



Report on STEER Breath-testing at Falls Music Festival 2015/16

The facts about alcohol and driving behaviour at Falls Festival



photograph courtesy of Tree Faerie @ Cloudbatcher Media 2016

January 2016

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Executive Summary

STEER Breath-testing 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 Breath-testing volunteers offer patrons a free voluntary breath-test and provide information and resources associated with safe alcohol consumption and safe safe driving- STEER Breath-testing is a part of major music Festivals and has had a presence at Falls Festival since 2013/14. STEER Breath-testing received an overwhelmingly positive response from Falls Festival patrons in 2015/16. Many people commented on what a simple idea it was and were so grateful for an opportunity to increase personal awareness of their blood alcohol concentration.

For some, breathalysing provided a type of game in which participants dragged their friends to the breathalyser and insisted they all take a test. Even in this 'play' context the breathalyser increased awareness amongst patrons regarding their BAC's. STEER volunteers were on hand to provide information and resources about standard drinks, processing alcohol and alternative transport/accommodation options.

There were a number of patrons who expressed disappointment at their low BAC subsequent to substantial drinking within the festival. STEER Breath-testing attribute this to the provision of low alcohol beverages at Falls Festival bars. STEER Breath-testing recommend provision of low alcohol drinks and 'alco-ternatives" be mandatory at Festivals and significant community events.

STEER Breath-testing provided almost 1800 breath-tests and conducted over 150 surveys with Festival patrons. The surveys enable STEER to paint a picture of the typical patrons participating in voluntary breath-testing, their intentions prior to breath-testing and their intentions following breath-testing. Surveys at Falls 2015/16 showed:

- 65% of surveyed patrons were aged under 29;
- 61% were males;
- 24% intended driving prior to breath-testing;
- the incidence of patrons testing at the high and low limits of BAC 0.1+ and 0.0 were both higher than Falls 2914/15;
- 30% of patrons had reasonable self awareness of their BAC;
- **100% of patrons intended to change their behaviour after a breath-test indicated they were over their legal limit.**

STEER Breath-testing recommend provision of voluntary breath-testing at Festivals and community events be at least recommended and at best compulsory.

Introduction

Australia is deemed to have the most successful Random Breath-Testing program internationally, having maintained RBT programs in all states since the 1980's.

STEER Breath-testing aims to 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. Our STEER Breath-testing volunteers offer patrons a free voluntary breath-test and provide information and resources associated with safe alcohol consumption and safe safe driving.



The STEER Breath-testing vision is ***“to positively change drink driving behaviour at festivals, community events & private activities likely to involve consumption of alcohol and driving”***. Our objectives at large festivals, community events and private activities are:

- increase awareness of standard drinks;
- increase personal awareness of BAC;
- increase awareness of BAC relative to amount of alcohol consumed;
- increase awareness of safe celebrating options for those intending to drive;
- change intended behaviour of those intending to drive who test over their legal limit

STEER Breath-testing was initiated in 2013 with support from an Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal ABC Heywire Youth Innovation Grant and Transport for NSW.

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 ¹.

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

Falls Festival is a multi-day music and arts festival held at North Byron Parklands approximately 30km north from Byron Bay. Festivals held at the North Byron Parklands in 2014 were responsible for a Gross Value Added of \$44.8m³. Of this, \$20.1m is attributed to the Northern Rivers (including Byron Shire). The average daily attendance for Falls in 2014/15 was 15,000 patrons, with approximately 2000 patrons travelling daily to off site accommodation. ⁴

In 2015/16 the Festival included a “Boogie Nights” New Years Eve only ticket attracting many one-day visitors. Transport to/from the Festival is predominantly by private vehicle.

¹Figures 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.

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

³ North Byron Parklands, Economic Impact and Benefits 2014, RPS Australia East Pty Ltd

⁴ North Byron Parklands, Economic Impact and Benefits 2014, RPS Australia East Pty Ltd

Test Results

Approximately 16,000 patrons attended Falls Festival Byron Bay from Wed 30th Dec 2015 to Sun 3rd Jan 2016.

STEER Breath-testing provided approximately 1800 voluntary breath tests and conducted over 150 surveys with Festival patrons.

The breath-tests represent almost 1800 conversations with Festival patrons in which STEER volunteers increase self awareness associated with alcohol consumption amongst patrons.

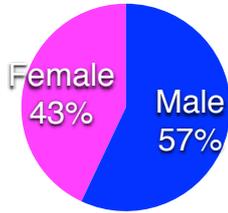
The conversations can include discussion regarding:

- how much patrons have drunk over what period of time;
- asking patrons to estimate their BAC;
- providing information regarding 'standard drinks';
- providing information regarding the amount of alcohol in drinks from Festival bars;
- providing information about safe celebrating e.g. where to get water, importance of eating and resting, providing suncream
- providing information about alternative transport options e.g. Festival shuttle bus;

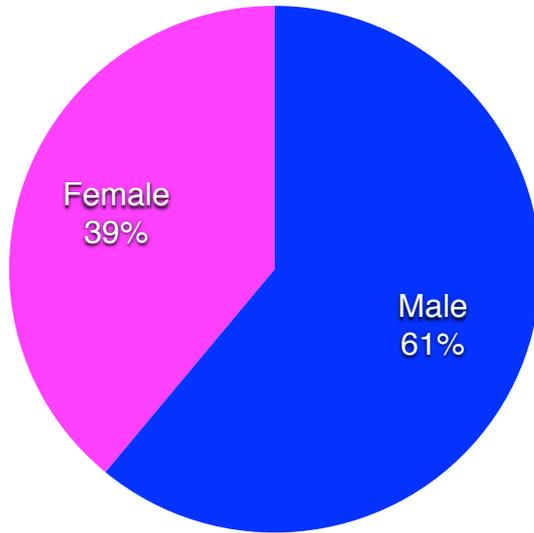
Who we surveyed...

Gender and Licence Type

Falls 2014/15

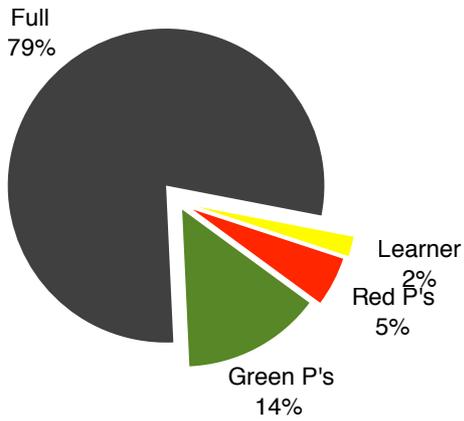


Falls 2015/16 - Gender

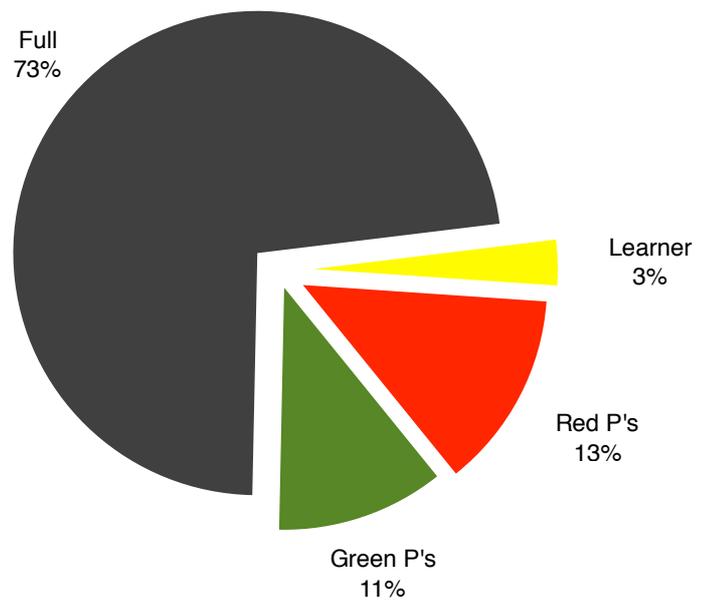


Licence Type

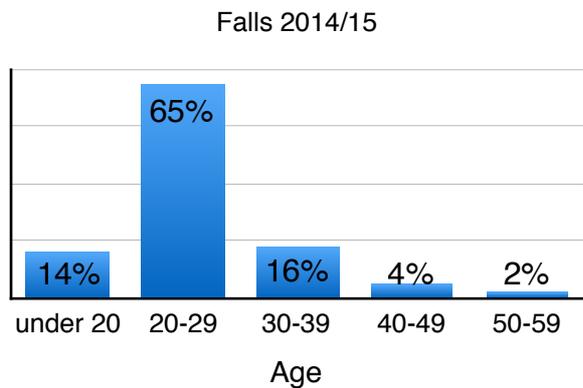
Falls 2014/15



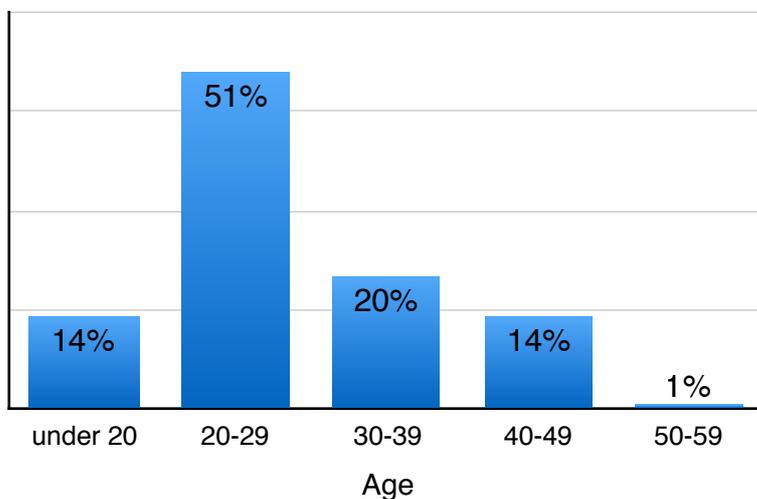
Falls 2015/16 - Licence Type



Average Age



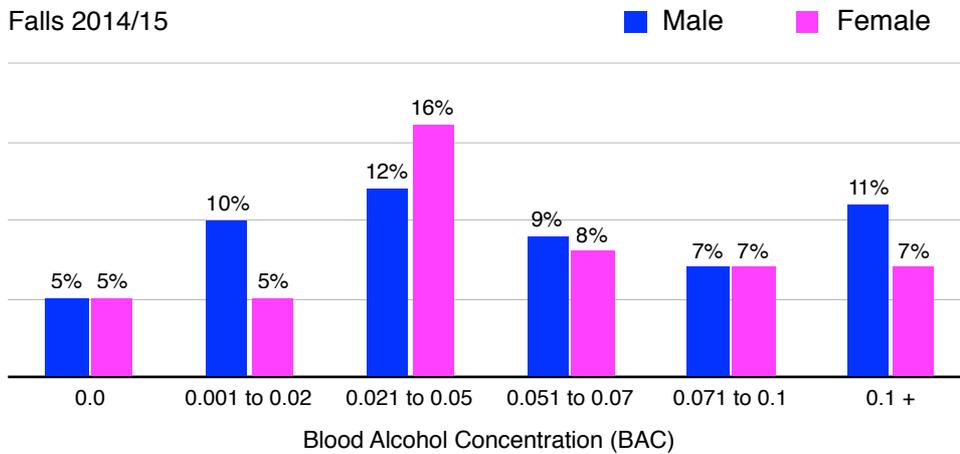
Falls 2015/16 - Average Age



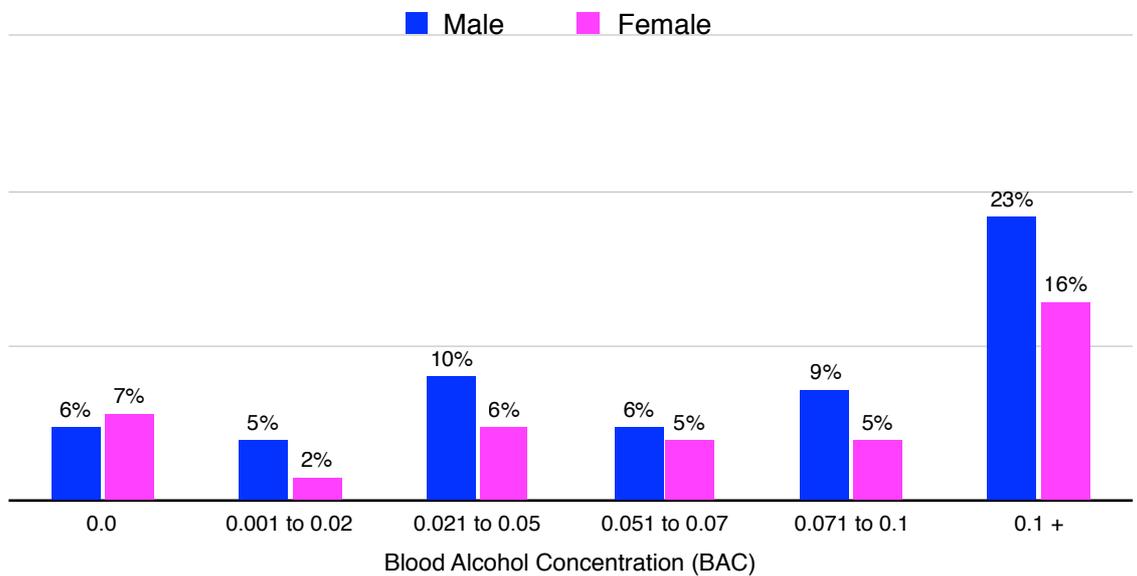
STEER Breath-testing is particularly effective at targeting young males i.e. 61% of those tested were males and 65% were aged under 29. In 2014/15 22% of surveyed respondents were aged over 30, compared to 35% in 2015/16.

What we discovered...

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) relative to Gender



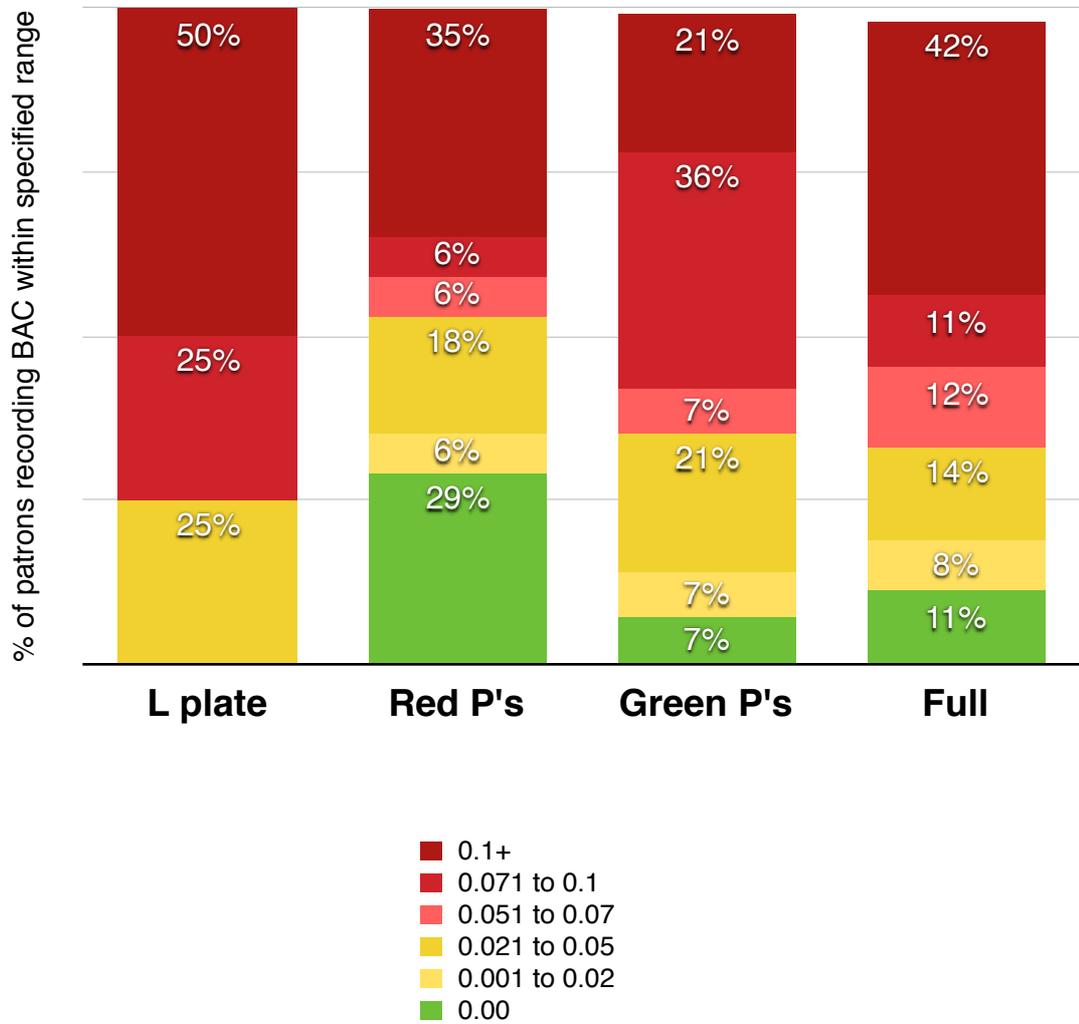
Falls 2015/16 - BAC relative to Gender



The incidence of 0.0 BAC was higher than previous Falls Festival as was the incidence of 0.1+ BAC. Of surveyed patrons, 13% tested 0.0 and 36% tested under 0.05.

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) relative to Licence Class

Falls 2015/16 - BAC relative to Licence Class

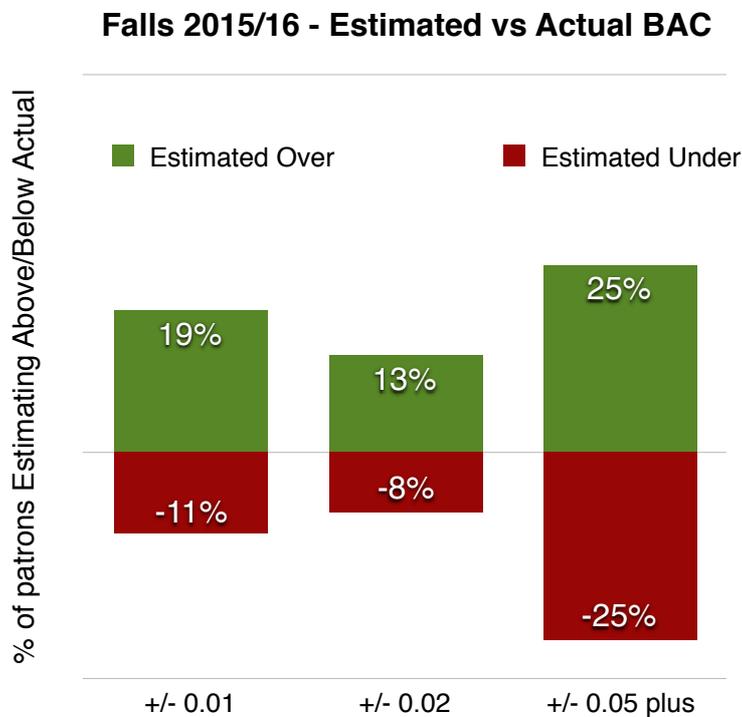


Estimated vs Actual Blood Alcohol Concentration

Patrons were asked to estimate their BAC prior to a breath-test. 30% of patrons estimated within +/- 0.01 of their actual reading indicating reasonable self awareness of BAC. As an example... if such a patron had an actual BAC of 0.04 they may estimate a BAC between 0.03 and 0.05.

At the other end of the scale, 50% of patrons estimated within +/- 0.05 of their reading indicating little self awareness of their BAC. As an example... if such a patron had an actual BAC of 0.04 they may estimate a BAC between 0.0 and 0.09.

In general, a patron estimating over their actual BAC is more likely to drive within their legal limit.



50% of patrons estimated their BAC within +/- 0.05 of actual reading indicating little self awareness of BAC. 30% of patrons estimated their BAC within +/- 0.01 of actual reading indicating reasonable self awareness of BAC.

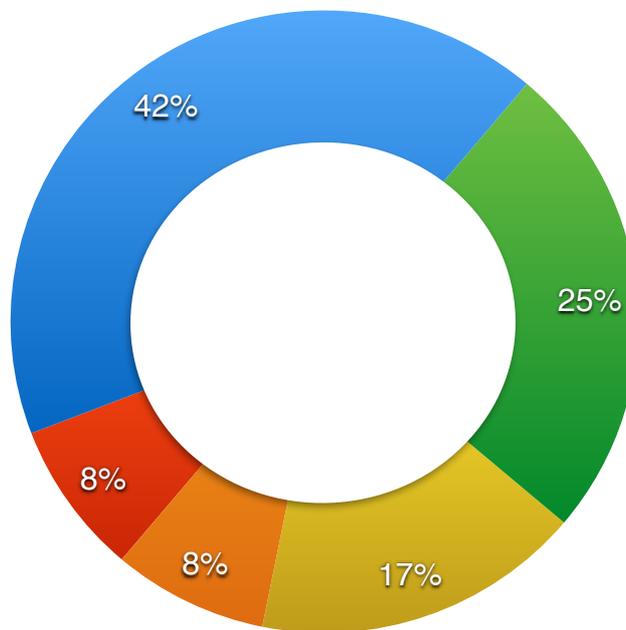
Intention and Behaviour Change

Prior to a voluntary breath-test patrons were asked if they intended driving home:

Those intending to drive home -	24%
Those maybe driving home -	7%
Those not driving home -	69%

Subsequent to a breath-test indicating they were over their legal limit, the types of intended behaviour change were:

Falls 2015/16 - Behaviour Change



- stay onsite
- stop and retest
- get bus/taxi
- lift w/ friend
- other

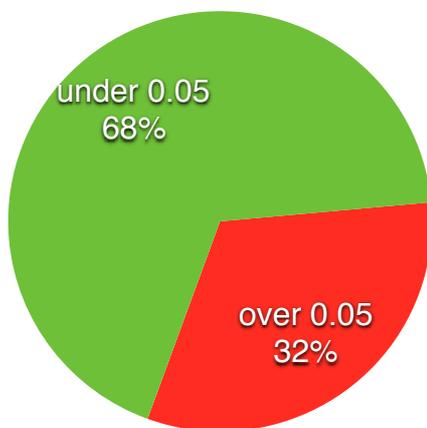
100% of patrons intended to change their behaviour after a breath-test indicated they were over their legal limit.

The Morning After

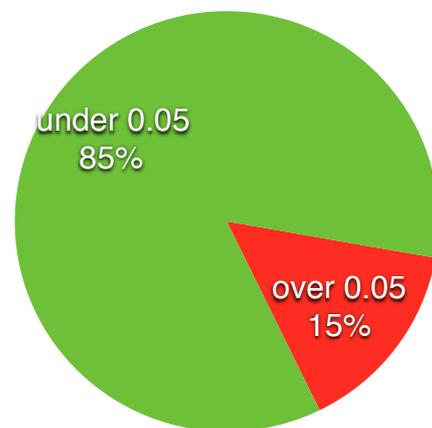
Throughout the Festival, patrons often asked if STEER Breath-testing would be available on the morning after the Festival. This year Falls included a “Boogie Nights” ticket for NYE only which resulted in many people staying on site for NYE and driving home on New Years Day. Most festival patrons left the site on the morning of Mon 3rd Jan 2016.

STEER Breath-testing conducted 144 breath-tests on the morning of Fri 1st Jan 2016 and 325 breath-tests on the morning of Mon 3rd Jan 2016.

Falls 2015/16 - 144 tests on
New Years day



Falls 2015/16 - 325 tests on
day after Falls



85% of patrons tested under 0.05 the morning after Falls Festival.

Thanks

STEER Breath-testing 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 Breath-testing volunteers;
- Falls Festival promoters & organisers;
- RMS for providing the Alcolizer standing breathalyser;
- Alcohoot for providing mobile breathalysers ;
- NSW State Library for providing standard drink information;
- Eve Jeffery for the cover photograph



Contact

Please contact Phil Preston for more information about STEER Breath-testing and to offer your support and suggestions:

Phil Preston	STEER coordinator
Mobile	0414 809 330
Email	phil@steerproject.org.au
Website	www.steerproject.org.au

STEER Breath-testing is an initiative of the STEER youth safe transport project.



Appendix - Survey Questions

Day/Date:
Time:

1. Male Female

2. PostCode

3. L Plate Green P Plate Red P Plate Full Licence

4. Under 20 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70+

5. Are you currently intending to drive home? NO MAYBE YES

6. Are you intending to give others a lift home? NO MAYBE YES - How many in car?

7. How much alcohol have you drunk over what period of time and what is your estimated BAC?

EST BAC

READ TO EVERY PARTICIPANT:
Please be aware BAC can increase for up to 2 hours after your last drink. The BAC reading obtained is indicative only. If you are in any doubt regarding your ability to drive safely we suggest you choose an alternative transport option.

STANDING TESTER

ALCOHOOT HANDHELD

8. After breath-testing what is your intention?

- I will drive home safely
- I will stop drinking and retest before choosing my transport option;
- I will get a mate/friend to drive my vehicle;
- I will get a lift with a mate/friend;
- I will get a bus/taxi;
- I will stay onsite/nearby;
- other...