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Number of Australians drinking wine, spirits and RTDs up significantly in 2021 while beer drinking holds steady

New data from [Roy Morgan's Alcohol Consumption Report](#) shows the proportion of Australians who drink alcohol increased by 4% points to 69.7% in the 12 months to June 2021 driven by increases in the number of Australians drinking wine, spirits and RTDs.

In the year to June 2021 a total of 13,908,000 Australians (69.7%) aged 18+ consumed alcohol in an average four-week period, up from 13,040,000 (65.7%) a year earlier.

Driving this increase were significant increases for wine, spirits and RTDs over the past year as Australia enjoyed strong economic growth following the lockdowns of 2020. The number of Australians drinking wine increased by nearly 1 million over the past year from 8,323,000 Australians (42.0%) to 9,237,000 (46.3%) – an increase of 4.3% points over the year.

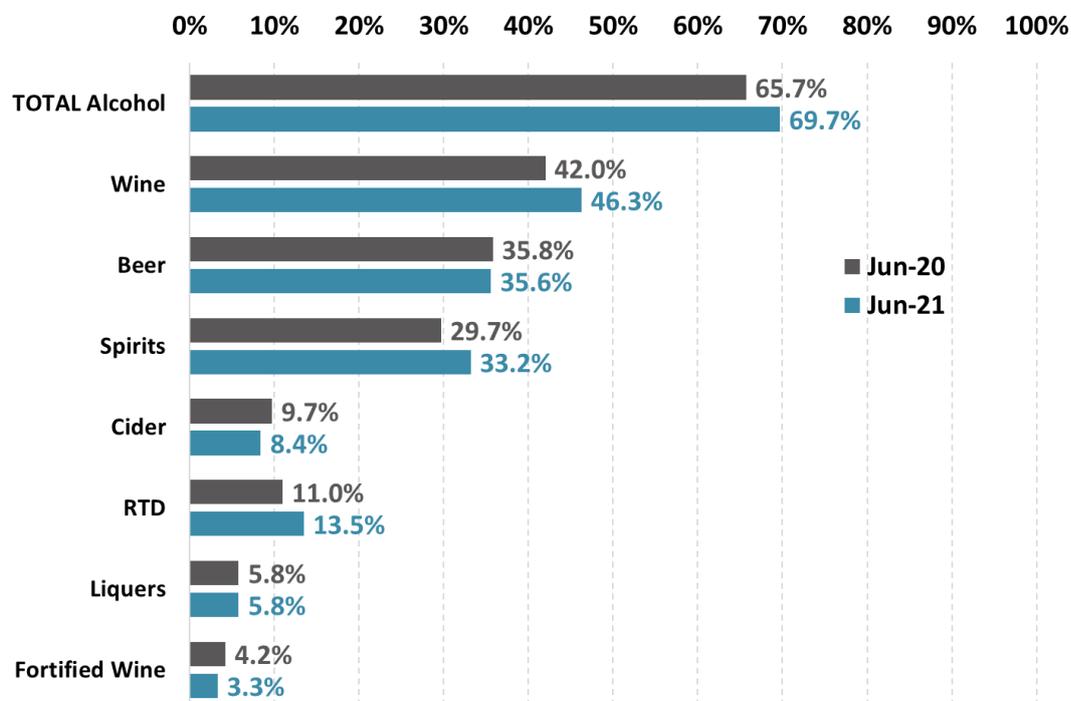
In addition, there were 6,621,000 Australians (33.2%) drinking spirits in mid-2021, up from 5,876,000 (29.7%) a year earlier – an increase of 3.5% points. Also increasing was consumption of Ready-to-drinks (RTDs) which increased from 2,187,000 Australians (11.0%) up to 2,699,000 Australians (13.5%).

There were mixed results for the other categories of alcohol with drinking of beer and liqueurs virtually unchanged on a year ago while there were fewer Australians drinking cider and fortified wines in mid-2021.

Notably in mid-2021 there were 7,094,000 Australians (35.6%) drinking beer compared to 7,077,000 (35.8%) a year earlier and if the trends of the last year were to continue over the next year the number of Australians drinking spirits is set to overtake those drinking beer.

The findings are from the Roy Morgan Single Source survey, Australia's most trusted and comprehensive consumer survey, derived from in-depth interviews with over 50,000 Australians each year.

Proportion of Australians who consume alcohol in an average four-week period



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source Australia, July 2019 – June 2020, n=15,234. July 2020 – June 2021, n=63,256.
Base: Australians aged 18+.

Roy Morgan CEO Michele Levine says the increase in alcohol consumption has continued during 2021 with wine, spirits and RTDs driving an increase of 4% points in the proportion of Australians drinking alcohol to over 13.9 million (69.7% of adults):

“The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic early in 2020 led to a turnaround in the long-term trend of declining alcohol consumption as a share of population which we had seen consistently over the last 15 years. This new trend has continued throughout the first half of 2021.

“Nearly 70% of Australian adults now consume alcohol in an average four-week period with the increases in consumption for wine, spirits and RTDs (Ready-to-drinks) driving this increase.

“Over 9.2 million Australians (46.3% of adults) now drink wine in an average four weeks, up 4.3% points from a year ago. The gap between wine and second-placed beer has now widened to over 10% points with 35.6% of Australians now drinking beer, virtually unchanged from 35.8% a year ago.

“Importantly, wine drinking has increased significantly in popularity for both genders with a majority of 50.5% of women now drinking wine, up 3.7% points on a year ago, and 41.9% of men drinking wine, an even larger increase of 4.8% points. The number of people drinking wine also increased across the age spectrum and those most likely to be drinking wine are aged 65-79; although the increase in this age group was smaller than any other at 0.8% points on a year ago.

“The other big winners over the last year have been spirits and RTDs. Nearly a third of Australian adults, 33.2%, now drink spirits, an increase of 3.5% points on a year ago and 13.5% now drink RTDs, up 2.5% points.

“The increasing consumption of spirits began well before the pandemic and if current trends continue there will be more Australians drinking spirits than drinking beer this time next year. At present there are 7,094,000 beer drinkers compared to 6,621,000 spirit drinkers – a gap of only 473,000 and the smallest on record.

“Consumption of other alcoholic beverages hasn’t benefited from the COVID-19 pandemic and the series of lockdowns to hit Australia over the last year with the number of Australians consuming liqueurs virtually unchanged on a year ago while fewer are now drinking cider or fortified wine.

“Roy Morgan will be keeping a keen eye on the developing trends in the alcohol market during the remainder of 2021 and into next year as Australia reaches vaccination targets over the next few months on the road to ‘COVID-normal’ and living with the virus.

“The big question for the alcohol market going forward is can the trends of the last 18 months during the pandemic with increasing numbers of Australians consuming alcohol (in particular wine, spirits and RTDs) continue once the pandemic over or will the prior longer-term trends on alcohol consumption reassert themselves when the lockdowns and forced business closures are over?”

Related research findings

View the [Alcohol Consumption Currency Report](#), as well as [targeted profiles on Australians based on what alcohol they drink, how much alcohol they drink, where they buy their alcohol from, and much more](#).

For further comment or more information about Roy Morgan’s alcohol data please contact:

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About Roy Morgan

Roy Morgan is Australia’s largest independent Australian research company, with offices in each state, as well as in the U.S. and U.K. A full-service research organisation, Roy Morgan has over 75 years’ experience collecting objective, independent information on consumers.

Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

Sample Size	Percentage Estimate			
	40%-60%	25% or 75%	10% or 90%	5% or 95%
10,000	±1.0	±0.9	±0.6	±0.4
20,000	±0.7	±0.6	±0.4	±0.3
50,000	±0.4	±0.4	±0.3	±0.2