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Full strength beer is preferred by Australia's beer drinkers

New data from [Roy Morgan's Alcohol Consumption Report](#) shows full strength beer is the preferred 'amber fluid' for Australians who drink beer.

Over a third of all Australians aged 18+, 6,277,000 (34.6%), drink beer in an average four weeks including at least one of the three varieties of full strength, mid strength and low alcohol beer – second only to wine as the alcoholic drink of choice for Australians (covered in detail here: [Number of Australians drinking alcohol in 2020 increases](#)).

Nearly a third of Australians aged 18+ (30.2%) consumed full strength beer in an average four weeks in 2020, down 3.1% points from 2019 (33.3%). This is not surprising as the pandemic hit the hospitality industry heavily and kept many pubs, clubs, bars and restaurants closed for an extended period. In Victoria most drinking establishments were closed for at least six months and some have closed permanently.

In comparison only 8.6% of Australians consumed mid-strength beer (down 2.2% points on 2019) and just 2.8% (down 1.1% points) had low alcohol beer in an average four weeks during 2020.

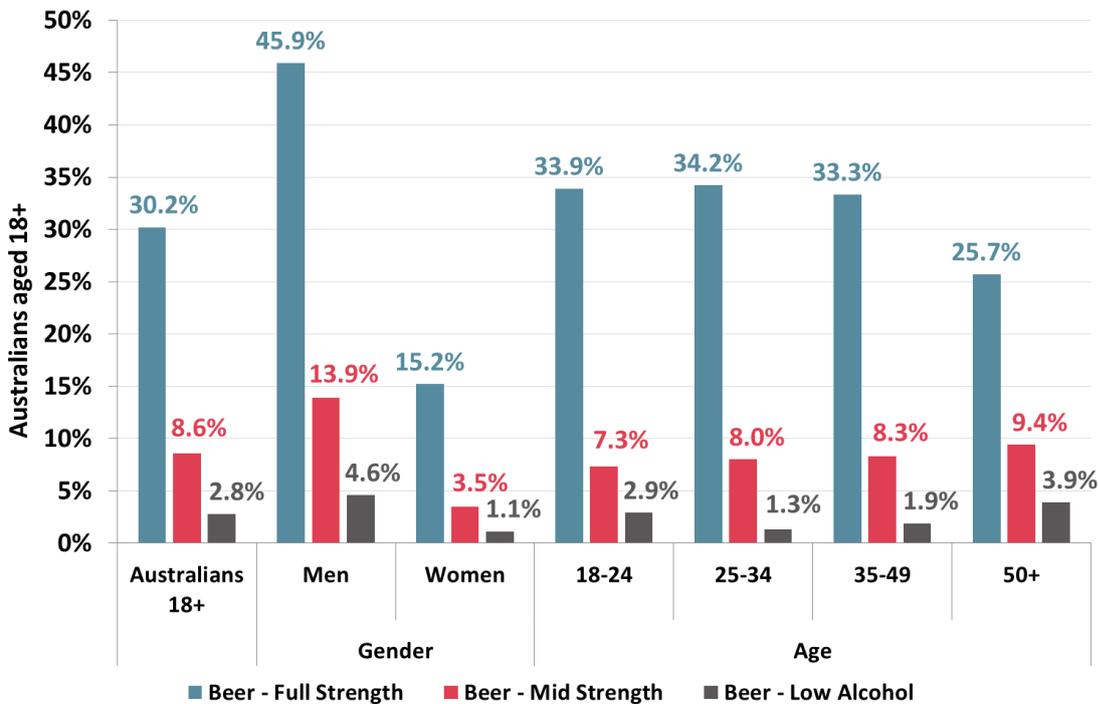
Men are three times as likely to drink beer (and full strength beer) as women

Men are the main consumers of beer with over half (52.4%) consuming beer in 2020 compared to only 17.5% of women. The ratio is very similar for full strength beer with nearly half of men, 45.9%, consuming full strength beer in 2020 compared to only 15.2% of women.

Less than one-in-seven men (13.9%) drink mid strength beer and only 4.6% drink low alcohol beer. Even fewer women (3.5%) drink mid strength beer and just 1.1% of women drink low alcohol 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 50,000 Australians each year.

Proportion of Australians who consume beer (full strength, mid-strength and low alcohol)



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source Australia, January – December 2020, n= 39,953. **Base:** Australians aged 18+.

Note: Beer – Full Strength has 4.5%+ alcohol by volume, Beer – Mid Strength has 3.5% - 4.5% alcohol by volume and Beer – Low Alcohol has less than 3.5% alcohol by volume.

Over a third of Australians aged 18-49 drink full strength beer

Full strength beer is heavily preferred by Australian beer drinkers of all ages – and especially those aged 18-49. Over a third of 18-24yr olds (33.9%), 25-34yr olds (34.2%) and a third of 35-49yr olds (33.3%) drink full strength beer. Only around a quarter (25.7%) of Australians aged 50+ drink full-strength beer.

Perhaps more mindful of protecting their health Australians aged 50+ are more likely to drink mid strength beer (9.4%) and low alcohol beer (3.9%) than any of the younger age groups.

Roy Morgan CEO Michele Levine says the enforced closure of hospitality venues such as pubs, hotels and bars during the nation-wide and extended Victorian lockdowns during 2020 had a big impact on Australian drinking habits with beer looking to 'bounce back' during 2021:

"The drinking habits of Australians were heavily impacted by the restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020 with [number of Australians consuming wine, spirits and RTDs](#) increasing while the number drinking beer decreased.

"However, by 'share of alcohol volume consumed' beer remains the clear leader and represented well over 40% of all alcohol consumed by Australians during 2020 – nearly as much as the alcohol volume of wine and spirits combined.

"The popularity of beer as a drink rests on its popularity with men for which it is the number one alcohol for all age groups and consumed by over 50% of men aged 25-34, 35-49 and 50+.

*"The core of the beer market is *full strength beer with an alcohol by volume (ABV) content of at least 4.5%. Nearly half of all men, 45.9%, consume full strength beer compared to only 13.9% drinking *mid strength beer (3.5% - 4.5% ABV) and 4.6% that consume *low alcohol beer (less than 3.5% ABV).*

"Although there has been a great deal of media attention on the new craze of 'hard seltzers' – soda water spiked with alcohol and a fruit flavour that is lower in calories and carbohydrates than other alcoholic beverages, these RTDs in a can represent only a tiny fraction of the alcohol market compared to beer, and particularly full strength beer.

"The recent launch of the [Coopers limited edition 'Australian IPA \(India Pale Ale\)'](#). A new beer available in cans the 'Australian IPA' is aimed squarely at fans of full strength craft beer with a higher than usual ABV of 6.5%.

"Coopers has been Australia's largest locally-owned brewery since 2011 and the 'Australian IPA' joins several other Cooper's products in the full strength beer category including Coopers Sparkling Ale (5.8% ABV), Coopers XPA (Extra Pale Ale) with 5.2% ABV, Coopers Vintage Ale (7.5% ABV), Cooper's Best Extra Stout (6.3% ABV) and the market-leading Coopers Original Pale Ale (4.5% ABV).

***Full Strength Beer** (4.5%+ Alcohol by Volume (ABV)) includes the likes of Coopers Original Pale Ale (4.5% ABV), Corona Extra (4.6% ABV), Asahi Super Dry (5.2% ABV) and Carlton Draught (4.6% ABV).

***Mid Strength Beer** (3.5% - 4.5% ABV) includes the likes of Great Northern Original (4.2% ABV), XXXX Gold (3.5% ABV) and Iron Jack Lager (3.5% ABV).

***Low Alcohol Beer** (Less than 3.5% ABV) includes the likes of Cascade Premium Light (2.4% ABV), Hahn Premium Light (2.4% ABV) and James Boag's Premium Light (2.7% ABV).

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