



# Report on Breathtesting at Falls Music and Arts Festival 2014/15

The facts about alcohol and driving behaviour at Falls Festival

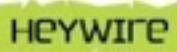
January 2015



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STEER Breathtesting is an initiative of the STEER youth safe transport project proudly supported by a 2013 FRRR ABC Heywire Youth Innovation Grant and Transport NSW funding.

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# Executive Summary

STEER Breathtesting received an overwhelmingly positive response from Falls Festival patrons. Many people commented on what a simple idea it was and were so grateful for an opportunity to increase awareness of their blood alcohol concentration.

For some the breathalyser provided a type of game in which participants dragged their friends to the Kiosk and insisted they all take a breathalyser test. Even in this 'play' context the breathalyser increased awareness amongst patrons regarding their BAC's and how each individual processes alcohol differently.

Many STEER Breathtesting participants returned multiple times and were grateful for the ability to monitor their alcohol consumption over the Festival. Of particular note were the number of patrons who breath tested in the evening prior to driving the next day.

There were a number of patrons who expressed disappointment at their low blood alcohol content subsequent to substantial drinking within the festival. STEER Breathtesting attribute this to the provision of low alcohol beverages at Falls Festival bars.

STEER Breathtesting recommend provision of low alcohol drinks and 'alco-ternatives" be mandatory at Festivals and significant community events.

STEER Breathtesting recommend provision of voluntary breath testing at Festivals, community events and private parties.

# Introduction

STEER Breathtesting positively change drink driving behaviour by making a person-to-person connection at the coalface i.e. where choices about safe celebrating and safe driving are made.

STEER Breathtesting offer patrons a free breath test and provide information and resources associated with safe alcohol consumption and safe driving.



## Background

Regional areas, and the Byron Shire particularly, are disadvantaged by a lack of safe transport options. This results in many young people, particularly males, making unsafe transport choices. In the 5 years from 2005-2010 there were 1,367 reported crashes in Byron Shire involving 17-20 year olds<sup>1</sup>.

Alcohol is a contributing factor in 15% of fatal crashes for young drivers aged 17-25<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup>Figures obtained from Road Traffic Authority (NSW): crashes in the 17-20 yr age group in Byron Shire from 1/7/2005 to 30/6/2010.

<sup>2</sup>Figures obtained from Safer Drivers Course for Learners (RMS) crashes for young drivers aged 17-25, 2011.

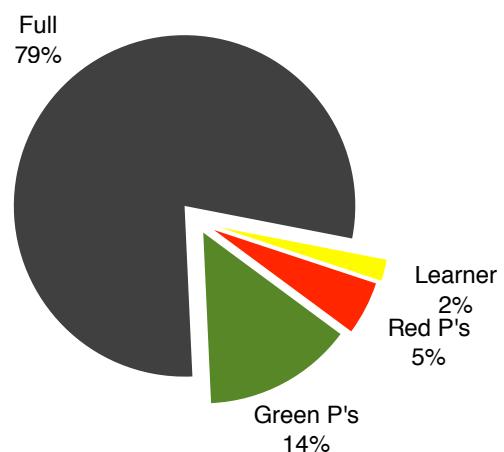
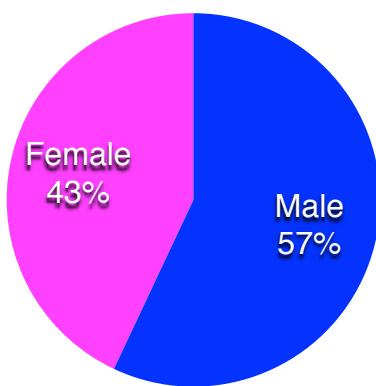
# Facts and Figures

Approximately 17,500 patrons attended Falls Festival Byron Bay from Monday 29th December 2014 to Friday 2nd Jan 2015.

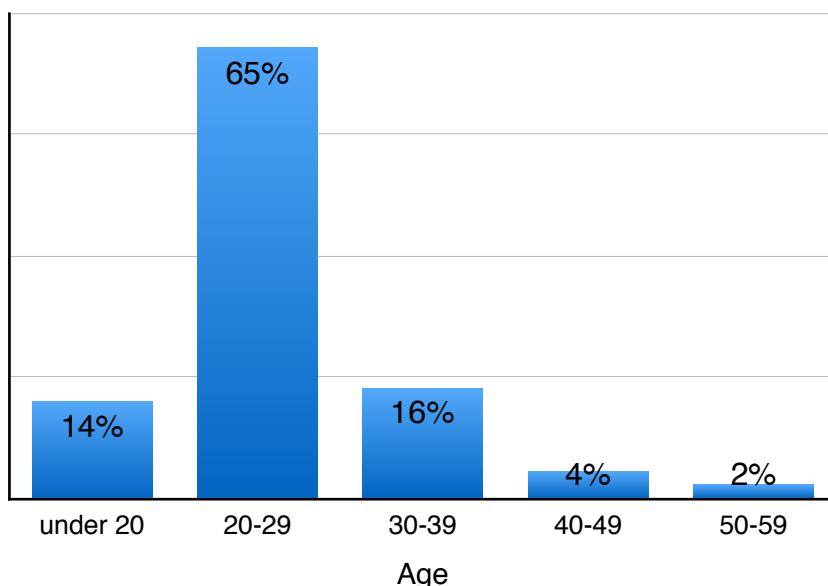
STEER Breathtesting provided approximately 2400 voluntary breath tests and conducted over 230 surveys with Festival patrons.

## Who we tested...

### Gender and Licence Type



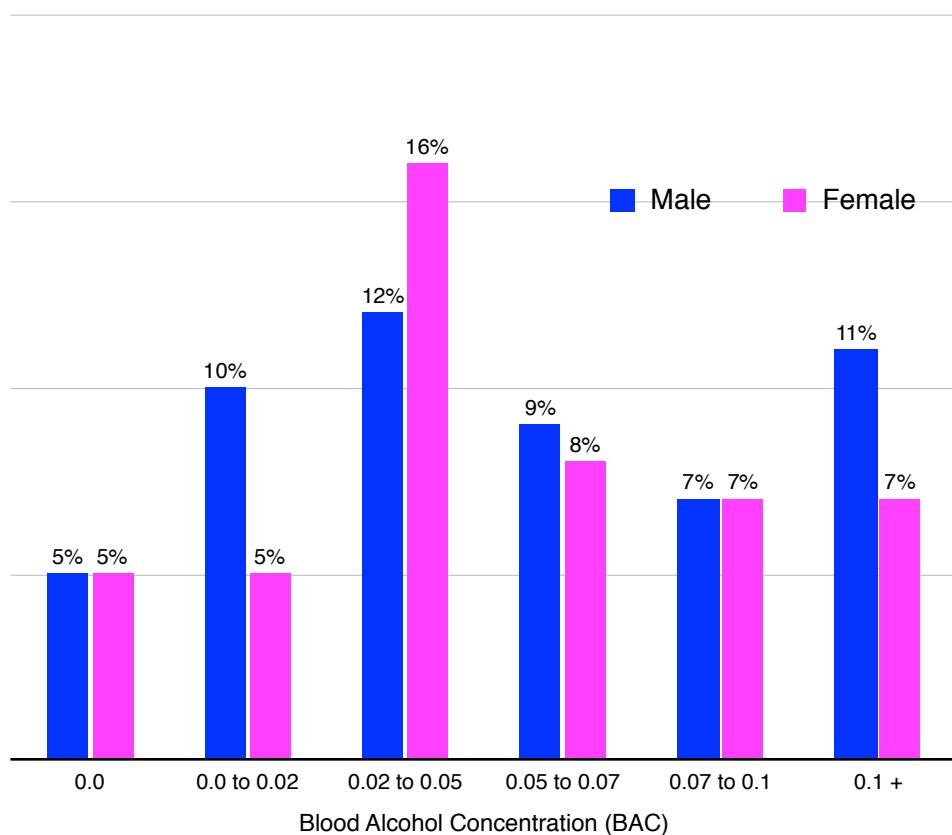
### Average Age



***STEER Breathtesting is particularly effective at targeting young males i.e. 57% of those tested were males and 65% aged b/w 20-29.***

## What we discovered...

### Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) relative to Gender



*Males generally had a higher incidence of Blood Alcohol Concentration over 0.05 and a notably higher incidence of Blood Alcohol Concentration over 0.1.*

*Of all patrons, 10% tested 0.0 and 53% tested under 0.05.*

## **Feedback regarding Low Alcohol Beverages at Falls Festival**

Many patrons were surprised how low their actual BAC was. Some were disappointed they were not as drunk as expected. Falls Festival served low alcohol beverages including:

- vodka, bourbon and rum mixed drinks - 3.5%
- beer - 3.5% & 2.6 %
- .cider 3.5%

We collected the following comments from patrons...

***"interesting. been drinking Festival beers for most of the day"***

20-29 male, full licence, not driving home. Actual BAC 0.057

***"I've had 8 beers, 4 vodkas and 2 ciders... and I'm still not pissed "***

20-29 male, full licence, not driving home. Actual BAC 0.068

***"4 vodka and 2 wines. Never done this before so I had no idea."***

under 20 female, Green P's, not driving home. Actual BAC 0.059

***"3 mid strength beers over day... that's awesome. Surprised to learn about mid strength beers"***

20-29 female, full licence, not driving home. Actual BAC 0.0

***"Vodka and beer. I am pissed off. I have been drinking Festival drinks since 11am and I'm not pissed."***

20-29 male, full licence, not driving home. Actual BAC 0.064

***"is your machine broken coz I have been drinking all day?"***

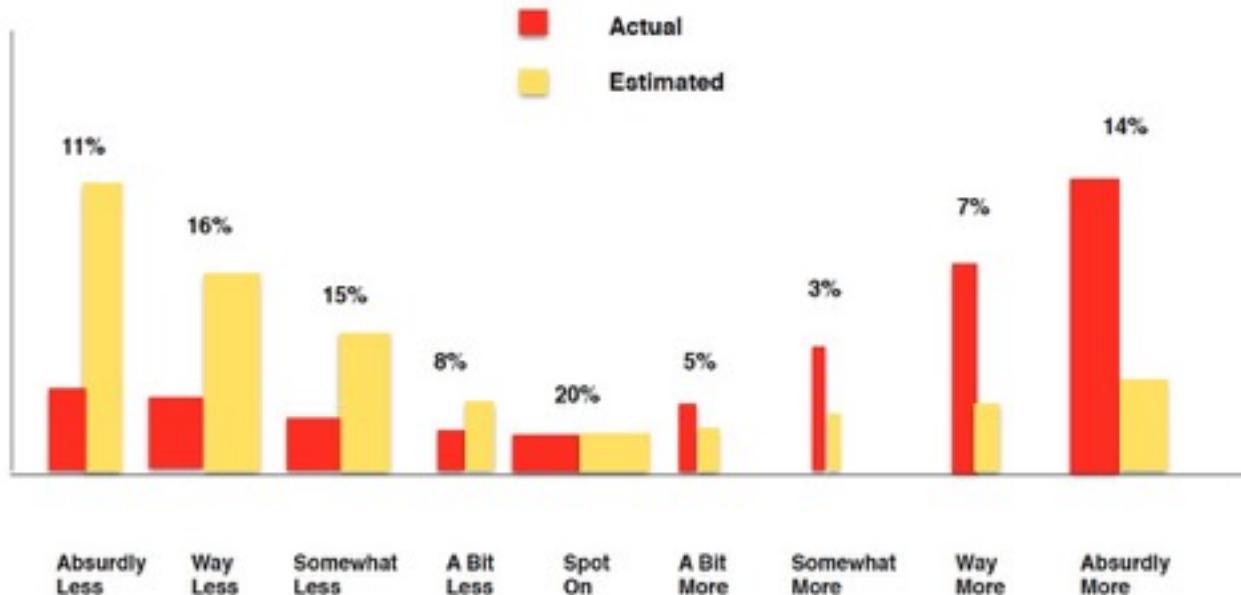
20-29 female, full licence, not driving home. Actual BAC 0.035

***"mid strength beers all day. 2 whiskeys. I learnt something today"***

30-39 male, full licence, not driving home. Actual BAC 0.054

A number of patrons confided they had been drinking full strength drinks at their campsites. STEER Breathtesting offered patrons information about standard drinks, alcohol content and processing of alcohol.

## Actual vs Estimated Blood Alcohol Concentration

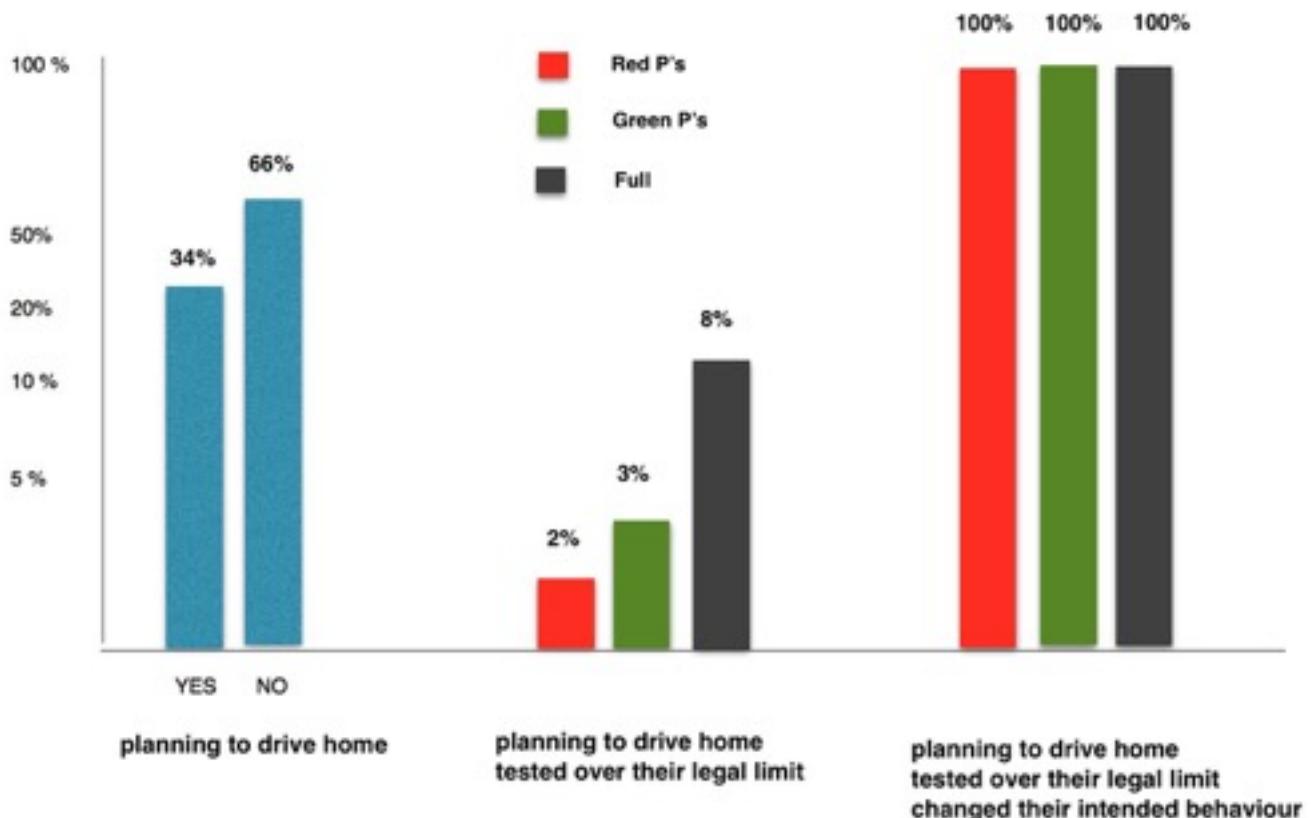


*Self awareness of BAC was good with 20% of people estimating their BAC almost exactly. 33% of patrons estimated their BAC with reasonable accuracy. 70 % of patrons had an actual BAC under their estimate i.e. they were actually less drunk than they thought*

## Behaviour Change after Testing Over Limit

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Driving Limits:

Red P plates:	limit 0.0
Green P plates:	limit 0.0
Full licence:	limit 0.05



**STEER Breathtesting discussed alternative options with over 300 patrons planning to drive home who tested over their legal limit. STEER Breathtesting changed the intended behaviour of 100% of those patrons.**

## **Feedback regarding general BAC awareness**

Many groups of friends came in who had been 'drink-for-drinking' all day... they were surprised at the different BAC's recorded by all of them.

**"we are here to choose a designated driver based on breathtest results"**

5 females aged 20-29 who came in to choose a designated drier. Their 5 test results were 0.032, 0.053, 0.026, 0.021 and 0.055

Many people had no idea what effect alcohol had on them and KPK was the first opportunity they ever had to test their BAC. This was particularly so for a person on epilepsy medication.

**"will drive tomorrow. never had opportunity of being tested after 1 or 2 drinks"**

30-39 male, full licence, driving next day. Actual BAC 0.032

**"I am blown away... great to know"**

30-39 female, no licence, not driving home. Actual BAC 0.014  
she is on epilepsy medication and had 1 Festival vodka

Many people came in repeatedly during the course of the Festival:

**"came in earlier and was 0.06"**

under 20 female, Green P's, not driving home. Actual BAC 0.038

**"third time of testing"**

30-39 female, full licence, planning to driving home. Actual BAC 0.073

STEER Breathtesting have recorded numerous instances of people who had been drinking and recorded a negligible BAC even after multiple tests on different devices:

**"I had 3 vodkas earlier. I have done numerous breath tests in the past with similar results i.e.  
I never register"**

50-59 male, full licence, not driving home. Actual BAC 0.006

# Thanks

STEER Breathestings is a community initiative and relies on widespread community support to develop, evolve and succeed. We would like to acknowledge and thank:

- all who attended Falls Festival;
- our STEER Breathesting volunteers;
- Falls promoters & organisers;
- our sponsors ABC Heywire and Transport for NSW;
- our supporters Alcohoot;
- Evan Malcolm for the cover photograph

Proudly supported by



***The Falls  
Music & Arts Festival***

# Contact

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STEER Breathtesting is an initiative of the STEER youth safe transport project and is auspiced by the Byron Youth Service.

