

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 30 December 2021

Tips for safe and social New Year's celebrations

New Year's celebrations should be a fun, social time with family and friends – whether you're enjoying beer and bangers at a BBQ, wine and wiener schnitzel at your local restaurant, cocktails and canapés at a city bar, or an alcohol-free bubbles and fish and chips picnic at the beach.

The NZ Alcohol Beverages Council (NZABC) says we all have a part to play to help reduce alcohol-related harm and keep safe and social when we are celebrating – that means making sensible decisions for ourselves and supporting others to do the same.

“It's been another challenging year for Kiwis, but we're asking everyone to keep their celebrations safe and social wherever they may be farewelling 2021 and welcoming in 2022,” says Bridget MacDonald NZABC's Executive Director.

“Keeping summer celebrations safe and social is all about making better, more responsible drinking choices. We can do this if we think about what we are drinking and how we are drinking. A good rule of thumb is ‘**Go no, low or slow**’ – it's always okay to choose a no- or low-alcohol drink, and if you choose to drink, then simply sip and savour it slowly,” says Bridget.

“The majority of Kiwis are moderate, sensible drinkers. We've made some positive changes in our attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol. We are becoming more aware of what and how we are drinking and our choices, such as no- and low-alcohol options. New research shows nearly half (47%) of Kiwis had low-alcohol drinks in the past year.ⁱ Data also shows that alcohol consumption is decreasing, hazardous drinking is declining, and fewer younger people are drinking in New Zealand.^{ii iii iv}

“There is more work to be done to accelerate these trends, and many Kiwis are already making better decisions around alcohol based on their personal circumstances, situation and lifestyle,” Bridget says.

“Make the most of your New Year celebrations and summer social occasions by moderating how much you drink, considering no- and low-alcohol options, staying hydrated with water, enjoying your drink with some food, and having a plan to get home safely,” says Bridget.

Top tips for safe and social New Year's celebrations and summer social occasions

- Go ‘no, low or slow’. It's okay to choose no- or low-alcohol drinks. If you choose to drink, pace yourself and enjoy your drink slowly.
- Sip and savour that cocktail, and remember that a good cocktail can be made with no more alcohol than a bottle of beer.
- Know what a standard drink looks like, and keep an eye on how many you are drinking.
- Eat when you are drinking.
- Drink water in between drinks to stay hydrated.
- Have a plan to get home safely. Leave the car at home.
- Support others to stay safe and social. Look out for your friends or family.
- If you're hosting, make sure there's plenty of food, no- and low-alcohol options, and water available.
- If you are out and about, be sure to use the NZ COVID tracer app.



Need more information?

- Check out cheers.org.nz and alcoholandme.org.nz for more information on what a standard drink is and how to make better drinking decisions.
- Ministry of Health/HPA Guidelines: [Low-risk alcohol drinking advice](#) to reduce your long-term health risks by drinking no more than:
 - **Two** standard drinks **a day for women** and no more than **10** standard drinks **a week**,
 - **Three standard drinks** a day for men **and no more than 15 standard drinks** a week,
 - **AND** have at least **two alcohol-free days** every week.

Need help?

Call the Alcohol Drug Helpline on 0800 787 797, free txt 8681, or visit alcoholdrughelp.org.nz.

CONTACT

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About NZABC

Formed in early 2018, the [NZ Alcohol Beverages Council](#) (NZABC) is a pan-industry group that speaks for those Kiwis who want to see a fair and balanced approach to alcohol attitudes, laws and regulation in New Zealand. At NZABC, we believe partnerships between local and central government, communities, and the alcohol sector, along with great education, are the best ways to reduce harm and maximise enjoyment from alcohol for everyone.

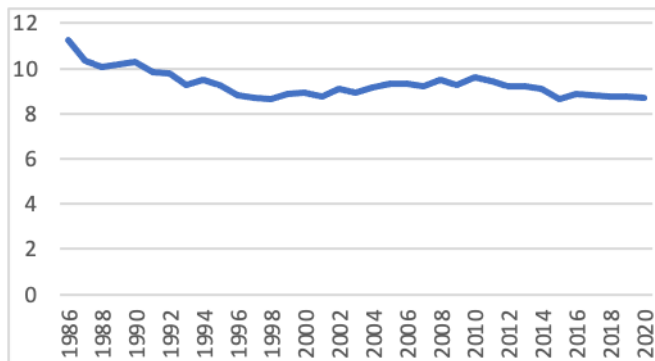
ⁱ NZ Alcohol Beverages Council, *New Zealander's attitudes to alcohol*, December 2021, poll of 1250 New Zealanders. They were asked: Do you drink low-alcohol beverages, and if so have you consumed more or less in the past year compared to 12 months ago? 47% (+7%) of respondents say they drink low-alcohol beverages. 23% say they are drinking the same amount of low-alcohol drinks, 10% more and 14% less than a year ago.

ⁱⁱ Euromonitor International Proprietary Alcoholic Drinks data, You Gov Plc, [The International Alliance for Responsible Drinking](#) (IARD), of which NZABC is a member, found new data from over 100 countries shows consumers worldwide bought 15.8 billion fewer litres of alcohol beverages in the past year. Lockdowns, closure of hospitality venues, and restrictions on socialising with friends and family contributed to alcohol sales volumes declining by more than 6%. New Zealand government data shows a similar decline, with alcohol available for consumption at 8.719 litres of alcohol available per head of population in December 2020 compared to 8.752 litres in December 2019.

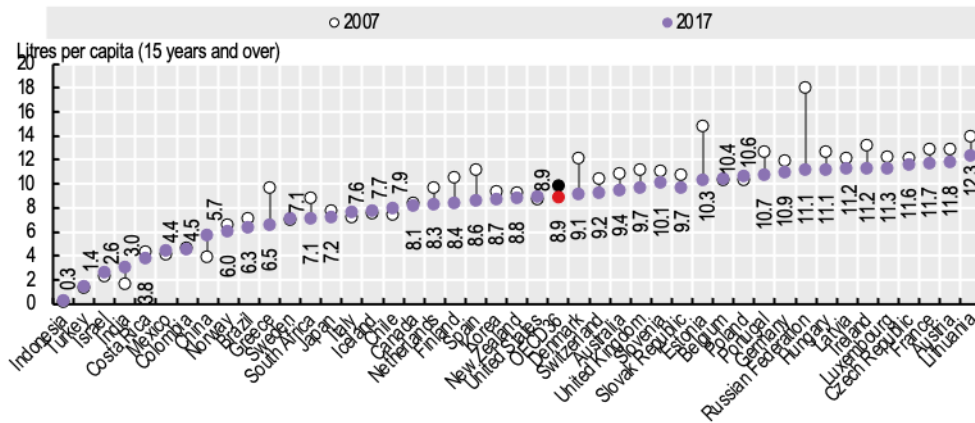
ⁱⁱⁱ **Decreasing alcohol consumption:** StatsNZ Infoshare, Alcohol available for consumption to December 2020 (published 25 February 2021), <http://archive.stats.govt.nz/infoshare/>.

Alcohol available for consumption has been trending downward for a number of years. Data shows alcohol available for consumption was 8.719 litres per head of population (15 years and older) in December 2020 and a 22.7% decrease since 1986 when the data was first collected where there were 11.282 litres per head of population (15 years and older) in December 2020 (see *graph 1 below*). The per head of population (15 years and older) is the measure used by the OECD.

Graph 1. Litres of Alcohol Per Head of Population in New Zealand (Annual-December 1986-2020, 15 years and over) Source: Stats NZ Infoshare (25 February 2021)



NZ consumption below OECD average: OECD Alcohol Consumption, <https://data.oecd.org/healthrisk/alcohol-consumption.htm>. Alcohol consumption is defined as annual sales of pure alcohol in litres per person aged 15 years and older. The OECD average consumption is 8.9 litres/capita (aged 15 and over). New Zealand is at 8.8 litres/capita. See graph 2 below. Source: OECD Health Statistics, 2019. New Zealand figures as at 2018.



^{iv} Ministry of Health, New Zealand Health Survey 2020/21, December 2021, <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/annual-update-key-results-2020-21-new-zealand-health-survey>
 Four in five adults (78.5%) drank alcohol in the past year compared to 81.6% in the previous year (-3.1%). The number of people who had a drink in the past year is declining, notably, adults aged 25-34 years (-4.8%), 45-54 years (-4.3%) and 65-74 years (-4.7%), and in the Māori population (-2.7%). Hazardous drinking across the total population has declined slightly (-1.4%). It has decreased the most in the older generations: adults aged 35-44 years (-2.1%), 45-54 years (-4.2%), 65-74 years (-1.6%), and 75+ years (-1.7%). Hazardous drinking in the Māori population has also declined (-3.2%).