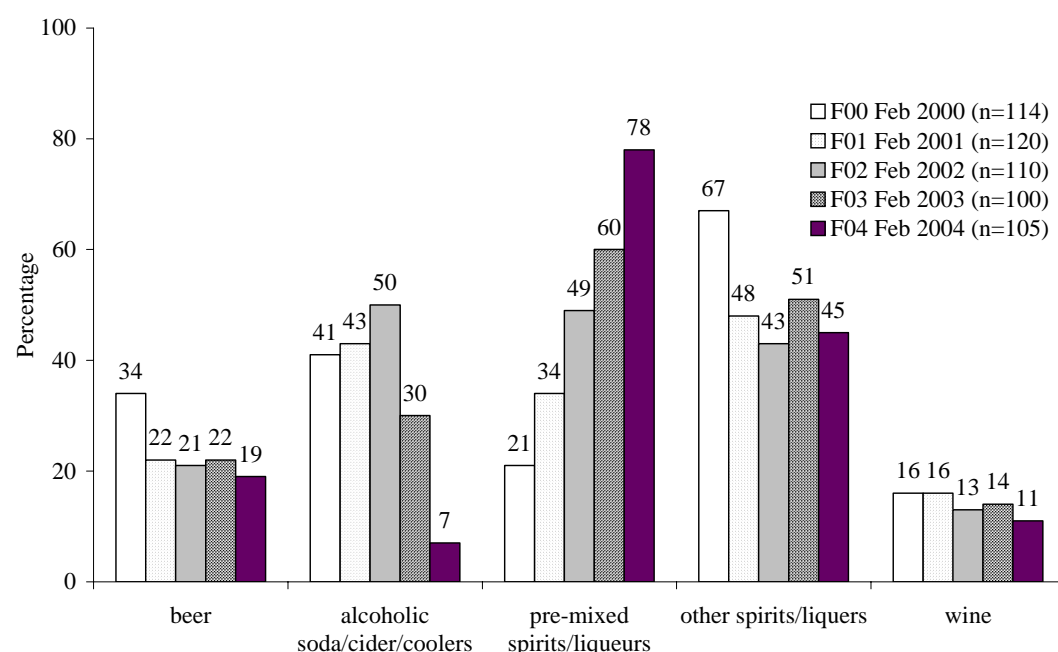
Female drinkers consuming alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion in the February 2004 survey were most likely to report consuming pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs (54%), followed by other spirits/liqueurs (20%) and wine (18%). Approximately one in eight reported consuming alcoholic soda/cider/coolers (13%) and one in twelve (8%) reported consuming beer.

This pattern in consumption of different beverage categories by female lower risk drinkers on their last drinking occasion has changed significantly across the February surveys.

- The proportion who consumed beer was significantly lower in February 2001, 2002 and 2004 when compared to February 2000 (F<sub>00</sub>: 19%, F<sub>01</sub>, F<sub>02</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 8%).
- The proportion who consumed alcoholic soda/cider/coolers has decreased significantly in the February 2003 and 2004 surveys when compared to the previous survey findings (F<sub>00</sub>: 30%, F<sub>01</sub>: 29%, F<sub>02</sub>: 27%, F<sub>03</sub>: 19%, F<sub>04</sub>: 13%).
- There has been a five-fold increase in the proportion who consumed pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs across surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 10%, F<sub>01</sub>: 18%, F<sub>02</sub>: 32%, F<sub>03</sub>: 44%, F<sub>04</sub>: 54%).
- The proportion who consumed other spirits/liqueurs has decreased, with the decline most notable between the February 2001 and 2002 surveys (F<sub>01</sub>: 40%, F<sub>02</sub>: 28%).

Figure 27 shows the proportion of female drinkers consuming alcohol at higher risk levels who consumed particular beverage categories.

**Figure 27: Beverage categories consumed by female drinkers consuming alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion**



Base: Females who drank within the last 3 months and drank at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion (ie. 5 or more standard drinks).

Female drinkers consuming alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion in the February 2004 survey were most likely to report consuming pre-mixed

spirits/liqueurs (78%), followed by other spirits/liqueurs (45%). Approximately one in five (19%) reported consuming beer, one in nine (11%) reported consuming wine, and one in fourteen (7%) reported consuming alcoholic soda/cider/coolers on their last drinking occasion.

It can be seen that there has been a marked shift in the consumption of several beverage categories over the February surveys for female higher risk drinkers.

- The proportion who consumed beer was highest in the February 2000 survey, and was significantly greater than in the subsequent surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 34%, F<sub>01</sub>: 22%, F<sub>02</sub>: 21%, F<sub>03</sub>: 22%, F<sub>04</sub>: 19%).
- The proportion who consumed alcoholic soda/cider/coolers showed an increasing trend across the first three surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 41%, F<sub>01</sub>: 43%, F<sub>02</sub>: 50%) but was significantly lower in the 2003 survey (F<sub>03</sub>: 30%), and significantly lower again in 2004 (F<sub>04</sub>: 7%).
- There was close to a three-fold increase in the proportion who reported consuming pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs over the five year period (F<sub>00</sub>: 21%, F<sub>01</sub>: 34%, F<sub>02</sub>: 49%, F<sub>03</sub>: 60%, F<sub>04</sub>: 78%).
- The proportion who consumed other spirits/liqueurs declined between the February 2000 and February 2001 surveys, and has remained relatively stable following that time (F<sub>00</sub>: 67%, F<sub>01</sub>: 48%, F<sub>02</sub>: 43%, F<sub>03</sub>: 51%, F<sub>04</sub>: 45%).

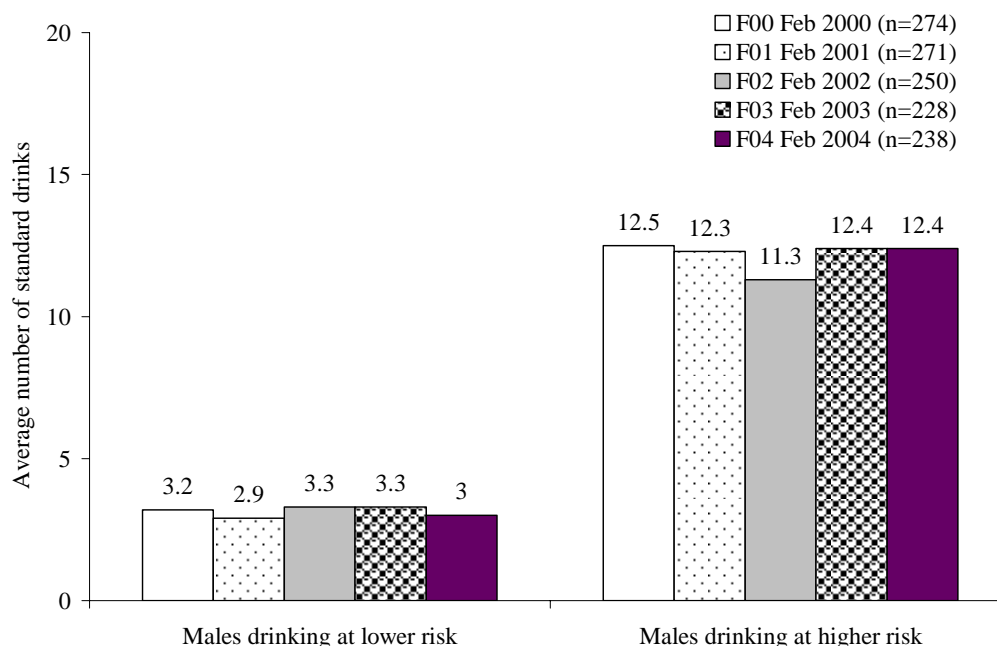
### **3.3.3 The average number of standard drinks consumed by lower and higher risk drinkers**

The average number of standard drinks consumed by teenagers who reported drinking alcohol within the last three months was investigated amongst those who drank at lower or higher risk on their last drinking occasion. As discussed previously, those respondents who reported consuming twenty-five or more standard drinks were excluded from this analysis. This was undertaken to ensure that the average number of standard drinks consumed was not artificially inflated by a small number of reports of extreme levels of consumption.

Males

Figure 28 shows the average number of standard drinks consumed by males drinking at lower and higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion.

**Figure 28: The average number of standard drinks consumed by males drinking at lower and higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion**



Base: Those males who consumed alcohol within the last three months.  
 The sample sizes (n's) shown in the legend exclude respondents who reported consuming 25 or more standard drinks.

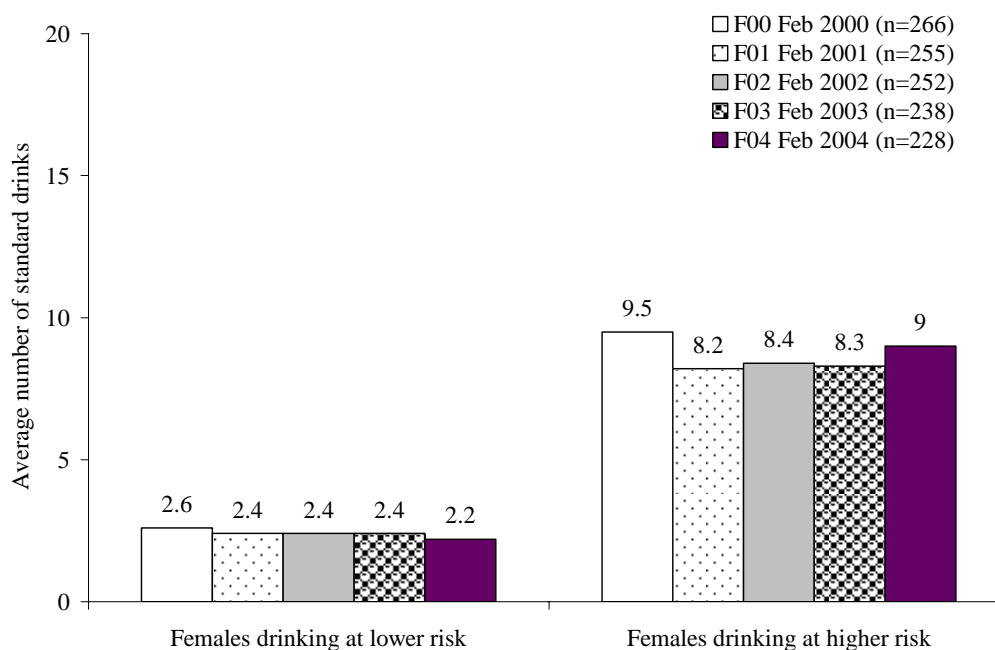
In the February 2004 survey, male drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion reported consuming an average of 3 standard drinks of alcohol. The average number of standard drinks consumed by those lower risk drinking males has remained relatively consistent over the February surveys, at around 3 standard drinks on their last drinking occasion (F<sub>00</sub>: 3.2, F<sub>01</sub>: 2.9, F<sub>02</sub>: 3.3, F<sub>03</sub>: 3.3, F<sub>04</sub>: 3.0).

In the February 2004 survey, male drinkers who consumed alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion reported consuming an average of 12.4 standard drinks. The average number of standard drinks consumed by higher risk drinking males was consistent across all February surveys excluding 2002, where it was lower by approximately one standard drink (F<sub>00</sub>: 12.5, F<sub>01</sub>: 12.3, F<sub>02</sub>: 11.3, F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 12.4).

## Females

Figure 29 shows the average number of standard drinks consumed by female drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower and higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion.

**Figure 29: The average number of standard drinks consumed by females drinking at lower and higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion**



Base: Those females who consumed alcohol within the last three months.  
The sample sizes (n's) shown in the legend exclude respondents who reported consuming 25 or more standard drinks.

Amongst female drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion, an average of 2.2 standard drinks were reported in the February 2004 survey, remaining relatively consistent across surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 2.6, F<sub>01</sub>, F<sub>02</sub> & F<sub>03</sub>: 2.4, F<sub>04</sub>: 2.2).

Amongst female drinkers who consumed alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion, an average of 9 standard drinks was recorded in the February 2004 survey. The average consumption of alcohol by higher risk drinking females declined by approximately one standard drink between the February 2000 and 2001 surveys, and has remained at that level until the most recent survey where it increased to 9 standard drinks (F<sub>00</sub>: 9.5, F<sub>01</sub>: 8.2, F<sub>02</sub>: 8.4, F<sub>03</sub>: 8.3, F<sub>04</sub>: 9.0).

### 3.3.4 The average number of standard drinks consumed by beverage category

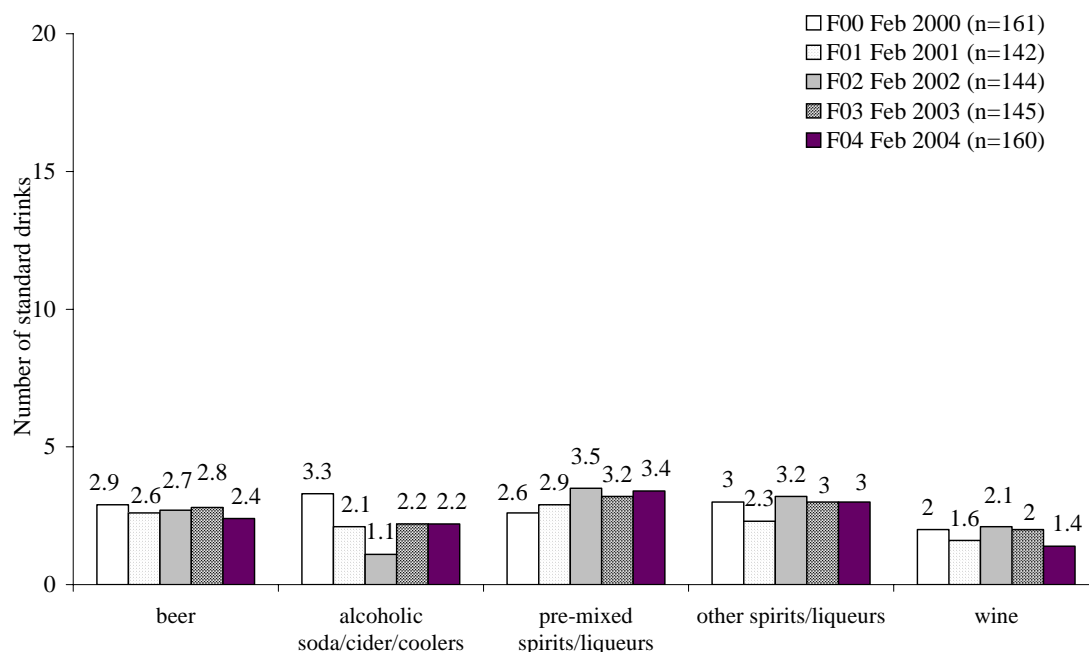
The average number of standard drinks of particular beverage types consumed by male and female drinkers has also been examined. The beverage types were grouped according to the generic beverage categories outlined previously, namely beer; alcoholic soda/cider/cooler; pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs; other spirits/liqueurs and wine.

In this section of the report, due to the nature of the analysis, the sample size of drinkers choosing to consume a particular beverage in any one survey can be quite small. A table detailing the sample size, mean and standard deviation for males and females drinking at lower and higher risk across the beverage types is attached at Appendix 1. Where relevant, the size of the sample of drinkers consuming particular beverages has been discussed in the body of the report.

#### Males – lower risk consumption

Figure 30 shows the average number of standard drinks for each beverage category consumed by male drinkers consuming alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion.

**Figure 30: The average number of standard drinks consumed by male drinkers consuming alcohol at lower risk levels, by beverage category**



Base: Males who drank within the last three months and drank at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion (ie less than 7 standard drinks)

In the February 2004 survey, amongst male drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion (n=160):

- Those who drank beer (n=92) consumed an average of 2.4 standard drinks of beer;

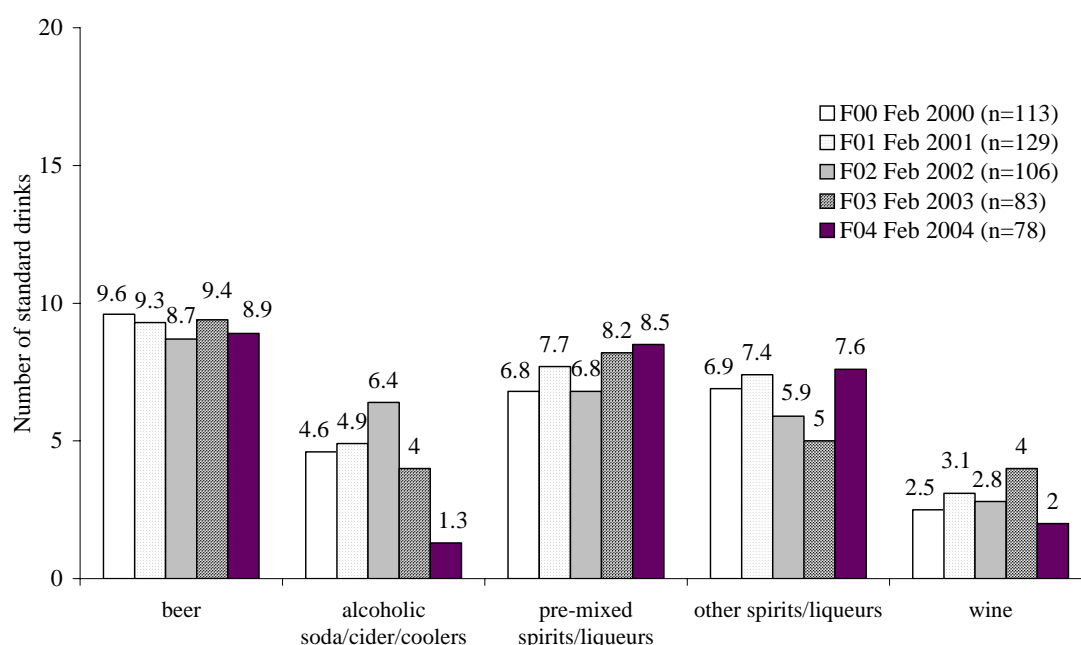
- Those who drank alcoholic soda/cider/cooler (n=9) consumed an average of 2.2 standard drinks of alcoholic soda/cider/cooler;
- Those who drank pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs (n=43) consumed an average of 3.4 standard drinks of pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs;
- Those who drank other spirits/liqueurs (n=26) consumed an average of 3 standard drinks of other spirits/liqueurs; and
- Those who drank wine (n=12) consumed an average of 1.4 standard drinks of wine.

From Figure 30 it can be seen that the average number of standard drinks consumed by these males, within beverage categories, was similar across surveys. Although there was an apparent decline in the average amount of alcoholic soda/cider/coolers consumed between February 2000 and 2002, it was not appropriate to test differences between means due to the small number of drinkers consuming this beverage category (F<sub>00</sub>: n=20, F<sub>01</sub>: n=14, F<sub>02</sub>: n=16, F<sub>03</sub>: n=9, F<sub>04</sub>: n=9).

### Males – higher risk consumption

Figure 31 shows the average number of standard drinks for each beverage category consumed by male drinkers consuming alcohol at higher risk levels, on their last drinking occasion.

**Figure 31: The average number of standard drinks consumed by male drinkers consuming alcohol at higher risk levels, by beverage category**



Base: Males who drank in the last three months and drank at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion (ie 7 or more standard drinks).  
The sample sizes (n's) shown in the legend exclude respondents who reported consuming 25 or more standard drinks.

The following drinking levels were reported amongst male higher risk drinkers, across beverage categories, on their last drinking occasion in the February 2004 survey (n=78):

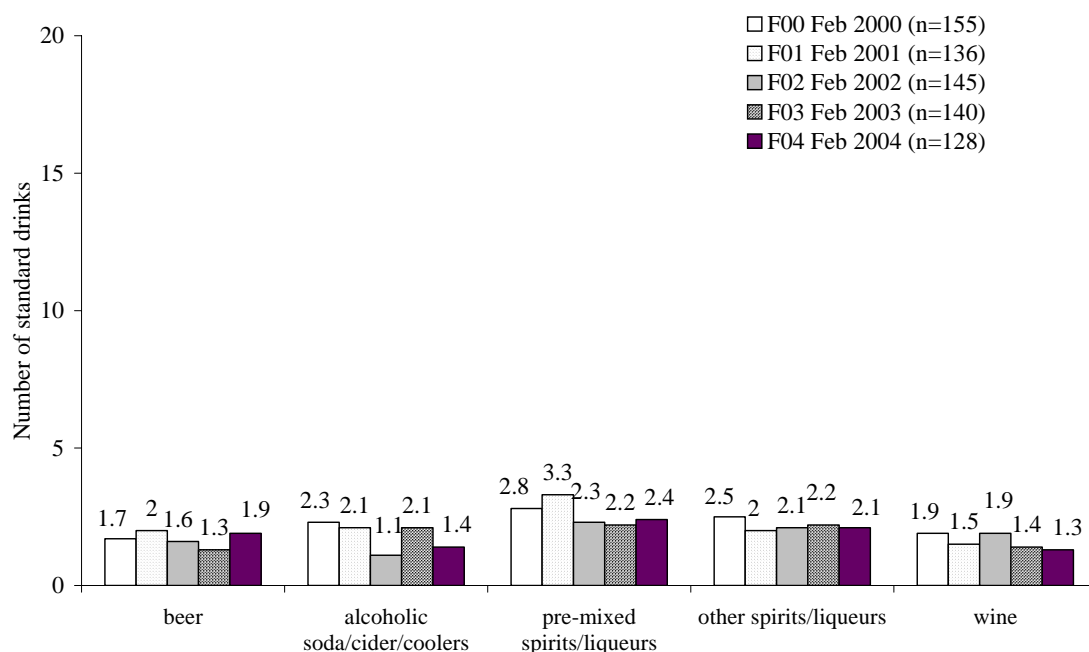
- Those who drank beer (n=46) consumed an average of 8.9 standard drinks of beer;
- The one respondent who drank alcoholic soda/cider/coolers (n=1) consumed 1.3 standard drinks of alcoholic soda/cider/coolers;
- Those who drank pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs (n=38) consumed an average of 8.5 standard drinks of pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs;
- Those who drank other spirits/liqueurs (n=35) consumed an average of 7.6 standard drinks of ‘other’ spirits/liqueurs; and
- The one respondent who drank wine (n=1) consumed 2 standard drinks of wine.

In 2004 among higher risk male drinkers, beer, pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs and other spirits/liqueurs represented the greatest average number of standard drinks by beverage category consumed (beer: 8.9, pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs: 8.5, other spirits/liqueurs: 7.6).

#### Females – lower risk consumption

Figure 32 shows the average number of standard drinks consumed by female drinkers consuming alcohol at lower risk levels for each beverage category on their last drinking occasion.

**Figure 32: The average number of standard drinks consumed by female drinkers consuming alcohol at lower risk levels, by beverage category**



Base: Females who drank in the last three months and drank at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion (ie less than 5 standard drinks).

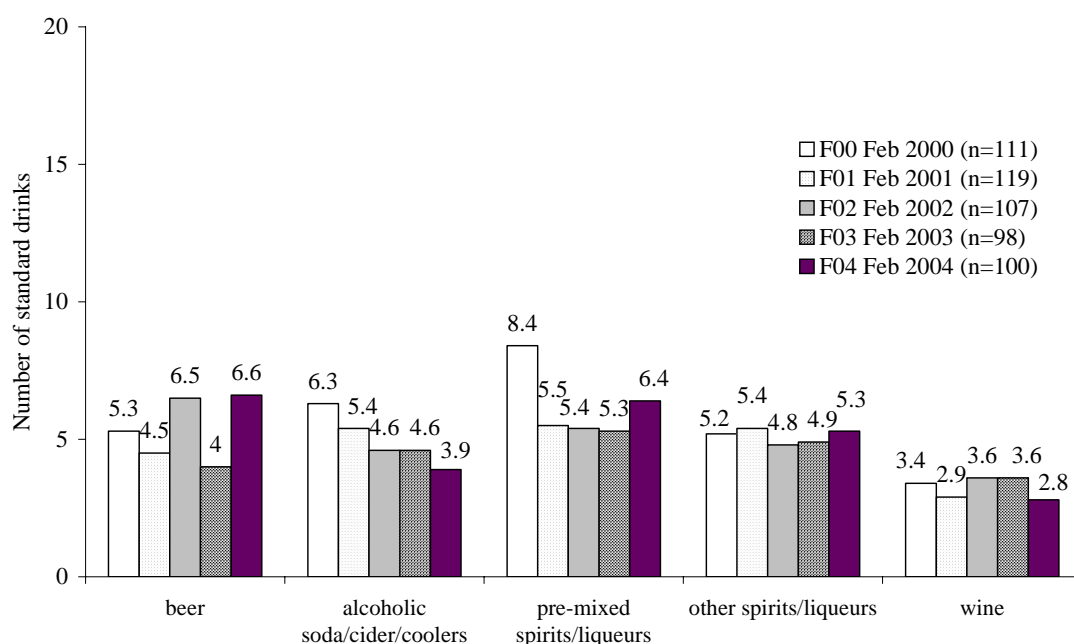
The following drinking levels were reported amongst female lower risk drinkers on their last drinking occasion in the February 2004 survey (n=128):

- Those who drank beer (n=10) consumed an average of 1.9 standard drinks of beer;
- Those who drank alcoholic soda/cider/cooler (n=16) consumed an average of 1.4 standard drinks of alcoholic soda/cider/cooler;
- Those who drank pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs (n=70) consumed an average of 2.4 standard drinks of pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs;
- Those who drank other spirits/liqueurs (n=26) consumed an average of 2.1 standard drinks of other spirits/liqueurs; and
- Those who drank wine (n=24) consumed an average of 1.3 standard drinks of wine.

### Females – higher risk consumption

Figure 33 shows the average number of standard drinks consumed by female higher risk drinkers across all beverage categories on their last drinking occasion.

**Figure 33: The average number of standard drinks consumed by female drinkers consuming alcohol at higher risk levels by beverage category**



Base: Females who drank in the last three months and drank at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion (ie 5 or more standard drinks).

The sample sizes (n's) shown in the legend exclude respondents who reported consuming 25 or more standard drinks.

In the February 2004 survey the following consumption levels were reported amongst female higher risk drinkers on their last drinking occasion (n=100):

- Those who drank beer (n=18) consumed an average of 6.6 standard drinks of beer;

- Those who drank alcoholic soda/cider/coolers (n=7) consumed an average of 3.9 standard drinks of alcoholic soda/cider/coolers;
- Those who drank pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs (n=77) consumed an average of 6.4 standard drinks of pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs;
- Those who drank other spirits/liqueurs (n=42) consumed an average of 5.3 standard drinks of other spirits/liqueurs; and
- Those who drank wine (n=11) consumed an average of 2.8 standard drinks of wine.

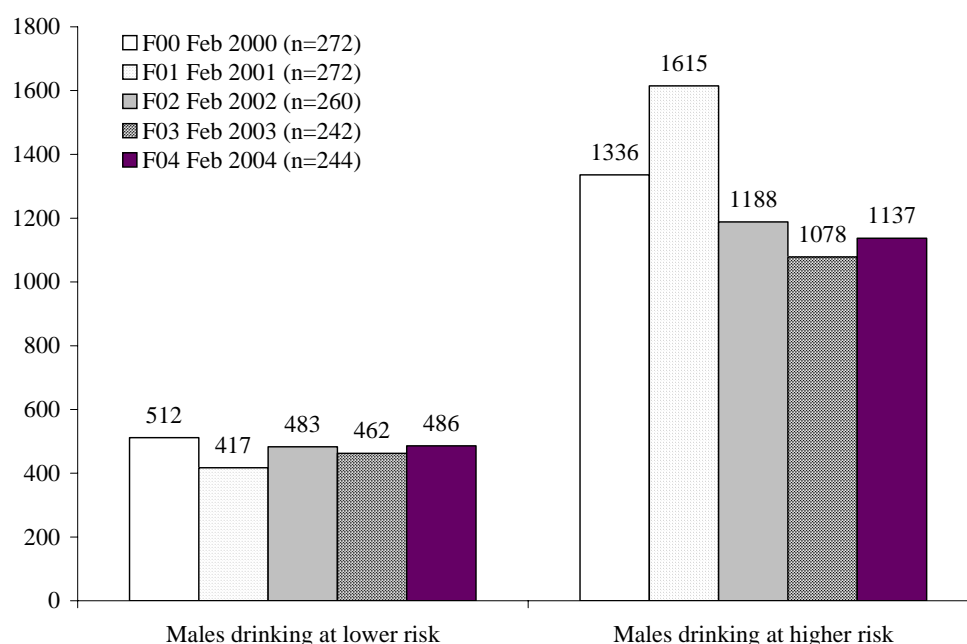
As seen with higher risk male drinkers, in 2004 beer, pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs and other spirits/liqueurs featured with the greatest average number of standard drinks consumed among higher risk female drinkers (beer: 6.6, pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs: 6.4, other spirits/liqueurs: 5.3).

### 3.3.5 Total amount of alcohol consumed

To assist in understanding the amount of alcohol that has been consumed by male and female drinkers across the surveys, the total number of standard drinks consumed by those who drank at lower and higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion was summed. As discussed earlier, those teenage drinkers who reported consuming more than twenty-five standard drinks on their last drinking occasion were excluded from the analysis, to prevent any non-representative skews in the results between surveys.

Figure 34 shows the total number of standard drinks reported to have been consumed by male drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower and at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion.

**Figure 34: Total number of standard drinks consumed by male drinkers**



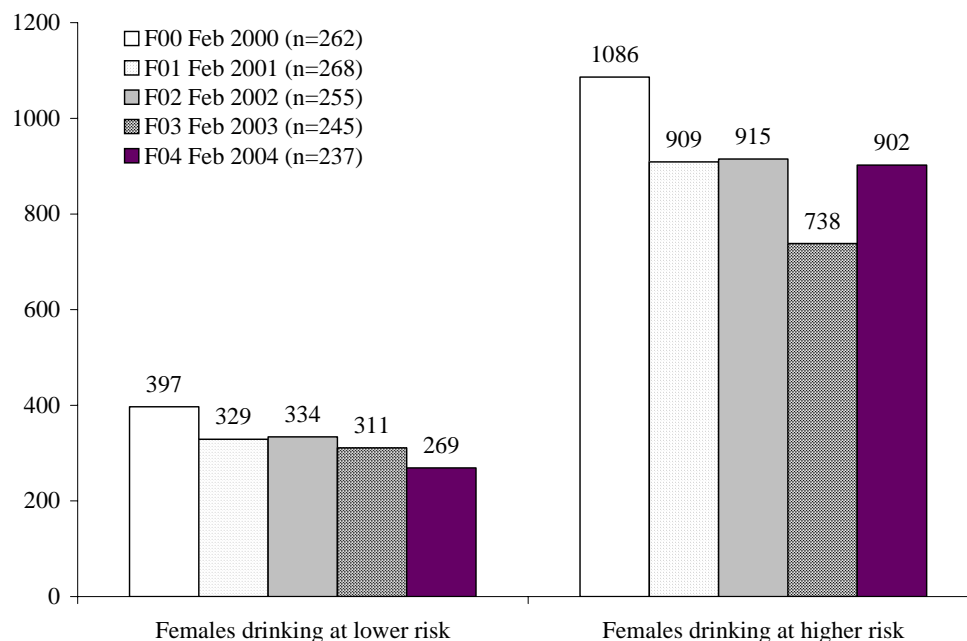
Base: Total number of standard drinks consumed by males who drank within the last three months. The sample sizes (n's) shown in the legend exclude respondents who reported consuming 25 or more standard drinks.

The total number of drinks consumed by all males who drank at lower risk levels has been relatively similar across the surveys, with a high of 512 standard drinks reported to have been consumed in the 2000 survey and a low of 417 standard drinks in the 2001 survey.

Among those male drinkers who consumed alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion, the total number of standard drinks consumed has varied across surveys, with the highest total consumption seen in the 2001 survey (n=1,615 drinks) and the lowest in 2003 (n=1,078 drinks). Over the three recent surveys the total number of standard drinks reported to have been consumed by higher risk drinking males has been relatively similar (F<sub>02</sub>: 1,188 drinks, F<sub>03</sub>: 1,078 drinks, F<sub>04</sub>: 1,137 standard drinks).

Figure 35 shows the total number of standard drinks reported to have been consumed by female drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower and at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion.

**Figure 35: Total number of standard drinks consumed by female drinkers**



Base: Total number of standard drinks consumed by females who drank within the last three months. The sample sizes (n's) shown in the legend exclude respondents who reported consuming 25 or more standard drinks.

It can be seen that, amongst female drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion, there has been a gradual decline across the surveys in the total number of standard drinks reported to have been consumed (F<sub>00</sub>: 397 drinks; F<sub>04</sub>: 269 drinks).

Amongst female drinkers consuming alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion, there has also been a decline in the total number of standard drinks consumed over the five surveys, with a peak in 2000 of 1,086 standard drinks and a low of 738 standard drinks in 2003. The amount of alcohol consumed in 2001, 2002 and 2004 was similar (F<sub>01</sub>: 909, F<sub>02</sub>: 915, F<sub>04</sub>: 902 standard drinks).

### 3.3.6 Share of consumption across beverage categories

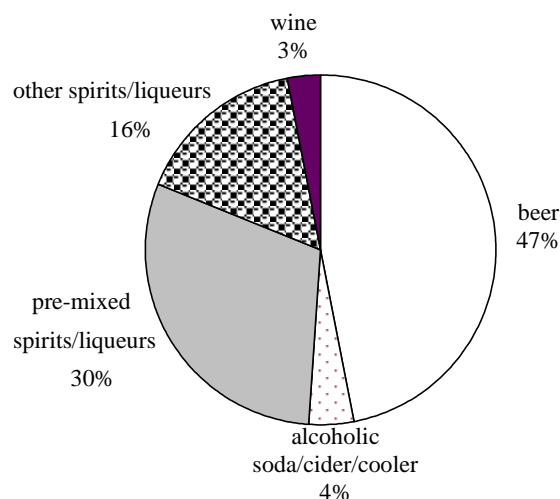
To further investigate consumption trends amongst teenage drinkers consuming alcohol at lower and higher risk levels, the share of consumption of each beverage category consumed by male and female drinkers on their last drinking occasion was calculated. The share of consumption information is a useful indicator of the overall trends in drinking preferences and consumption amongst this age group. The analysis once again only included the 15 to 17 year old males and females who had drunk alcohol in the three months prior to each survey, referred to as ‘drinkers’.

The share of consumption across alcoholic beverages was calculated by summing the numbers of standard drinks of each beverage type that were consumed by those teenage drinkers on their last drinking occasion, and expressing this as a proportion of the total number of standard drinks consumed. When analysing the data, no significant differences emerged between age categories within gender. Therefore, to improve statistical power, age bands were collapsed within gender for this analysis.

#### Males – lower risk consumption

The share of consumption for alcoholic beverages consumed by male drinkers who drank at lower risk on their last drinking occasion was examined across all alcoholic beverage categories. Figure 36 shows these beverage consumption shares from the 2004 survey.

**Figure 36: Beverage consumption in 2004 amongst male lower risk drinkers**



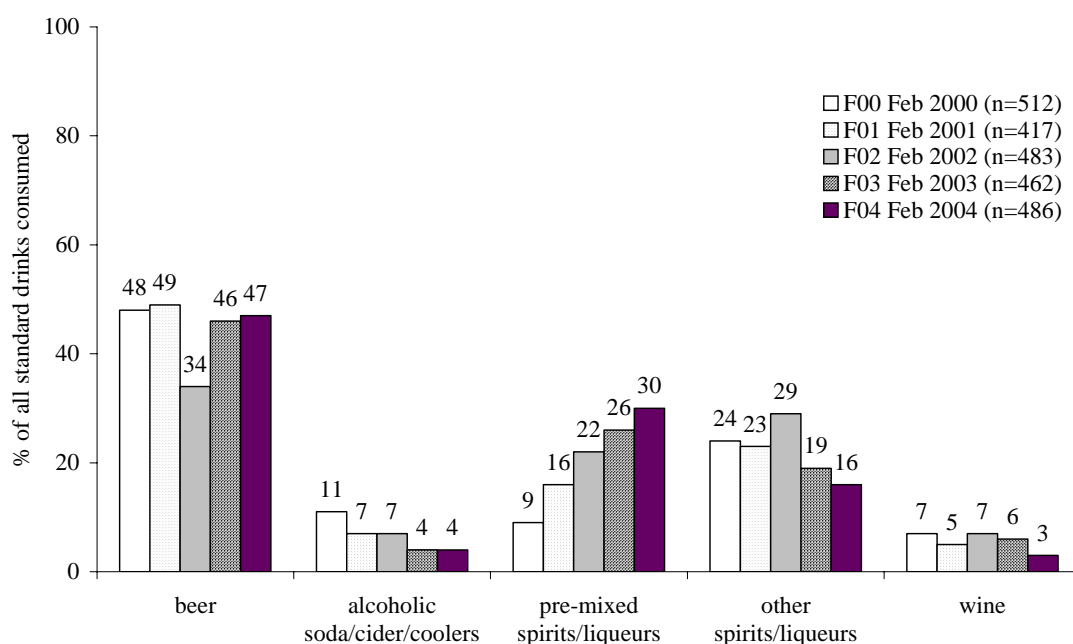
Base: Total number of standard drinks consumed by males who drank within the last three months and drank at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion.

Among male drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion in 2004, it can be seen that beer represented close to half of all the alcohol consumed (47%). Pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs represented close to a third of all alcohol

consumed (30%), followed by the other spirits/liqueurs category (16%). Wine and alcoholic soda/cider/coolers represented a minimal proportion of the share of consumption, at 3 and 4 per cent respectively.

Figure 37 shows the share of consumption for alcoholic beverages consumed by males who drank at lower risk levels, across each of the February surveys.

**Figure 37: The share of consumption by beverage category amongst male lower risk drinkers: 2000 – 2004.**



Base: Total number of standard drinks consumed by males who drank within the last three months and drank at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion.

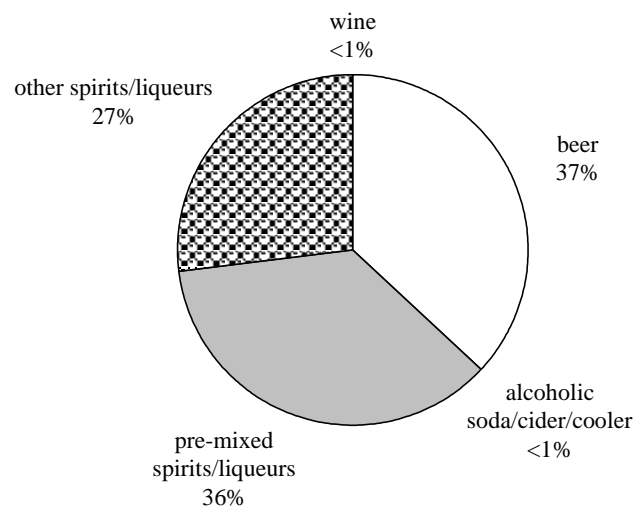
In terms of trends across the surveys in share of consumption of alcoholic beverage categories among male lower risk drinkers:

- The share of consumption for beer was consistent across all surveys at almost half, with the exception of February 2002 where it was significantly lower, representing just over a third of the total amount of alcohol consumed (F<sub>00</sub>: 48%, F<sub>01</sub>: 49%, F<sub>02</sub>: 34%, F<sub>03</sub>: 46%, F<sub>04</sub>: 47%).
- There has been a gradual decline in the share of consumption for alcoholic soda/cider/coolers across surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 11%, F<sub>01</sub> & F<sub>02</sub>: 7%, F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 4%).
- The pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs share of consumption continues to increase significantly and consistently from February 2000 to 2004 (F<sub>00</sub>: 9%, F<sub>01</sub>: 16%, F<sub>02</sub>: 22%, F<sub>03</sub>: 26%, F<sub>04</sub>: 30%).
- The other spirits/liqueurs share of consumption has gradually decreased across all surveys with the exception of 2002 (F<sub>00</sub>: 24%, F<sub>01</sub>: 23%, F<sub>03</sub>: 19%, F<sub>04</sub>: 16%). In February 2002, the share of consumption was at its highest (F<sub>02</sub>: 29%), whilst the share of consumption for beer was at its lowest (F<sub>02</sub>: 34%).
- The wine share of consumption has remained consistently low across surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 7%, F<sub>01</sub>: 5%, F<sub>02</sub>: 7%, F<sub>03</sub>: 6%, F<sub>04</sub>: 3%).

Males – higher risk consumption

Figure 38 shows the share of beverage consumption amongst those males who drank at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion in the 2004 survey.

**Figure 38: Beverage consumption in 2004 amongst male higher risk drinkers**

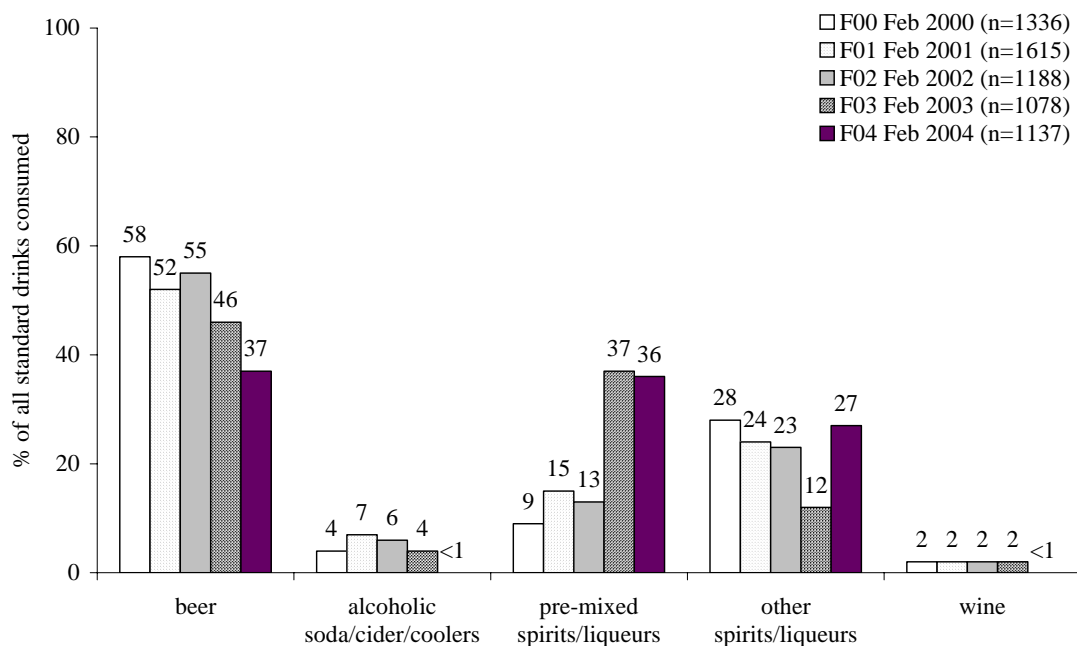


Base: Total number of standard drinks consumed by males who drank within the last three months and drank at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion (excluding those who reported consuming 25 or more standard drinks).

In contrast to the male drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower risk, higher risk male drinkers had a relatively evenly distributed consumption pattern across only three different beverage categories. That is, beer consumption and pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs consumption were at a similar level (37% and 36% respectively), while consumption of other spirits/liqueurs represented just over a quarter of total alcohol consumption (27%). Interestingly alcoholic soda/cider/coolers and wine consumption each comprised less than 1 per cent of total consumption amongst these higher risk male drinkers.

Figure 39 shows the trends in beverage consumption for male drinkers who consumed alcohol at higher risk on their last drinking occasion, across all surveys.

**Figure 39: The share of consumption by beverage category amongst male higher risk drinkers: 2000 – 2004.**



Base: Total number of standard drinks consumed by males who drank in the last three months and drank at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion (excluding those who reported consuming 25 or more standard drinks).

With respect to trends across surveys in share of consumption of alcoholic beverage categories for male higher risk drinkers:

- The beer share of consumption has decreased by a third over the five surveys, representing almost three fifths of total consumption in 2000, and just over one third in 2004 (F<sub>00</sub>: 58%, F<sub>01</sub>: 52%, F<sub>02</sub>: 55%, F<sub>03</sub>: 46%, F<sub>04</sub>: 37%). There was a downward trend in beer consumption across all surveys except for 2002 (F<sub>02</sub>: 55%).
- There was a two-fold increase in the share of consumption of pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs between February 2002 and 2003 (F<sub>02</sub>: 13% F<sub>03</sub>: 37%). This major increase was maintained and placed pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs level with beer as the beverage type with the greatest share of consumption in 2004 (pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs: 36%, beer 37%).
- The other spirits/liqueurs share of consumption was similar across all of the surveys at around a quarter of consumption share, with the exception of February 2003 where it decreased by approximately half (F<sub>00</sub>: 28%, F<sub>01</sub>: 24%, F<sub>02</sub>: 23%, F<sub>03</sub>: 12%, F<sub>04</sub>: 27%).

When comparing the share of consumption across beverages amongst male drinkers consuming alcohol at lower and higher risk levels it can be seen that:

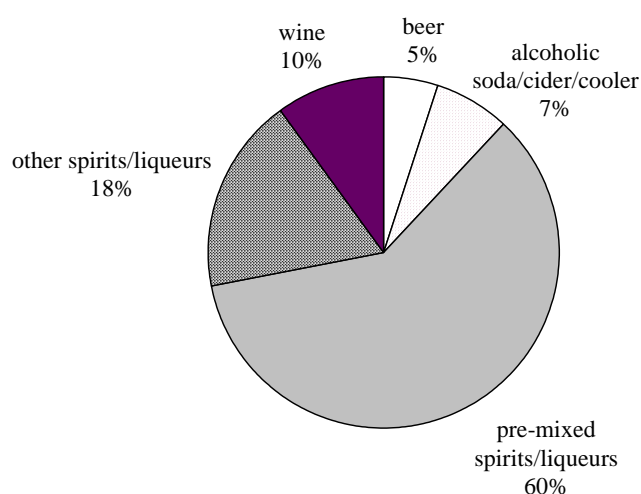
- Lower risk drinkers have been more consistent across surveys in their preference for beer, which has remained at close to half of the consumption share across four of the five surveys. However the role of beer as a preferred beverage amongst higher risk male drinkers appears to be diminishing across surveys.

- The share of consumption for pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs has increased over surveys for both lower and higher risk drinkers, however it increased markedly for higher risk drinkers between February 2002 and 2003 (F<sub>02</sub>: 13%, F<sub>03</sub>: 37%). This increase in pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs consumption reflected the decline in other spirits/liqueurs consumption amongst higher risk drinkers in 2003 (other spirits/liqueurs: F<sub>02</sub>: 23%, F<sub>03</sub>: 12%).
- There was an approximately equal share of consumption for other spirits/liqueurs among both male lower risk and higher risk drinkers in the first three surveys (lower risk F<sub>00</sub>: 24%, F<sub>01</sub>: 23%, F<sub>02</sub>: 29%; higher risk: F<sub>00</sub>: 28%, F<sub>01</sub>: 24%, F<sub>02</sub>: 23%). Amongst lower risk male drinkers the share of consumption for other spirits/liqueurs appears to be declining at the expense of pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs. Amongst higher risk drinkers the share of consumption for other spirits/liqueurs increased in 2004, at the expense of beer.

#### Females – lower risk consumption

The share of consumption for the alcoholic beverages consumed by female drinkers was examined across all alcoholic beverage categories. Figure 40 shows the share of beverage consumption amongst those female drinkers who drank at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion in the 2004 survey.

**Figure 40: Beverage consumption in 2004 amongst female lower risk drinkers**

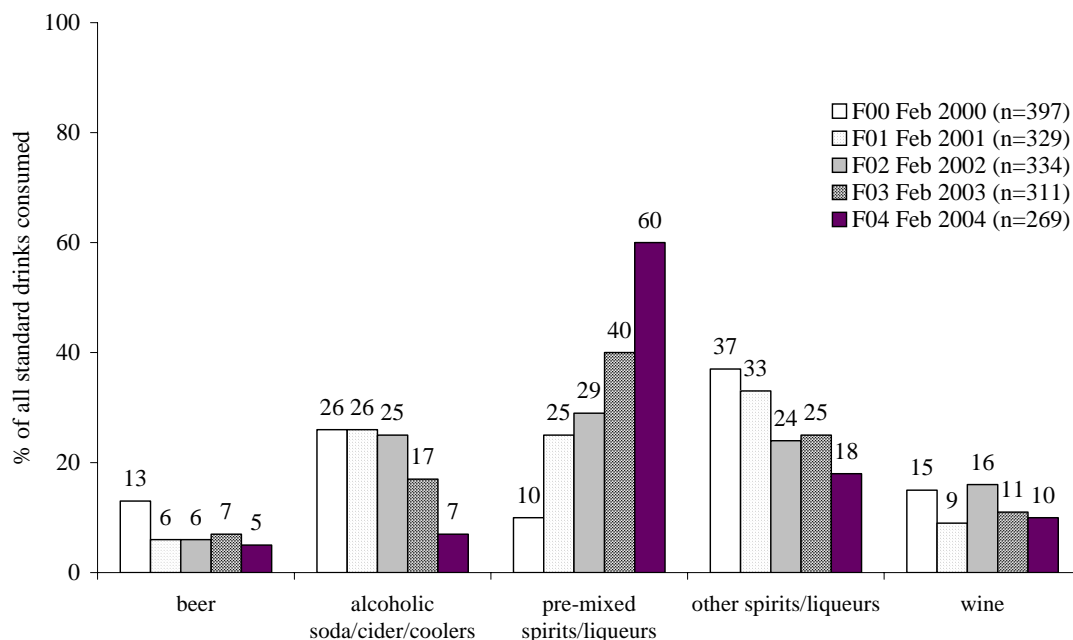


Base: Total number of standard drinks consumed by females who drank in the last three months and drank at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion.

In February 2004, among female drinkers consuming alcohol at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion, spirits represented close to four fifths of total consumption (78%). Pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs comprised the greatest volume of alcoholic beverage consumed, representing 60 per cent of total consumption, while other spirits/liqueurs represented 18 per cent. Consumption of wine represented 10 per cent of the share of consumption, while alcoholic soda/cider/coolers and beer represented 7 per cent and 5 per cent respectively.

Figure 41 shows the trends in beverage consumption for female drinkers who consumed alcohol at lower risk on their last drinking occasion, across all surveys.

**Figure 41: The share of consumption by beverage category amongst female lower risk drinkers: 2000 – 2004.**



Base: Total number of standard drinks consumed by females who drank in the last three months and drank at lower risk levels on their last drinking occasion.

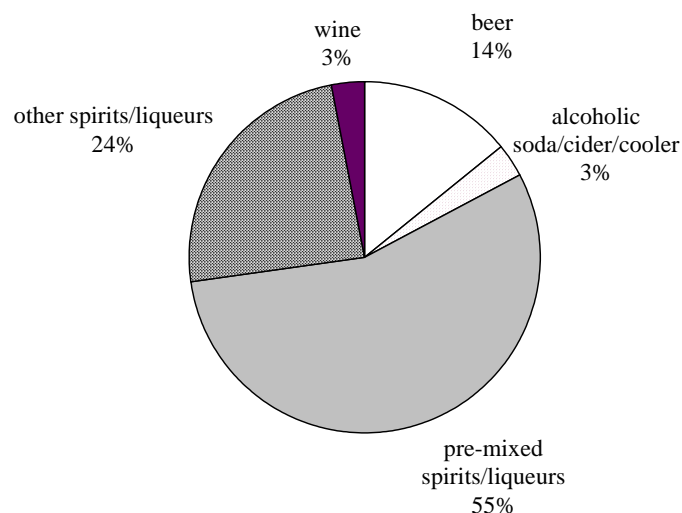
In terms of trends across the surveys in share of consumption of alcoholic beverages among female lower risk drinkers:

- There has been a five-fold increase in the share of consumption for pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs from February 2000 to February 2004 (F<sub>00</sub>: 10%, F<sub>01</sub>: 25%, F<sub>02</sub>: 29%, F<sub>03</sub>: 40%, F<sub>04</sub>: 60%). This increase is reflected in the decline in the share of consumption of other spirits/liqueurs and alcoholic soda/cider/coolers.
- From February 2000 to 2004 the share of consumption for other spirits/liqueurs has halved (F<sub>00</sub>: 37%, F<sub>01</sub>: 33%, F<sub>02</sub>: 24%, F<sub>03</sub>: 25%, F<sub>04</sub>: 18%).
- Alcoholic soda/cider/coolers represented a quarter of the share of consumption across the February surveys from 2000 to 2002, but has significantly declined in the two most recent surveys to less than one tenth of the share of consumption (F<sub>00</sub> & F<sub>01</sub>: 26%, F<sub>02</sub>: 25%, F<sub>03</sub>: 17%, F<sub>04</sub>: 7%).
- The wine share of consumption represented approximately one seventh of the total market share in February 2000 and 2002, but was lower in the two most recent surveys, reflecting the February 2001 survey level (F<sub>00</sub>: 15%, F<sub>01</sub>: 9%, F<sub>02</sub>: 16%, F<sub>03</sub>: 11%, F<sub>04</sub>: 10%).
- The beer share of consumption has remained consistently low from February 2001 to 2004 at approximately one twentieth of consumption share, following a decline between February 2000 and 2001 (F<sub>00</sub>: 13%, F<sub>01</sub> & F<sub>02</sub>: 6%, F<sub>03</sub>: 7%, F<sub>04</sub>: 5%).

Females – higher risk consumption

Figure 42 shows the share of beverage consumption amongst those females who consumed alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion in the 2004 survey.

**Figure 42: Beverage consumption in 2004 amongst female higher risk drinkers**

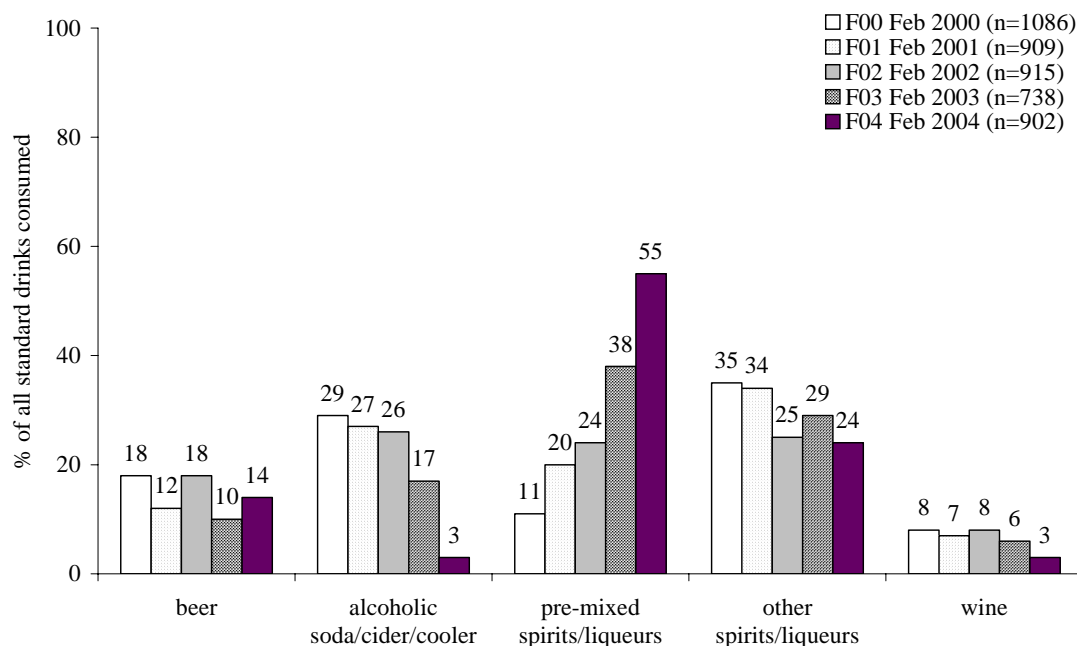


Base: Total number of standard drinks consumed by females who drank in the last three months and drank at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion (excluding those who reported consuming 25 or more standard drinks).

Among females who consumed alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion in the February 2004 survey, total spirit consumption was similar to that seen among lower risk females, representing close to 80 per cent of total consumption. That is, pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs represented 55 per cent of the share of consumption, whilst other spirits/liqueurs represented close to a quarter (24%). Beer represented 14 per cent of the share of consumption among higher risk drinkers, which was more than double that seen amongst the lower risk drinkers. Conversely, alcoholic soda/cider/coolers and wine were less popular amongst the higher risk female drinkers, each representing 3 per cent of total consumption.

Figure 43 shows the trends in beverage consumption for female drinkers who consumed alcohol at higher risk on their last drinking occasion, across the surveys.

**Figure 43: The share of consumption by beverage category amongst female higher risk drinkers: 2000 – 2004.**



Base: Total number of standard drinks consumed by females who drank in the last three months and drank at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion (excluding those who reported consuming 25 or more standard drinks).

In terms of trends across the surveys in the share of consumption of alcoholic beverages among female higher risk drinkers:

- There has been close to a four-fold increase in pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs share of consumption across surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 11%, F<sub>01</sub>: 20%, F<sub>02</sub>: 24%, F<sub>03</sub>: 38%, F<sub>04</sub>: 55%). In the February 2003 and 2004 surveys, it appears that the growth in the pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs consumption share has occurred primarily at the expense of alcoholic soda/cider/coolers, as well as other spirits/liqueurs.
- There has been a decline in the other spirits/liqueurs share of consumption across surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 35%, F<sub>01</sub>: 34%, F<sub>02</sub>: 25%, F<sub>03</sub>: 29%, F<sub>04</sub>: 24%). The lowest share of consumption for other spirits/liqueurs occurred in February 2002 (F<sub>02</sub>: 25%), most probably explained by the increase in beer and pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs consumption seen in that survey.
- The alcoholic soda/cider/coolers share of consumption was above a quarter of total consumption in the first three February surveys, however a decline began in 2003 and consumption dropped again down to 3 per cent in February 2004 (F<sub>00</sub>: 29%, F<sub>01</sub>: 27%, F<sub>02</sub>: 26%, F<sub>03</sub>: 17%, F<sub>04</sub>: 3%).
- The beer share of consumption represented about one fifth of total consumption in February 2000 and 2002, but was close to half that amount in the 2003 survey (F<sub>00</sub>: 18%, F<sub>01</sub>: 12%, F<sub>02</sub>: 18%, F<sub>03</sub>: 10%, F<sub>04</sub>: 14%).

When comparing the share of consumption for alcoholic beverages amongst female drinkers consuming alcohol at lower and at higher risk levels, it can be seen that:

- The growth in the share of consumption for pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs has been similar across the surveys for both lower and higher risk drinkers (lower risk: F<sub>00</sub> 10%, F<sub>01</sub> 25%, F<sub>02</sub> 29%, F<sub>03</sub> 40%, F<sub>04</sub> 60%; higher risk: F<sub>00</sub> 11%, F<sub>01</sub> 20%, F<sub>02</sub> 24%, F<sub>03</sub> 38%, F<sub>04</sub> 55%).
- The decline in the share of consumption for other spirits/liqueurs across surveys has also been comparable for both lower and higher risk drinkers, however is more noticeable among lower risk drinkers in the most recent survey (lower risk: F<sub>00</sub> 37%, F<sub>01</sub> 33%, F<sub>02</sub> 24%, F<sub>03</sub> 25%, F<sub>04</sub> 18%; higher risk: F<sub>00</sub> 35%, F<sub>01</sub> 34%, F<sub>02</sub> 25%, F<sub>03</sub> 29%, F<sub>04</sub> 24%).
- Prior to 2003, alcoholic soda/cider/coolers had constituted approximately a quarter of the share of consumption for both lower and higher risk female drinkers (lower risk: F<sub>00</sub> & F<sub>01</sub> 26%, F<sub>02</sub> 25%; higher risk: F<sub>00</sub> 29%, F<sub>01</sub> 27%, F<sub>02</sub> 26%). In February 2003 and 2004 the consumption of alcoholic soda/cider/coolers dropped considerably for both groups of female drinkers (lower risk: F<sub>03</sub> 17%, F<sub>04</sub> 7%; higher risk: F<sub>03</sub> 17%, F<sub>04</sub> 3%).

The greatest difference in beverage preference trends amongst lower and higher risk drinking females was seen with beer and wine consumption. The share of consumption of wine was higher than beer for the lower risk drinking females, while higher risk drinking females consumed a greater amount of beer compared to wine. Interestingly, wine share of consumption was greater for lower risk drinkers in February 2000 and 2002 (F<sub>00</sub>: 15%, F<sub>01</sub>: 9%, F<sub>02</sub>: 16%, F<sub>03</sub>: 11%, F<sub>04</sub>: 10%), while among higher risk drinkers, beer share of consumption was also greater in these two time periods (F<sub>00</sub>: 18%, F<sub>01</sub>: 12%, F<sub>02</sub>: 18%, F<sub>03</sub>: 10%, F<sub>04</sub>: 14%).

### **3.4 SITUATIONS IN WHICH ALCOHOL WAS CONSUMED AND WAYS IN WHICH TEENAGERS OBTAINED ALCOHOL**

#### **3.4.1 Situations in which alcohol was consumed by teenage drinkers**

Those teenagers who had consumed alcohol within the previous three months were provided with a list of places where people sometimes drink alcohol, and were asked to consider in which of these places they had consumed alcohol on their last drinking occasion. These teenagers were also asked in which, if any, of these places they had consumed alcohol with adult supervision.

#### Situations in which alcohol was consumed

Table 5 shows the most frequent responses provided by teenagers regarding where they consumed alcohol on their last drinking occasion.

**Table 5: Situations in which teenagers consumed alcohol**

Situation	F <sub>00</sub>	F <sub>01</sub>	F <sub>02</sub>	F <sub>03</sub>	F <sub>04</sub>
	Feb 00	Feb 01	Feb 02	Feb 03	Feb 04
<i>n</i>	534	540	515	487	481
	%	%	%	%	%
At a friend's house	40	34	41	39	35
At a party	30	38	33	32	33
In my home with parents or parents' friends	21	20	22	30	30
In my home with friends	15	11	11	12	13

Base: Teenagers who drank within the last three months

Shading in the data cells indicate a significant difference in the proportion drinking in this situation across surveys. Where significant differences have been found across more than one survey, shading is shown in the most adjacent cells only.

The most frequent situation where teenagers reported that they had consumed alcohol on their last drinking occasion was at a friend's house, with approximately one-third of teenagers (F<sub>04</sub>: 35%) stating so in the February 2004 survey. More teenagers reported drinking alcohol at a friend's house in February 2000 and 2002 (F<sub>00</sub>: 40%, F<sub>02</sub>: 41%) than in February 2001 (F<sub>01</sub>: 34%).

Parties were reported as the next most frequent situation where alcohol was consumed by teenagers, with approximately one in three teenage drinkers reporting this (F<sub>00</sub>: 30%, F<sub>01</sub>: 38%, F<sub>02</sub>: 33%, F<sub>03</sub>: 32%, F<sub>04</sub>: 33%). Teenage drinkers in February 2001 were more likely than those in February 2000 to report having consumed alcohol on their last drinking occasion at a party (F<sub>00</sub>: 30%, F<sub>01</sub>: 38%).

In the February surveys up to 2002, about one in five teenagers reported drinking alcohol at home with their parents and their parents' friends (F<sub>00</sub>: 21%, F<sub>01</sub>: 20%, F<sub>02</sub>: 22%), however in the two most recent surveys this proportion increased to three in ten (F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 30%).

Approximately one in eight teenage drinkers reported consuming alcohol at home with their friends (F<sub>00</sub>: 15%, F<sub>01</sub>: 11%, F<sub>02</sub>: 11%, F<sub>03</sub>: 12%, F<sub>04</sub>: 13%).

Trends in lower and higher risk drinking patterns were found with respect to where the alcohol had been consumed. Table 6 shows these results.

**Table 6: Situations where teenage drinkers consumed alcohol, by lower and higher risk drinking status**

Situation	Feb 2000 F <sub>00</sub>		Feb 2001 F <sub>01</sub>		Feb 2002 F <sub>02</sub>		Feb 2003 F <sub>03</sub>		Feb 2004 F <sub>04</sub>	
	L*	H*	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H
<i>n</i>	291	243	291	249	294	221	298	189	293	188
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
At a friend's house	32	49	27	41	32	54	30	53	31	42
At a party	26	36	29	47	26	41	25	44	24	45
In my home, with parents or parents' friends	27	12	30	10	32	9	37	18	37	18
In my home, with friends	11	22	7	15	10	11	11	14	11	17

Base: Teenagers who drank within the last three months

L\* = Lower risk drinkers; H\* = Higher risk drinkers

Shading in the data cells indicate a significant difference in the proportion consuming alcohol in that situation for lower and higher risk drinkers within that survey.

Across all surveys:

- Those teenagers who reported drinking alcohol at a friend's house or at a party on their last drinking occasion were more likely to have consumed alcohol at higher risk levels than at lower risk levels.
- Conversely, teenage drinkers who reported drinking in their home with their parents or parents' friends were more likely to report drinking alcohol at lower risk than at higher risk levels.

In the February 2000 and 2001 surveys:

- Teenage drinkers who reported consuming alcohol at home with their friends were more likely to report drinking alcohol at higher risk than at lower risk levels.

#### Situations in which alcohol was consumed with adult supervision

As stated previously, teenagers were provided with a list of places where people sometimes drink alcohol, and asked in which of these places was there adult supervision on their last drinking occasion. Table 7 shows these results.

**Table 7: Situations in which teenage drinkers consumed alcohol with adult supervision**

Situation	Feb 00 F <sub>00</sub>	Feb 01 F <sub>01</sub>	Feb 02 F <sub>02</sub>	Feb 03 F <sub>03</sub>	Feb 04 F <sub>04</sub>
<i>n</i>	534	540	515	487	481
	%	%	%	%	%
At a friend's house	23	24	28	28	26
At a party	20	26	23	23	23
In my home with parents or parents' friends	20	19	22	28	29
In my home with friends	9	6	9	9	9

Base: Teenagers who drank within the last three months

Shading in the data cells indicate a significant difference in the proportion drinking in this situation across surveys. Where significant differences have been found across more than one survey, shading is shown in the most adjacent cells only.

Table 7 shows that in February 2004 teenagers were most likely to report consuming alcohol with adult supervision when they were in their home with their parents or parents' friends (F<sub>04</sub>: 29%), followed closely by at a friend's house (F<sub>04</sub>: 26%), and at a party (F<sub>04</sub>: 23%). Few teenagers reported consuming alcohol with adult supervision in their home with their friends (F<sub>04</sub>: 9%), reflecting the fact that relatively few teenagers drank alcohol at home with friends, as seen in Table 5.

- The proportion of teenage drinkers who reported drinking alcohol at home with their parents or parents' friends, with adult supervision, was greater in February 2003 and 2004 compared to the previous surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 20%, F<sub>01</sub>: 19%, F<sub>02</sub>: 22%, F<sub>03</sub>: 28%, F<sub>04</sub>: 29%).
- The proportion of teenage drinkers who reported consuming alcohol at a party with adult supervision increased in February 2001 when compared to February 2000 (F<sub>00</sub>: 20%, F<sub>01</sub>: 26%).

Trends in lower and higher risk drinking patterns were found with respect to where alcohol had been consumed with adult supervision. Table 8 shows these trends.

**Table 8: Situations in which alcohol was consumed by teenage drinkers with adult supervision, by lower and higher risk drinking levels**

Situation	Feb 2000 F <sub>00</sub>		Feb 2001 F <sub>01</sub>		Feb 2002 F <sub>02</sub>		Feb 2003 F <sub>03</sub>		Feb 2004 F <sub>04</sub>	
	L*	H*	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H
<i>n</i>	291	243	291	249	294	221	298	189	293	188
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
At a friend's house	22	24	20	28	23	36	23	36	22	32
At a party	16	26	22	30	19	28	20	29	18	31
My home, with parents or parents' friends	26	12	28	9	32	8	37	14	36	18
My home, with friends	6	14	4	8	9	8	8	11	7	13

Base: Teenagers who drank within the last three months

L\* = Lower risk drinkers; H\* = Higher risk drinkers

Shading in the data cells indicate a significant difference in the proportion consuming alcohol in this situation for lower and higher risk drinkers within that survey.

Trends in the amount of alcohol consumed whilst under adult supervision were found with respect to where the alcohol had been consumed.

- Teenagers who reported drinking alcohol at a friend’s house with adult supervision on their last drinking occasion were more likely to report having consumed alcohol at higher risk than lower risk levels across all surveys excluding February 2000.
- Similarly, teenagers who reported drinking alcohol at a party with adult supervision on their last drinking occasion were more likely to report having consumed alcohol at higher risk than lower risk levels.
- Teenagers who reported drinking alcohol in their home with their parents or parents’ friends and under adult supervision were more likely to report drinking alcohol at lower risk than higher risk levels.

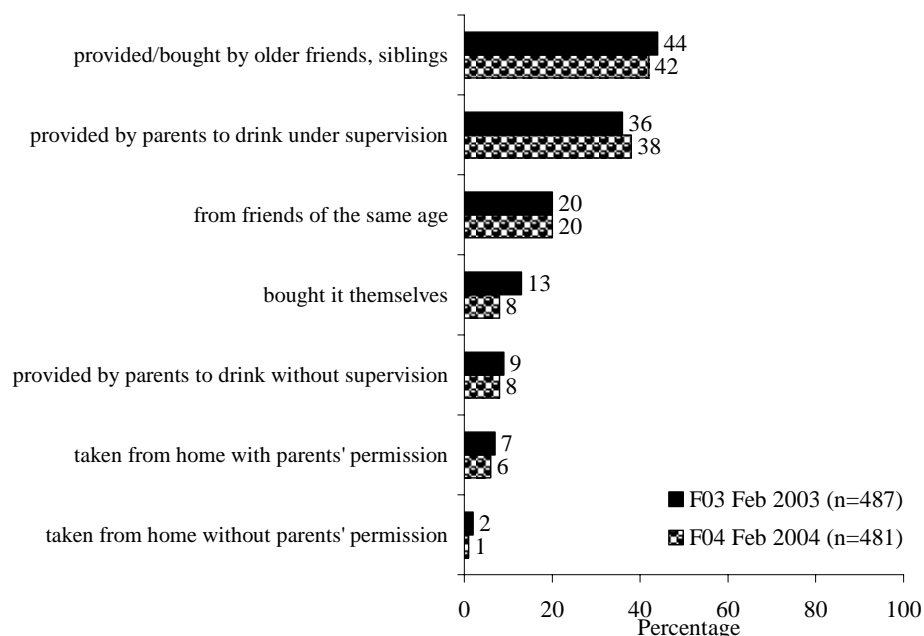
### 3.4.2 Ways in which alcohol was obtained by teenage drinkers

Two new questions were included in the February 2003 and 2004 surveys regarding how teenagers, who had consumed alcohol within the previous three months, obtained their alcohol on their most recent drinking occasion, and how they attained the greatest amount of alcohol that they consumed on that occasion. Teenage drinkers were provided with a list of several ways in which alcohol could be obtained and were asked to select the ways that best represented how they obtained their alcoholic drinks on that occasion. Multiple responses were allowed.

#### Ways in which alcohol was obtained on the last drinking occasion

Figure 44 shows the most popular ways in which drinkers, on their most recent drinking occasion in the February 2003 and 2004 surveys, obtained alcohol.

**Figure 44: Ways in which alcohol was obtained**



Base: Teenagers who consumed alcohol within the last three months

The most frequent source of alcohol amongst teenage drinkers was provided to them by their older friends or siblings (F<sub>03</sub>: 44%, F<sub>04</sub>: 42%). Amongst this group of drinkers who obtained their alcohol from older friends or siblings:

- There were more 17 year olds than 15 year olds obtaining their alcohol in this way (17 year olds: F<sub>03</sub> 49% F<sub>04</sub>: 46%; 15 year olds: F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub> 33%).
- In the 2003 survey there were more 16 year old females than 16 year old males obtaining their alcohol in this way (F<sub>03</sub>: 16 year old females 49%, 16 year old males 37%).
- There were more higher risk drinkers than lower risk drinkers obtaining their alcohol in this way (higher risk: F<sub>03</sub> 60%, F<sub>04</sub> 56%; lower risk: F<sub>03</sub> 33%, F<sub>04</sub> 32%).

More than one-third of drinkers stated that their parents provided the alcohol for them to drink under their supervision (F<sub>03</sub>: 36%, F<sub>04</sub>: 38%). Among this group of drinkers:

- Fifteen year olds were more likely to receive alcohol to drink under their parents' supervision than were 16 and 17 year olds (15 year olds: 51%, 16 year olds: 29%, 17 year olds: 31%).
- In the 2004 survey, those teenagers who perceived that their parents had strict rules about drinking were more likely to report drinking under their parents' supervision than were those who didn't (strict rules - ie a rating of 4 or 5 - F<sub>04</sub>: 52%; lenient rules - ie a rating of 1 or 2 - F<sub>04</sub>: 27%).

About one in ten teenage drinkers reported buying the alcohol themselves, whether from a liquor store, licensed venue or supermarket (F<sub>03</sub>: 13%, F<sub>04</sub>: 8%). Among this group of teenage drinkers who bought the alcohol themselves:

- 17 year old males were more likely than were 17 year old females or 16 year olds to buy the alcohol themselves (17 year old males: 27%, 17 year old females: 14%, 16 year olds: 10%).
- Those teenagers who perceived lenient parental rules about drinking were more likely to report buying the alcohol themselves than those who perceived strict rules on drinking (lenient rules - ie a rating of 1 or 2 - F<sub>04</sub>: 16%, strict rules - ie a rating of 4 or 5 - F<sub>04</sub>: 3%).

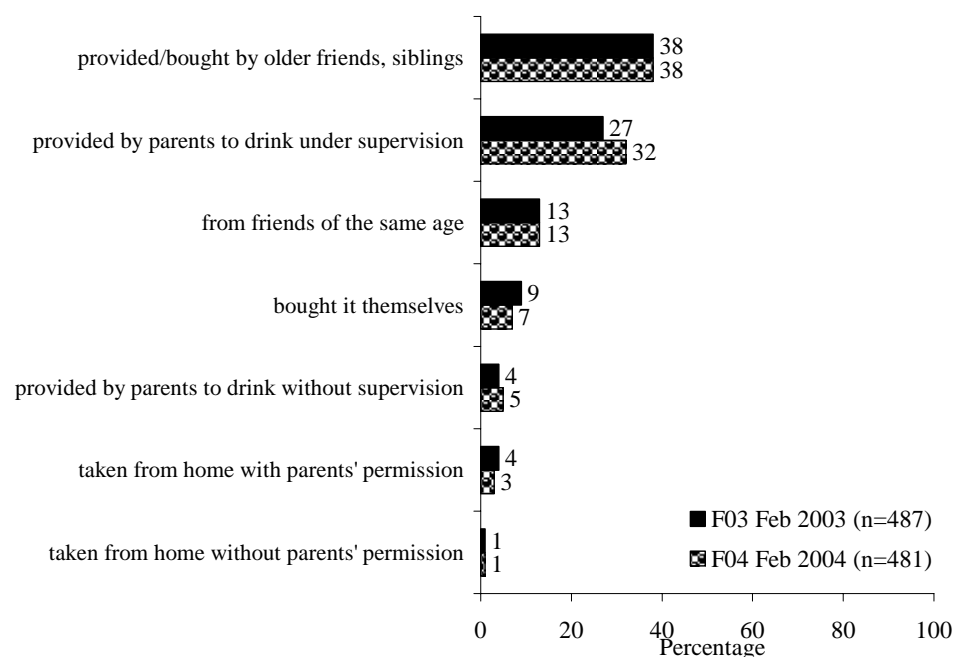
Less than one in ten teenagers obtained the alcohol they consumed on their last drinking occasion from their parents, either to drink without supervision (F<sub>03</sub>: 9%, F<sub>04</sub>: 8%), or to drink outside of the home with or without their parents' permission (with: F<sub>03</sub> 7%, F<sub>04</sub> 6%; without: F<sub>03</sub>: 2%, F<sub>04</sub>: 1%).

How teenagers attained the greatest amount of alcohol that they consumed on their last drinking occasion

As stated previously, teenage drinkers were provided with a list of several ways in which alcohol could be obtained and were asked to select the ways in which they obtained the greatest amount of alcohol they consumed on their last drinking occasion. Multiple responses were allowed.

Figure 45 shows the source of alcohol leading to the greatest amount of alcohol consumed on their most recent drinking occasion in the February 2003 and 2004 surveys.

**Figure 45: The source leading to the greatest amount of alcohol consumed on the most recent drinking occasion, 2003 and 2004.**



Base: Teenagers who consumed alcohol within the last three months.

From Figure 45 it can be seen that trends in the source of alcohol resulting in the greatest amount of alcohol consumed by teenage drinkers closely reflect the trends in the way in which total alcohol was consumed. That is, just over four in ten teenage drinkers reported obtaining the alcohol they consumed on their last drinking occasion from older friends or siblings (F<sub>03</sub>: 44%, F<sub>04</sub>: 42%) and just under four in ten drinkers reported this was the source of the greatest amount of alcohol they consumed on that occasion (F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 38%). This represents a proportion of 86 per cent of teenage drinkers in February 2003, who obtained alcohol from older friends or siblings, stated that it represented the greatest amount of alcohol they consumed. In February 2004 this proportion was 90 per cent.

Considering those teenagers who had reported alcohol being provided by their parents to drink under their supervision (F<sub>03</sub>: 36%, F<sub>04</sub>: 38%), approximately three in ten drinkers reported that this source of alcohol contributed to their greatest amount of consumption (F<sub>03</sub>: 27%, F<sub>04</sub>: 32%). Thus, among those who reported obtaining alcohol from their parents to drink under their supervision, approximately 75 per cent

in 2003 and 84 per cent in 2004 reported it was the greatest source of alcohol on that occasion.

One in eight teenage drinkers reported that the alcohol they obtained from friends of the same age was the greatest source of alcohol consumed on their last drinking occasion (F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 13%). One in five teenage drinkers had reported friends as a source of alcohol (F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 20%), thus creating a proportion of approximately two thirds of drinkers who obtained alcohol from their friends reporting that it represented the greatest amount of alcohol they consumed on that occasion.

### 3.4.3 Ways in which alcohol was obtained by teenage drinkers consuming alcohol at lower and higher risk levels

The trends in both the source of the alcohol consumed by teenage drinkers on their last drinking occasion and the source of the greatest amount of alcohol were analysed according to lower and higher risk drinking patterns. Tables 9 and 10 show these trends.

**Table 9: Ways in which alcohol was obtained by teenage drinkers on their last drinking occasion, by lower and higher risk drinking levels**

Method of obtaining alcohol	Feb 2003 F <sub>03</sub>		Feb 2004 F <sub>04</sub>	
	Lower	Higher	Lower	Higher
<i>n</i>	298	189	293	188
	%	%	%	%
Provided / bought by older friends, siblings	33	60	32	56
Provided by parents to drink under their supervision	43	24	45	28
From friends of the same age	19	20	20	20
Bought it themselves	6	23	7	10
Provided by parents to drink without their supervision	6	14	6	10
Taken from home with parents' permission	6	9	6	6
Taken from home without parents' permission	1	3	1	1

Base: Teenagers who drank alcohol within the last three months.

Shading in the data cells indicate a significant difference in the proportion consuming alcohol in this situation for lower and higher risk drinkers within that survey.

From Table 9 it can be seen that:

- There was a greater proportion of teenage drinkers engaging in higher risk drinking when the alcohol was provided for them by their older friends or siblings (higher risk drinking F<sub>03</sub>: 60%, F<sub>04</sub>: 56%, lower risk drinking F<sub>03</sub>: 33%, F<sub>04</sub>: 32%).
- A greater proportion of teenage drinkers reported lower risk drinking when the alcohol was provided by their parents to drink under their supervision (lower risk drinking F<sub>03</sub>: 43%, F<sub>04</sub>: 45%, higher risk drinking F<sub>03</sub>: 24%, F<sub>04</sub>: 28%).
- There was no difference in drinking status when the alcohol was provided by friends of the same age (lower risk drinking F<sub>03</sub>: 19%, F<sub>04</sub>: 20%, higher risk drinking F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 20%).

- In the February 2003 survey teenagers who bought the alcohol themselves or had it provided by their parents to drink without their supervision were more likely to have consumed alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion (Bought it themselves: lower risk: 6%, higher risk: 23%; provided by parents to drink without their supervision: lower risk: 6%, higher risk: 14%).

Table 10 shows the how teenage drinkers obtained the greatest amount of alcohol the consumed on their last drinking occasion.

**Table 10: The source of the greatest amount of alcohol consumed by teenage drinkers on their last drinking occasion, by lower and higher risk drinking levels**

Source of alcohol resulting in the greatest consumption on the last drinking occasion	Feb 2003 F <sub>03</sub>		Feb 2004 F <sub>04</sub>	
	Lower	Higher	Lower	Higher
<i>n</i>	298	189	293	188
	%	%	%	%
Provided / bought by older friends, siblings	31	49	28	51
Provided by parents to drink under their supervision	36	13	39	22
From friends of the same age	15	11	16	9
Bought it themselves	5	16	6	9
Provided by parents to drink without their supervision	3	6	5	5
Taken from home with parents' permission	5	2	4	2
Taken from home without parents' permission	1	1	1	0

Base: Teenagers who drank alcohol within the last three months.

Shading in the data cells indicate a significant difference in the proportion consuming alcohol in this situation for lower and higher risk drinkers within that survey.

Table 10 shows similar trends in consumption to Table 9, with respect to the finding amongst those who reported having the alcohol provided by their older friend or sibling or by their parents to drink under their supervision. That is:

- There was a larger proportion of teenage higher risk drinkers stating that they attained the greatest amount of alcohol on their last drinking occasion from their older friends or siblings (higher risk drinking F<sub>03</sub>: 49%, F<sub>04</sub>: 51%, lower risk drinking F<sub>03</sub>: 31%, F<sub>04</sub>: 28%).
- A larger proportion of teenage lower risk drinkers who consumed alcohol provided by their parents to drink under their supervision reported that this represented the greatest amount of alcohol they consumed (lower risk drinkers F<sub>03</sub>: 36%, F<sub>04</sub>: 39%, higher risk drinking F<sub>03</sub>: 13%, F<sub>04</sub>: 22%).
- In 2004, more lower risk than higher risk drinkers reported obtaining the greatest amount of alcohol to drink from friends of the same age (lower risk drinkers F<sub>04</sub>: 16%, higher risk drinking F<sub>04</sub>: 9%).
- In the February 2003 survey, among those teenage drinkers who reported buying the alcohol themselves, higher risk drinkers were more likely to state that it represented the greatest amount of alcohol they consumed on that occasion (higher risk drinkers 16%; lower risk drinkers 5%).

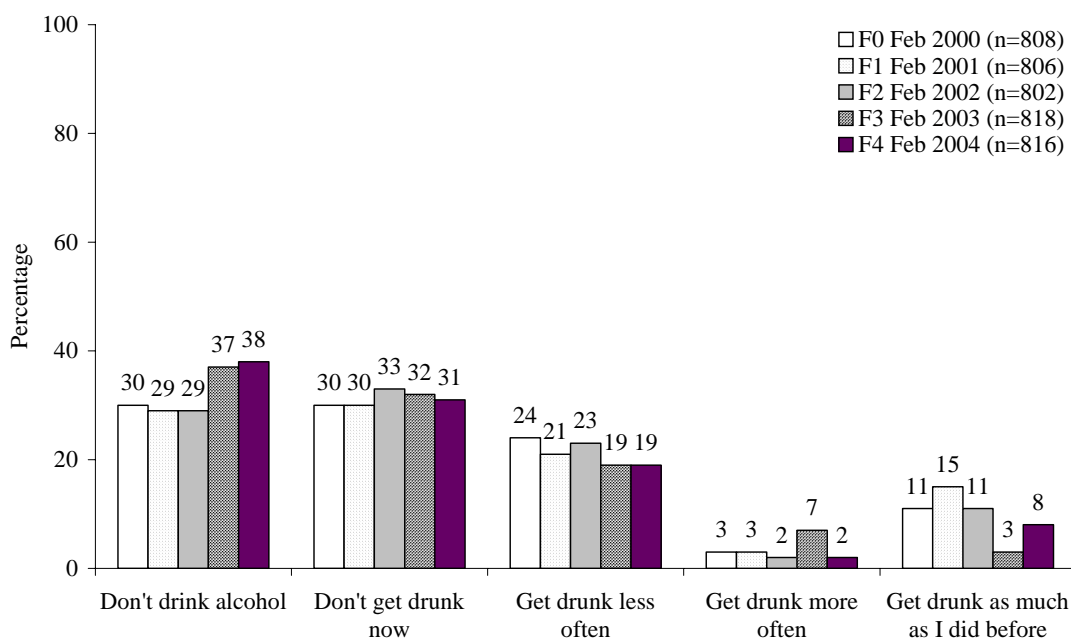
### 3.5 CHANGES, OR INTENDED CHANGES TO ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

All respondents were asked to consider their drinking behaviour, from the point of view of any attempts they may have made or intentions they may have regarding the amount of alcohol they drink. Teenagers were presented with a series of statements that related to things people sometimes do or try to do about their drinking. These statements comprised: ‘make no change to my drinking because I don’t drink alcohol’; ‘make no change to my drinking because I don’t get drunk now’; ‘get drunk less often’; ‘get drunk more often’ and ‘get drunk as much as I did before’. This was a closed-ended question. Respondents were asked to consider which of these statements were correct for them with respect to the previous three months and which were correct with respect to their intentions for the next three months.

#### 3.5.1 Drinking intentions regarding the past three months

Figure 46 shows teenagers’ reported intentions regarding drinking alcohol over the past three months.

**Figure 46: Teenagers’ reported intentions regarding drinking alcohol over the past three months**



Base: All respondents.

From Figure 46 it can be seen that nearly seven in ten respondents reported that over the past three months they had not intended to make any change in their drinking because they either didn’t drink alcohol (F<sub>04</sub>: 38%) or they don’t get drunk now (F<sub>04</sub>: 31%). This proportion of teenagers who reported that they don’t drink alcohol or get drunk increased between the 2002 and 2003 surveys (F<sub>02</sub>: 62%, F<sub>03</sub>: 69%).

Approximately one in five respondents in both the 2003 and 2004 surveys reported that they planned to get drunk less often (F<sub>03</sub> & F<sub>04</sub>: 19%), and the proportion

reporting this has decreased across surveys (F<sub>00</sub>: 24%, F<sub>04</sub>: 19%), reflecting the increased proportion in the later surveys in respondents stating that they don't drink alcohol.

In 2004, about one in twelve teenagers reported they would 'get drunk as much as they did before' (F<sub>04</sub>: 8%), which was significantly greater than that reported in the 2003 survey (F<sub>03</sub>: 3%), and significantly less than that seen in the February 2001 survey (F<sub>02</sub>: 15%).

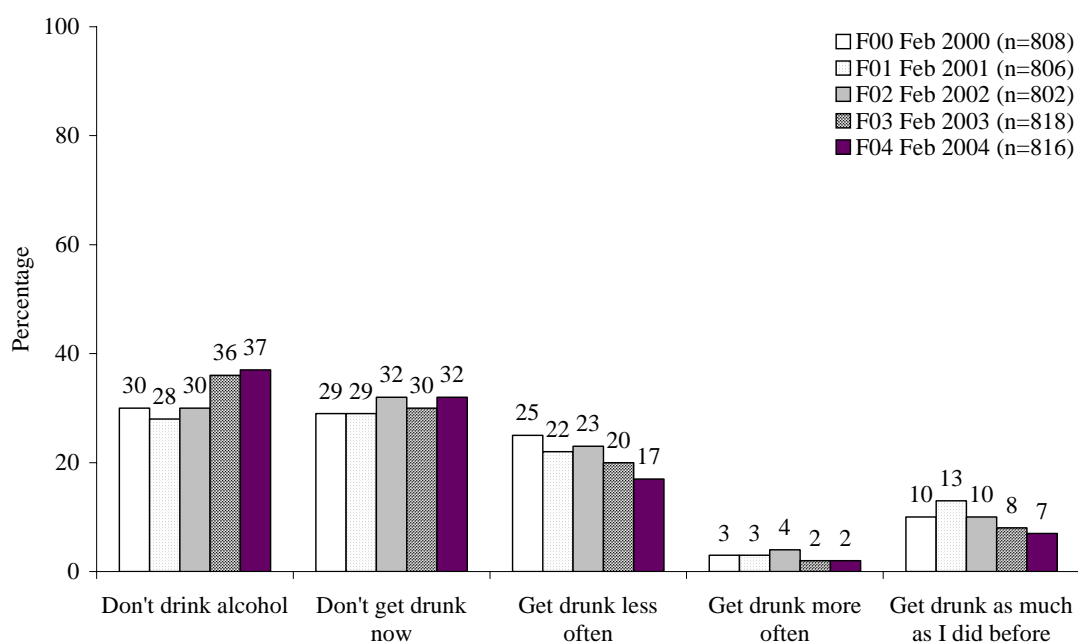
The findings in drinking intentions over the previous three months were consistent across males and females, however differences by drinking status were noted amongst those teenagers that had consumed alcohol within the last three months:

- Higher risk drinkers were more likely than lower risk drinkers to report that they intended to get drunk less often (higher risk drinkers: F<sub>00</sub> 45%, F<sub>01</sub> 40%, F<sub>02</sub> 42%, F<sub>03</sub> 40%, F<sub>04</sub> 44%; lower risk drinkers F<sub>00</sub> 26%, F<sub>01</sub> 21%, F<sub>02</sub> 24%, F<sub>03</sub> 20%, F<sub>04</sub> 20%).
- Higher risk drinkers were also more likely to report that they would get drunk as much as they did before (higher risk drinkers: F<sub>00</sub> 25%, F<sub>01</sub> 33%, F<sub>02</sub> 24%, F<sub>03</sub> 22%, F<sub>04</sub> 20%; lower risk drinkers F<sub>00</sub> 9%, F<sub>01</sub> 13%, F<sub>02</sub> & F<sub>03</sub> 7%, F<sub>04</sub> 10%).

### 3.5.2 Drinking intentions regarding the next three months

Similar findings were seen amongst respondents with respect to their drinking intentions during the past three months and the next three months. Figure 47 shows the intentions of all teenagers regarding their drinking behaviour in the next three months.

**Figure 47: Teenagers' future intentions regarding drinking alcohol in the coming three months**



Base: All respondents.

Similar to the findings shown in Figure 46, nearly seven in ten respondents in the 2004 survey reported that they didn't intend to make any change in their drinking behaviour in the next three months because they either don't drink alcohol (F<sub>04</sub>: 37%) or they don't get drunk now (F<sub>04</sub>: 32%). This proportion of teenagers who reported that they don't drink alcohol or get drunk increased between the 2002 and 2004 surveys (F<sub>02</sub>: 62%, F<sub>04</sub>: 69%).

About one in six respondents reported that they planned to get drunk less often (F<sub>04</sub>: 17%) in the coming months, and about one in fourteen reported they would get drunk as much as they did before (F<sub>04</sub>: 7%); and only two per cent reported that they planned to get drunk more often in the future (F<sub>04</sub>: 2%).

The findings regarding future drinking intentions over the coming three months were consistent across males and females over the surveys, however differences in drinking intentions were noted amongst those teenagers that had consumed alcohol within the last three months. These trends are similar to those seen in drinking intentions over the previous three months.

- Higher risk drinkers were more likely than lower risk drinkers to report that they intended to get drunk less often in the coming three months (higher risk drinkers: F<sub>00</sub> 50%, F<sub>01</sub> 40%, F<sub>02</sub> 45%, F<sub>03</sub> 44%, F<sub>04</sub> 40%; lower risk drinkers F<sub>00</sub> 25%, F<sub>01</sub> 22%, F<sub>02</sub> 22%, F<sub>03</sub> 21%, F<sub>04</sub> 17%).
- Higher risk drinkers were also more likely to report that they would get drunk as much as they did before (higher risk drinkers: F<sub>00</sub> 23%, F<sub>01</sub> 29%, F<sub>02</sub> 23%, F<sub>03</sub> 23%, F<sub>04</sub> 18%; lower risk drinkers F<sub>00</sub> 9%, F<sub>01</sub> 11%, F<sub>02</sub> 8%, F<sub>03</sub> 6%, F<sub>04</sub> 8%).

## **DISCUSSION**

Five national surveys were conducted each year from February 2000 (F<sub>00</sub>) to February 2004 (F<sub>04</sub>) with samples of 15-17 year olds to contribute to the evaluation of the National Alcohol Campaign. Teenagers' drinking levels and patterns were monitored at this consistent time of the year to control for potential seasonal influences on drinking behaviours. The key behavioural variables examined here were the recency of alcohol consumption, the amount of alcohol consumed (allowing an investigation of the trends in alcohol consumption at lower risk and higher risk levels), and the beverage type of alcohol consumed.

One of the most important and promising findings from this research is the trend toward fewer teenagers, particularly younger teenagers, drinking alcohol over this study period. In 2004, approximately two in three 15 to 17 year olds reported that they had consumed alcohol within the previous 12 months. Approximately three in five drank within the previous three months, and about a quarter drank during the previous two weeks and seven days. There has been a reduction over the five surveys in the proportions of teenagers who reported consuming alcohol across these time periods, with the greatest reduction seen in 2003 and 2004. This finding indicates that the pool of teenagers who drank within the three months prior to each survey (termed as 'drinkers'), and whose behaviour is analysed in detail in this report, has diminished over the study period. This reduction in the number of drinkers in the teenage samples was apparent among the three age groups of 15 year olds, 16 year olds and 17 year olds, although most evident amongst the 15 year olds. These findings suggest that the National Alcohol Campaign and other alcohol prevention initiatives may be contributing to a delay in the onset of drinking amongst Australian teenagers, particularly before the age of 16 years.

The Australian Alcohol Guidelines state that young people up to the ages of about 18 years should keep any drinking to a minimum, and most importantly should not drink to become intoxicated. In the absence of any specific volumetric guidelines for teenagers, this report has categorised lower and higher risk teenage drinking according to adult drinking guidelines in its analysis of teenage drinking trends. Based on this analysis, it is clear that there is a concerning number of teenagers who put themselves at risk of harm by drinking at very high levels. For example, in 2004, 44 per cent of female drinkers reported consuming alcohol at higher risk levels on their last drinking occasion. This represents consuming at least five standard drinks, and the finding is similar to previous February surveys.

Among male drinkers, between 43 and 50 per cent had reported consuming alcohol at higher risk levels (i.e. at least seven drinks on their last drinking occasion) between 2000 and 2002. However this proportion decreased in the two most recent February surveys to 37 per cent in 2003 and then 34 per cent in 2004. This finding suggests that over the campaign period, there has been a positive trend among male drinkers towards less excessive amounts of alcohol being consumed on the one drinking occasion.

It does appear however, that the average amount of alcohol consumed by those teenagers who do drink at higher risk levels has remained relatively constant and alarmingly high. Consistently across the February surveys, the average number of

drinks consumed by males drinking at higher risk levels (ie between 7 and 25 drinks) has been approximately 12.4 standard drinks, excluding February 2002 where it was around one standard drink less. The equivalent measure for females drinking at higher risk levels dropped by around one standard drink between 2000 and 2001 (from 9.5 to 8.2 standard drinks) where it remained until 2004 when it increased to 9.0 standard drinks. These levels of consumption suggest significant intoxication and serious exposure to potential harm for these teenage drinkers.

Over the same period there have been large shifts in the type of alcohol being consumed by teenage drinkers, mainly in relation to an increase in consumption of pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs. This has coincided with a decrease in consumption of other spirits/liqueurs and alcoholic soda/cider/coolers, and amongst higher risk drinking males, consumption of beer.

Amongst lower risk male drinkers, a two-fold increase in the total consumption of pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs has occurred at the expense of other spirits/liqueurs and to a lesser extent alcoholic soda/cider/coolers. Beer consumption among this group of males has represented close to half of their total consumption, excluding 2002 where beer consumption dropped to a third of the total share of consumption, apparently displaced by other spirits/liqueurs.

Amongst male drinkers who consumed alcohol at higher risk on their last drinking occasion, beer consumption has decreased across the time period, from three-fifths to just over one-third of total consumption. The most notable decline in beer consumption was evident in the 2003 and 2004 surveys. Reflecting this decline, the total consumption of pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs increased dramatically due to an increased proportion of males consuming pre-mixed drinks, and an increase in the average number of these drinks they consumed. The beverage types associated with the highest levels of consumption amongst higher risk male drinkers in 2004 were beer (mean consumption level of 9.0 standard drinks) and pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs (8.5 standard drinks).

Shifts in beverage preferences among female lower risk drinkers have been most notable with respect to pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs and alcoholic soda/cider/coolers. The share of consumption for pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs increased five-fold from 10 per cent in 2000 to 60 per cent in 2004. The share of consumption of other spirits/liqueurs has halved over the time period, down to 18 per cent in 2004. During that time, preferences for alcoholic soda/cider/coolers, which had remained at more than a quarter of the share of consumption for the first three February surveys, dropped to 7 per cent of consumption share in 2004.

Similar to female lower risk drinkers, shifts in beverage preference among higher risk female drinkers have been striking for pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs, alcoholic soda/cider/coolers and also other spirits/liqueurs. The consumption share for pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs has increased four-fold across the surveys, from 11 per cent in 2000 to 55 per cent in 2004. Alcoholic soda/cider/coolers became less popular amongst teenagers in recent surveys, reducing their share of consumption from 26 per cent in 2002 to 3 per cent in 2004. During this time period, other spirits/liqueurs' share of consumption declined from 35 per cent in 2000 to 24 per cent in 2004, whilst the consumption share for beer reflected a downward trend. Interestingly, the share of

consumption for beer is greater than the share for wine amongst higher risk female drinkers, while the opposite can be seen for lower risk female drinkers.

The beverage types associated with the highest levels of consumption amongst higher risk female drinkers in 2004 were beer (mean consumption level of 6.6 standard drinks), pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs (6.4 standard drinks) and other spirits/liqueurs (5.3 standard drinks). The shift in beverage preferences indicates that the marketplace for teenage drinking continues to be a very dynamic one.

The findings regarding how teenagers obtain alcohol and where they consume it indicate some interesting trends in lower and higher risk consumption. Considering the ways in which teenagers obtained alcohol on their last drinking occasion, the most commonly reported sources of alcohol were from older friends or siblings (44%) or from parents to drink under their supervision (36%). Teenagers who obtained alcohol from older friends or siblings were more likely to be older themselves. These teenagers were also more likely to be higher risk drinkers, while those who consumed alcohol under parental supervision were more likely to be younger, to report that their parents had strict rules on drinking and to drink at lower risk levels. Higher risk drinking was also more likely when teenagers received the majority of alcohol that they consumed from older friends or siblings.

The relationship between parental supply and supervision, and the prevalence of risky teenage drinking is clearly important. With respect to supply, teenage reports on parental provision of alcohol suggest that the majority of parents who do provide alcohol to their teenagers are doing so in a way that does not appear to be associated with higher risk drinking. For example, the majority of the 38 per cent of teenagers in 2004 who reported that their parents provided them with alcohol on their last drinking occasion to drink under their supervision, reported having drunk at lower risk levels. Nevertheless, there was a concerning proportion of higher risk teenage drinkers in 2004 who reported that the greatest amount of alcohol they received on their last drinking occasion was from their parents to drink under their supervision (22%).

The situations where teenage drinkers were most likely to report having consumed alcohol with adult supervision were at home with their parents or parent's friends, at a friend's house or at a party. Teenagers were found to be more likely to drink at lower risk than higher risk levels while drinking at home with adult supervision, but were more likely to drink at higher risk when drinking at a friend's house or at a party, even while supervised. While the term 'supervision' was not specifically defined in the study, supervision in general did not appear to prevent higher risk drinking when away from the home environment. A greater focus on the nature and extent of adult supervision in teenage drinking situations seems warranted.

With respect to unsupervised consumption of alcohol, few teenagers reported either their parents providing them with alcohol to drink without their supervision (8%) or taking alcohol from home to drink with their parents' permission (6%). This suggests that the majority of parents are not supporting the unsupervised consumption of alcohol by their teenagers.

There is clearly a role for parents to play in reducing risky drinking by their teenagers. The fact that approximately one in three teenagers reported that within the last three

months they had discussions with their parents or guardians about what can happen when they drink alcohol, suggests that this is not an uncommon topic in Australian households. These discussions and parental rules about drinking may well be accounting for the reduction, particularly amongst younger teenagers, in the numbers of teenagers who were drinking, as well as the reduction in higher risk consumption amongst males.

Similarly, the positive finding that one in four teenagers reported discussing drinking and its potential consequences with teachers suggests that this topic is also receiving a degree of focus in schools.

While the findings of this report show some positive trends over the National Alcohol Campaign period, there is certainly no room for complacency. The numbers of teenagers drinking to intoxication and putting themselves at risk of harm remains a significant source of concern. This relates not only to those categorised as drinking at higher risk levels according to the adult Australian Alcohol Guidelines, but also the very high numbers of teenagers who would still be drinking to levels of intoxication (eg 3 or 4 standard drinks for young and inexperienced teenage girl or 5 or 6 drinks for a similarly young and inexperienced teenage boy) but remaining categorised as a lower risk drinker.

Australian teenagers are constantly exposed to the positive messages about drinking in alcohol advertising and promotions, influencing positive expectations about drinking alcohol. Educating these young people about the significant potential negative outcomes associated with drinking is critically important. The regular reinforcement of parental education and rules about drinking in the home by National Alcohol Campaign media communication and school-based activities holds the greatest promise for a reduction in the harm associated with teenage drinking.

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**APPENDIX 1: THE UNWEIGHTED SAMPLE SIZES, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR MALE AND FEMALE DRINKERS CONSUMING ALCOHOL AT LOWER AND HIGHER RISK ON THEIR LAST DRINKING OCCASION, BY BEVERAGE CATEGORY CONSUMED.**

	Total				Net beer				Net soda/cider/coolers				Net pre-mixed spirits/liqueurs				Net other spirits/liqueurs				Net wine			
	Males		Females		Males		Females		Males		Females		Males		Females		Males		Females		Males		Females	
	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H
F <sub>00</sub> n	161	113	155	111	78	100	28	35	20	15	49	52	17	23	16	23	38	60	54	77	15	8	30	25
F <sub>00</sub> mean	3.2	12.5	2.6	9.5	2.9	9.6	1.7	5.3	3.3	4.6	2.3	6.3	2.6	6.8	2.8	8.4	3	6.9	2.5	5.2	2	2.5	1.9	3.4
F <sub>00</sub> st. d.	0.36	1.18	0.21	1.04	0.48	1.3	0.49	1.62	0.75	3.67	0.36	1.73	1.09	2.72	0.63	3.14	0.7	1.66	0.34	1.46	1.05	3.91	0.46	1.53
F <sub>01</sub> n	142	129	136	119	77	93	12	29	14	25	51	58	20	33	23	44	38	52	57	70	16	10	25	21
F <sub>01</sub> mean	2.9	12.3	2.4	8.2	2.6	9.3	2	4.5	2.1	4.9	2.1	5.4	2.9	7.7	3.3	5.5	2.3	7.4	2	5.4	1.6	3.1	1.5	2.9
F <sub>01</sub> st. d.	0.35	1.13	0.21	0.68	0.5	1.41	0.73	1.36	0.89	3.3	0.33	1.03	0.87	2.64	0.62	1.28	0.8	2.25	0.33	1.08	0.9	4.6	0.46	2.11
F <sub>02</sub> n	144	106	145	107	71	78	11	23	16	14	46	62	28	26	46	60	47	49	39	55	14	9	26	19
F <sub>02</sub> mean	3.3	11.3	2.4	8.4	2.7	8.7	1.6	6.5	1.1	6.4	1.1	4.6	3.5	6.8	2.3	5.4	3.2	5.9	2.1	4.8	2.1	2.8	1.9	3.6
F <sub>02</sub> st. d.	0.32	0.95	0.21	0.89	0.44	1.1	0.78	3.3	0.77	2.78	0.36	0.85	0.8	2.31	0.39	0.94	0.57	1.58	0.42	1.61	0.78	1.29	0.46	1.79
F <sub>03</sub> n	145	83	140	98	81	52	20	20	9	10	28	29	40	42	62	58	31	27	40	49	15	5	27	14
F <sub>03</sub> mean	3.3	12.4	2.4	8.3	2.8	9.4	1.3	4	2.2	4	2.1	4.6	3.2	8.2	2.2	5.3	3	5	2.2	4.9	2	4	1.4	3.6
F <sub>03</sub> st. d.	0.32	1.18	0.21	0.8	0.45	1.59	0.57	1.96	1.14	3.78	0.5	1.71	0.64	1.81	0.26	1.19	0.7	2.09	0.35	1.33	0.89	2.85	0.49	1.04
F <sub>04</sub> n	160	78	128	100	92	46	10	18	9	1	16	7	43	38	70	77	26	35	26	42	12	1	24	11
F <sub>04</sub> mean	3	12.4	2.2	9	2.4	8.9	1.9	6.6	2.2	1.3	1.4	3.9	3.4	8.5	2.4	6.4	3	7.6	2.1	5.3	1.4	2	1.3	2.8
F <sub>04</sub> st. d.	0.29	1.23	0.23	0.99	0.37	1.74	0.68	3.05	1.2	21.1	0.49	4.42	0.58	1.99	0.3	1.14	0.7	1.91	0.59	1.77	0.96	10.22	0.49	2.51

Base: Those who drank in the last three months and reported drinking less than 25 standard drinks.

**Key:**

L = lower risk levels

H = higher risk levels

St.d. = Standard deviation