

Report on STEER Breath-testing at Bello Winter Music Festival 2016



Willie Watson courtesy Bello Winter Music Festival

Alcohol consumption and driving behaviour at Bello Music Festival

August 2016

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Executive Summary

STEER Breath-testing positively changes 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 currently a regular part of multiple major music Festivals.

STEER adapted the large scale breath-testing setup of major Festivals and created a smaller 'community event' model incorporating a single breath-testing machine and 1 volunteer. The new model worked perfectly at the smaller scale Bello Winter Music Festival, and demonstrated the ease with which STEER breath-testing can be incorporated at small-medium scale community events and activities.

STEER Breath-testing received an overwhelmingly positive response from Bello Festival patrons. Four friends who had been drink-for-drinking all night could not believe the difference in their BAC levels. A husband and wife arrived with the husband feeling OK to drive home and testing way over. Many patrons had never breath tested before and had no idea of their BAC. Some non drinkers wanted to test the machines. Many patrons were extremely grateful for the service... "Should be one of these in every venue" was a common sentiment.

STEER volunteers actively engaged patrons in conversations, providing information and resources about standard drinks, the rate bodies process alcohol and alternative transport/accommodation options.

STEER Breath-testing provided over 300 breath-tests and conducted over 80 surveys with Festival patrons. The surveys enable STEER to paint a picture of the intentions of Bello Festival patrons both before and after breath-testing. Surveys at Bello Festival 2016 revealed:

- almost equal proportion of males/females tested;
- 20-29 year olds were the only age group to record BAC's of 0.0;
- over a third of patrons were intending to and/or thinking about driving home prior to breath-testing;
- of those intending to drive home almost half of full licence holders had a BAC over their legal limit;
- just under a half of all patrons had no idea of their estimated BAC;
- A quarter of 20-29 year olds estimated their BAC within +/- 0.01.
- **ALL patrons surveyed intended to change their behaviour after a breath-test indicated they were over their legal limit.**

STEER Breath-testing recommend provision of person-to-person based breath-testing at Festivals and community events be at least recommended and at best mandatory.

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. Among the general population, personal contact with random breath testing has the strongest deterrent impact on drink driving ¹.

STEER Breath-testing compliments police random breath testing and positively changes 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 to...

- 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 a Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal ABC Heywire Youth Innovation Grant and Transport for NSW.

¹ Effective drink driving prevention and enforcement strategies: Approaches to improving practice. Kiptoo Terer and Rick Brown. Australian Institute of Criminology. Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice. No 472. February 2014

Background

Regional areas are disadvantageded by a lack of safe transport options. This results in many young people, particularly males, making unsafe transport choices.

Alcohol is a contributing factor in 15% of fatal crashes for young drivers aged 17-25.²

Through increasing safe celebrating and driving awareness amongst older drivers and parents, STEER Breath-testing believe younger drivers and children will change their celebrating and driving behaviour based on positive role modelling.

Bello Festival is a multi-day music festival held in Bellingen, NSW. Approximately 8,500 patrons passed through the Bello Festival doors between Thursday 7th July and Sunday 10th July 2016.

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

What We Did

STEER Breath-testing provided almost 300 voluntary breath tests and conducted over 80 surveys with Festival patrons.

The breath-tests represent almost 300 conversations with Festival patrons in which STEER volunteers increase self awareness associated with alcohol consumption and safe driving amongst patrons. The conversations included...

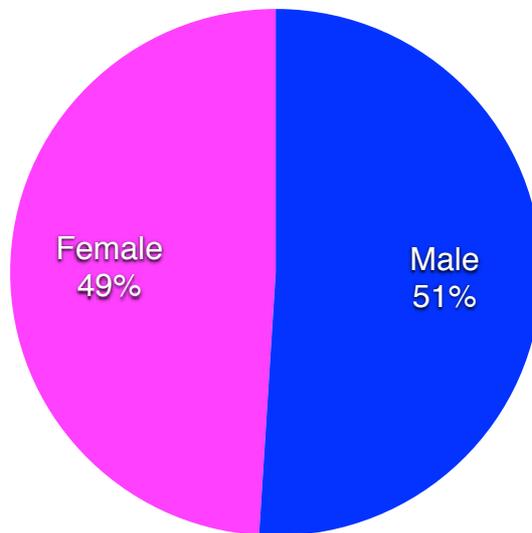
- discussing how much patrons had drunk over a given period of time;
- providing information about standard drinks;
- what a standard drink of wine actually looks like;
- how the body processes alcohol;
- asking patrons to estimate their BAC;
- providing 'Plan B' collateral and resources;
- providing information about safe celebrating e.g. where to get water, importance of eating/resting;
- providing information about alternative transport options e.g. Festival shuttle bus.

We had poured 100ml of wine into a glass as served at the Festival bar and had it on display at the breath-testing booth. Many patrons were completely unaware a 'standard drink' of wine was 100ml and were surprised a glass of wine served at the bar was actually 2 standard drinks.

Who we surveyed...

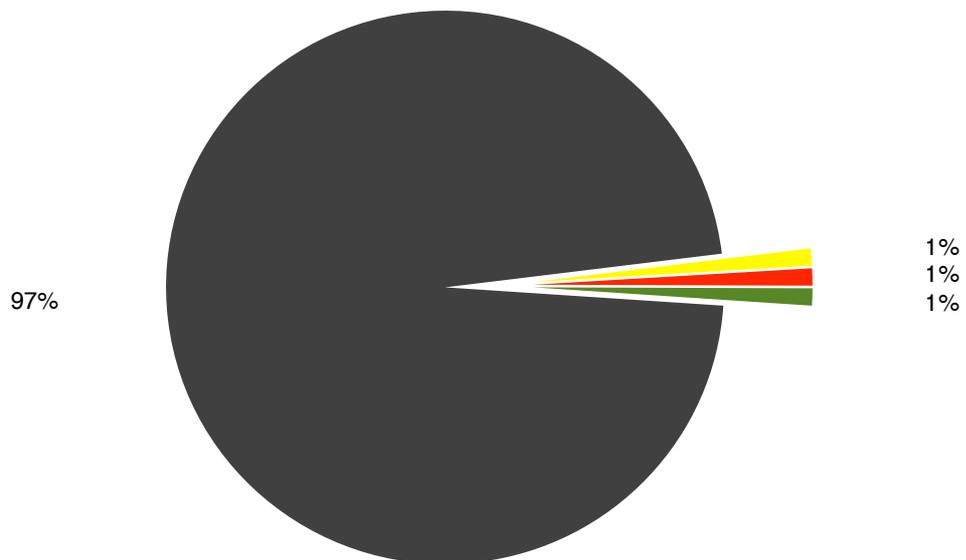
Gender

Gender



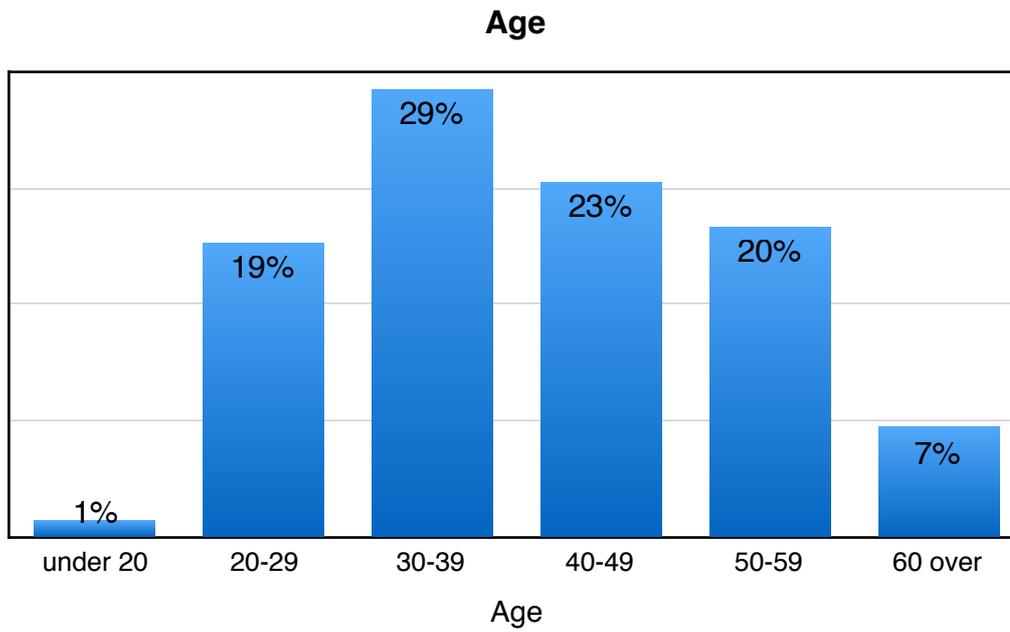
Licence Type

Licence Type

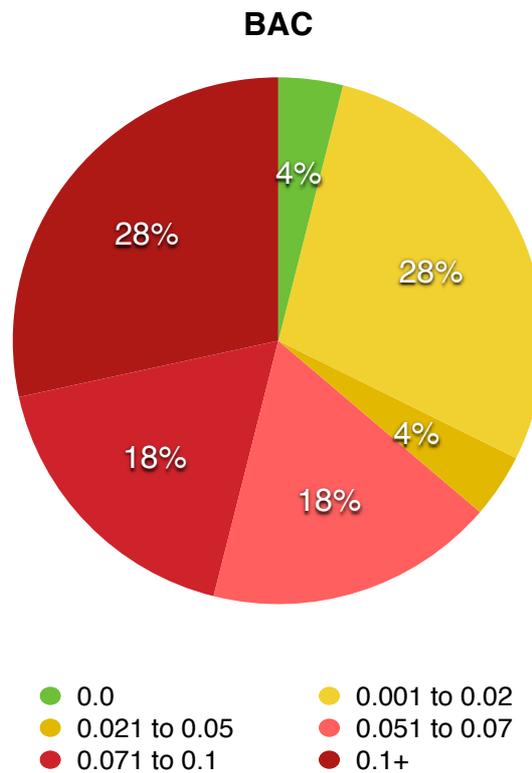


- Learner
- Red P's
- Green P's
- Full

Age



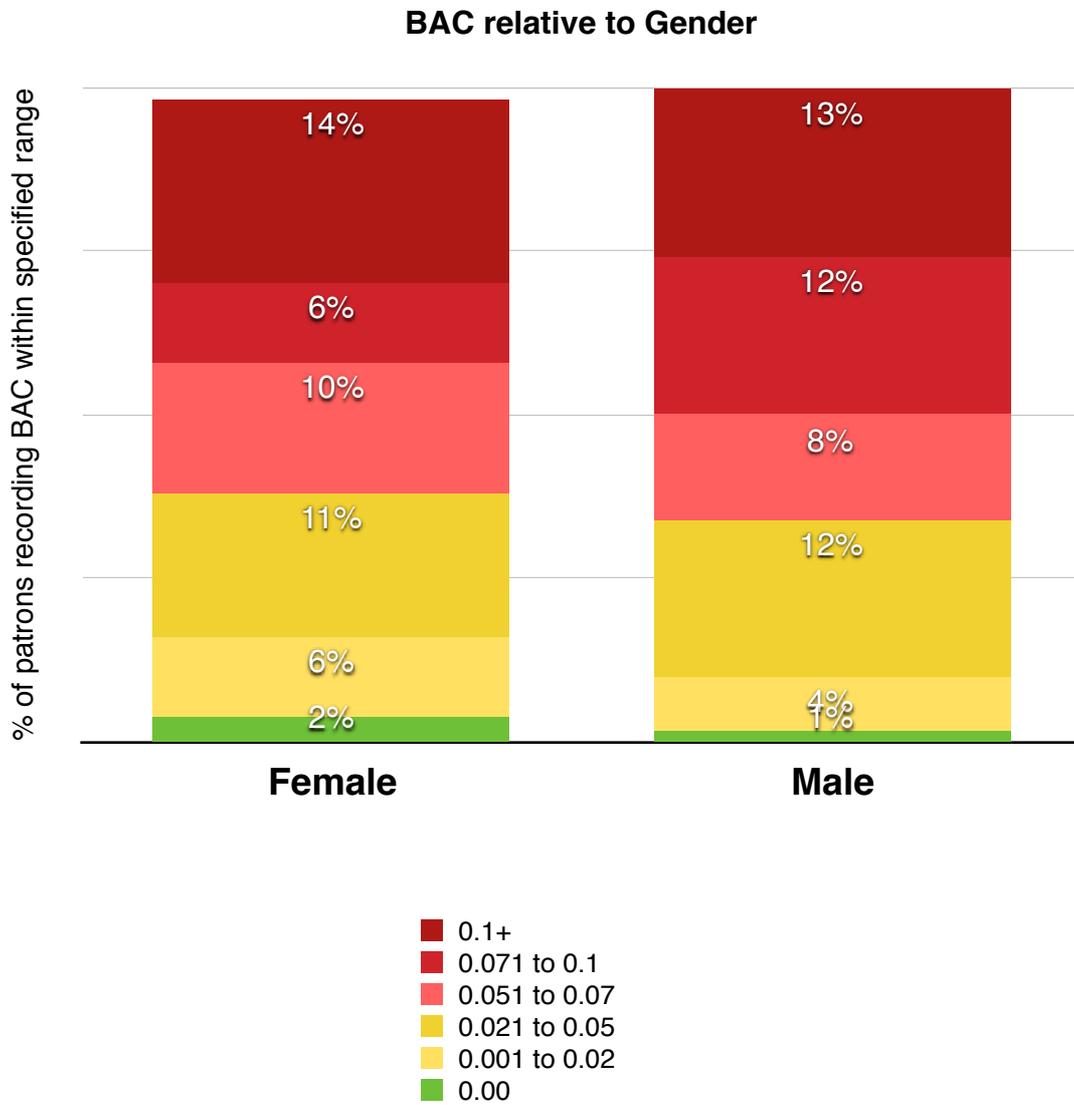
BAC



64% of patrons tested had a BAC over 0.05.

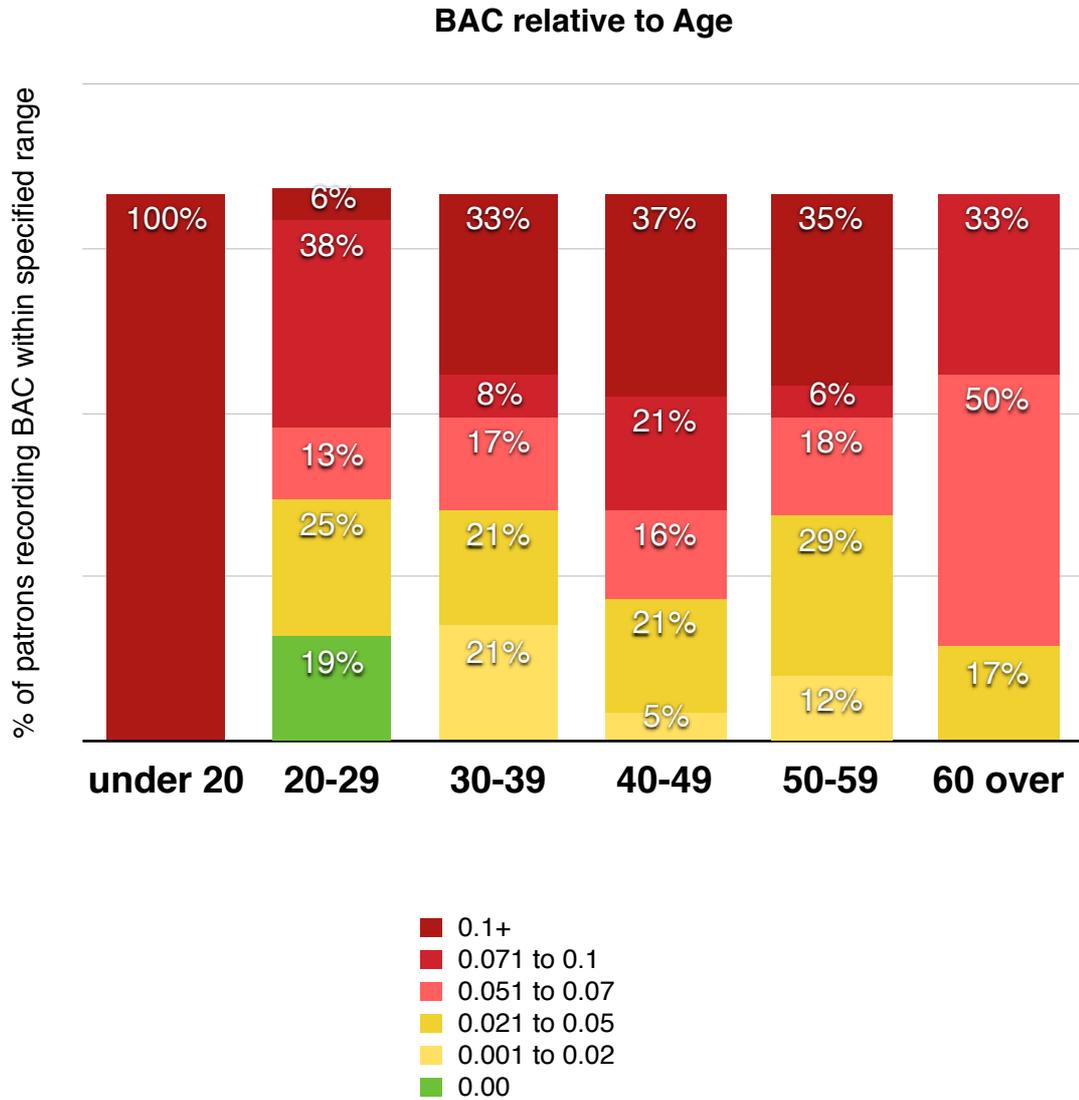
What we discovered...

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) relative to Gender



Males had greater incidence of BAC between 0.07 and 0.1.

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) relative to Age

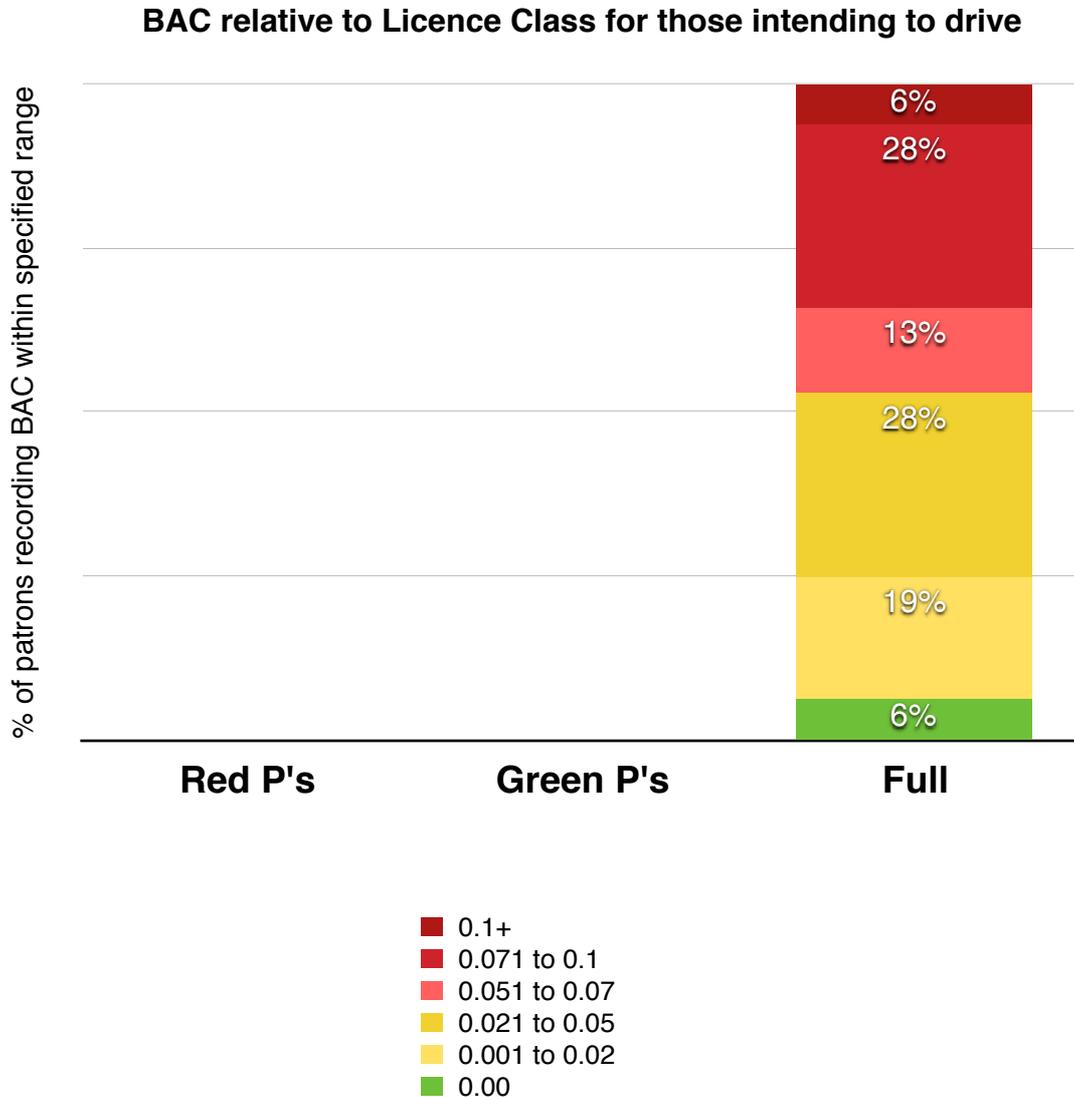


NOTE: results for under 20 are skewed due to low sample size.

Those aged 20-29 had the highest proportion of BAC's under 0.05 and were the only age group to record BAC's of 0.0.

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) relative to Licence Class for those intending to drive

Most of those intending to and/or thinking about driving home had a BAC under their legal limit of 0.05.



NOTE: no P platers tested were intending to drive home.

47% of those intending to and/or thinking about driving home had a BAC over their legal limit.

Estimated vs Actual Blood Alcohol Concentration

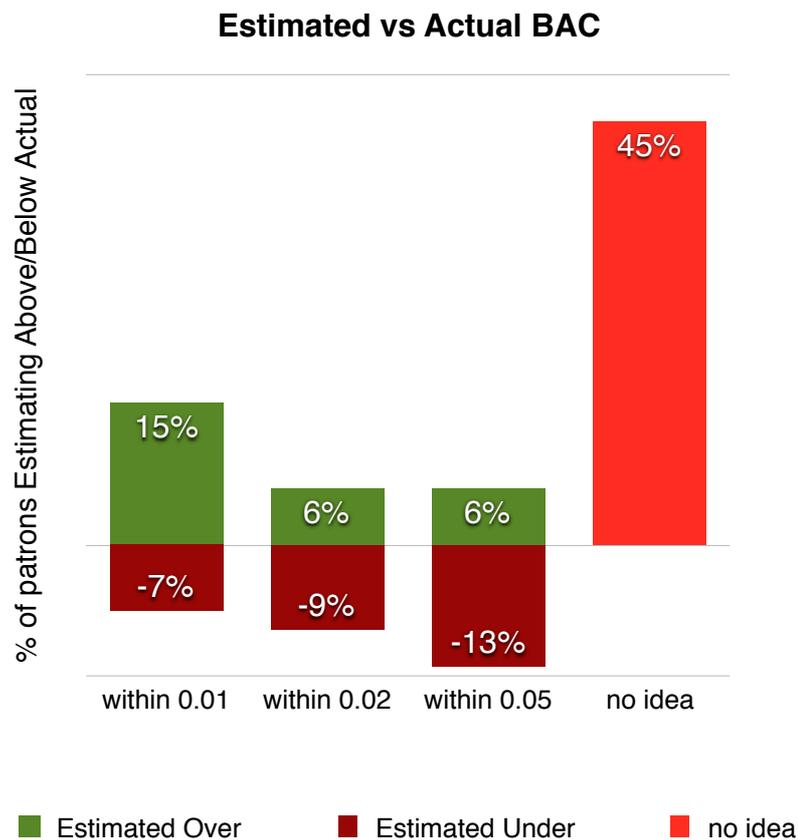
Patrons were asked to estimate their BAC prior to a breath-test and were given the option of 'no idea' if they could not guess at their BAC.

45% of patrons had no idea of their estimated BAC.

22% of patrons estimated within +/- 0.01 of their actual BAC indicating good self awareness of their BAC. As an example... if such a patron had an actual BAC of 0.04 they would estimate a BAC between 0.03 and 0.05.

At the other end of the scale, 19% 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 would 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.



22% of patrons estimated their BAC within +/- 0.01 of actual BAC indicating good self awareness of BAC.

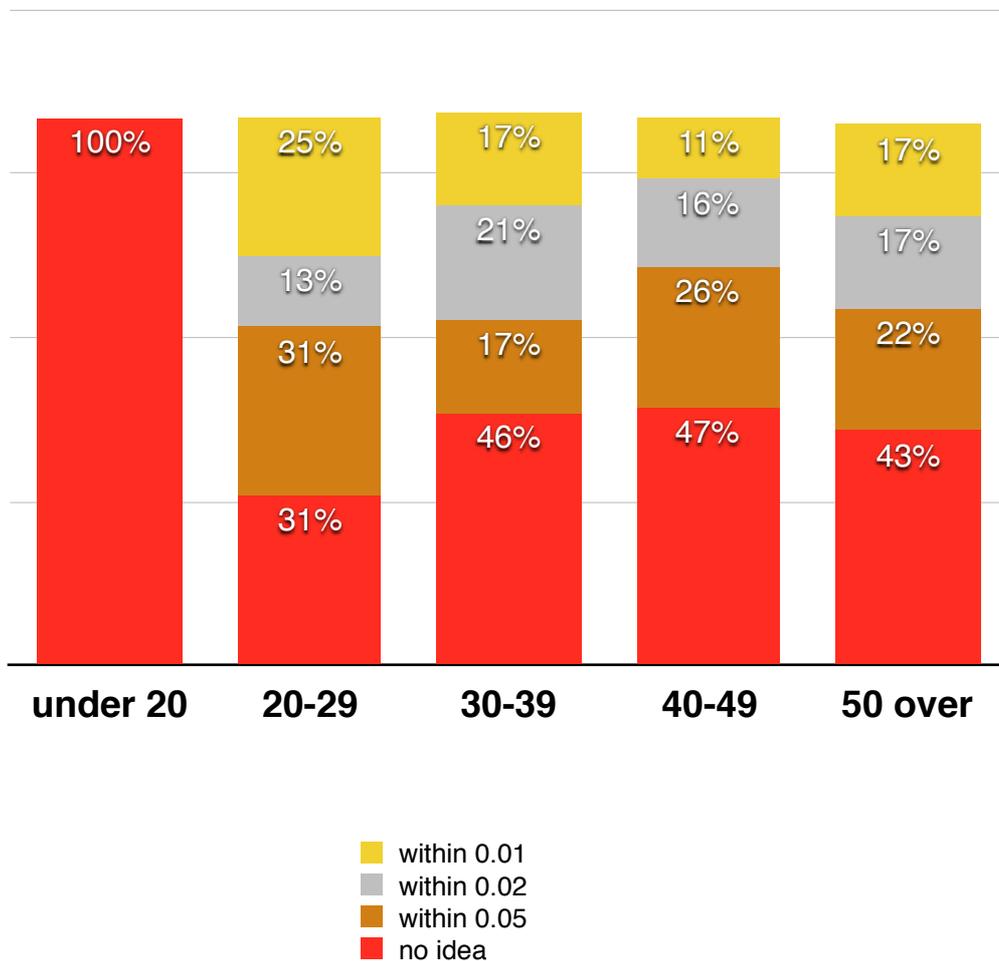
Estimated vs Actual Blood Alcohol Concentration relative to Age

Patrons were asked to estimate their BAC prior to a breath-test.

Over half of all age groups had no idea of their BAC and/or estimated their BAC within +/- 0.05.

25% of 20-29 year olds estimated their BAC within +/- 0.01.

Estimated vs Actual Blood Alcohol Concentration relative to Age



NOTE: results for under 20 are skewed due to lack of data

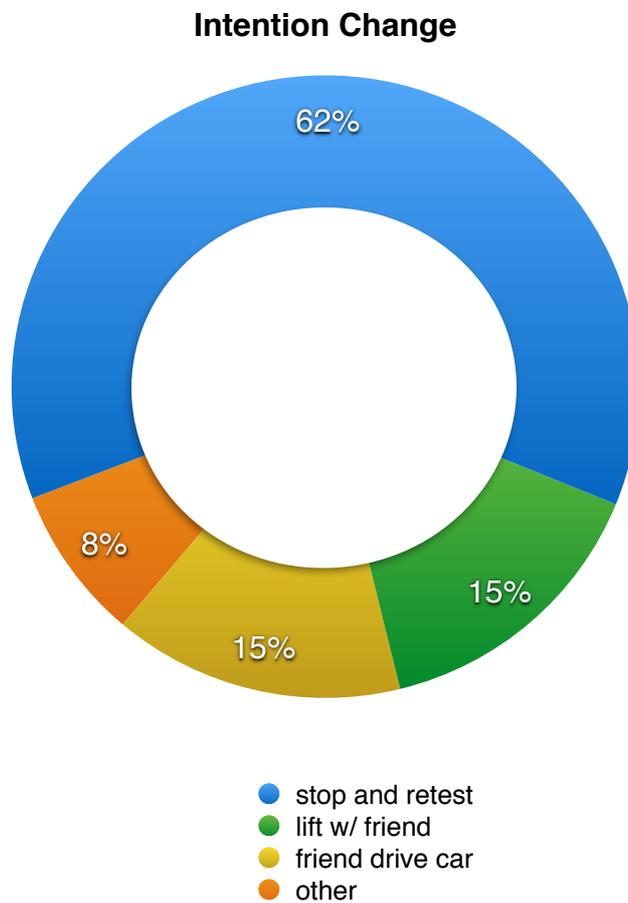
A quarter of 20-29 year olds estimated their BAC within +/- 0.01.

Change of Intention

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

Those intending to drive home -	27%
Those maybe driving home -	12%
Those not driving home -	61%

Subsequent to a breath-test those intending to drive home with a BAC over their legal limit changed their intentions according to the following:



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

Stories

We collected numerous stories, suggestions and feedback from patrons and breath-testing volunteers throughout the Festival. Here is a selection...

“My big comment is that many people, after hearing what it was about, replied 'These breathalysers should be everywhere!' or 'Why aren't they everywhere?’

Many people were genuinely curious to know how alcohol affected them in terms of their BAC. Fascinating to see the response of people once they figured out what 'over the limit' actually felt like, with comments such as 'Wow I didn't realise what 0.05 (or over) felt like',

Very interesting to see two people rock up, both had drunk the same amount and one was over and the other under!

Many people workshopped their options once they realised they were over.

Very interesting to see the response once the power was handed back to the patron - if under the limit some people began calculating how many drinks they could have. If over, figuring out how long they could wait to drive, or explore other options.

A proportion of folks said they would come back over the course of the night to monitor their own BAC. That's a great result!”

S. Wicks - breath testing volunteer

Had 6 beers & not intending to drive home. Estimated BAC of 0.05. Actual BAC of 0.067. Commented “every pub should have one”

30-40 y.o. male

4 friends having drunk similar amounts throughout the evening wanted to comparatively test themselves. The first 3 friends had BAC's near to and exceeding 0.1+.

The 4th friend had a BAC of 0.055. He couldn't believe it and requested another test. The second test confirmed a BAC of 0.058.

Friend 1 - 30-40 y.o. male

Friend 2 - 40-50 y.o. male

Friend 3 - 40-50 y.o. female

Friend 4 - 40-50 y.o. male

A recurrent theme in breath-testing stories is 'surprise'. Many people are surprised at how different individual BAC's are after drink-for-drinking with friends. Many people are surprised at how low or high their BAC's are.

Another common theme is voluntary breath-testing should be available at more venues and events.

Wife intending to drive had a BAC of 0.028. Husband said he felt OK to drive and had a test... result being a BAC of 0.085. Suffice to say wife drove home.

Wife - 40-50 y.o. female
Husband - 40-50 y.o. male

Patron had 5 beers over the evening & knew they couldn't drive home... just wanted a breath-test out of curiosity. Estimated their BAC at 0.07. Actual BAC of 0.058. Intended to sleep in back of their van.

30-40 y.o. male

2 friends. Both had been drink-for-drinking all day and reckoned on having had about 15 standard beers each.

One friend estimated his BAC at 0.085 and had an actual BAC of 0.095. Other friend had no idea of his BAC and an actual BAC of 0.099.

Friend 1: 20-30 y.o. male
Friend 2 - 20-30 y.o. male

Patron wanted to drive home had no idea of her estimated BAC. Had an actual BAC of 0.06 at around 9pm. She was unsure about what she was going to do.

50-60 y.o. female

Patron intending to drive home at approximately 10:30pm after about 5 wines over the whole evening. Estimated BAC was 0.05 and actual BAC of 0.081. After lengthy discussion and the engagement of her friends in the conversation... she decided to wait some hours before testing again. At conclusion of testing around midnight her BAC was 0.056 after which she intended to wait further before driving.

50-60 y.o. female

Plan B

STEER Breath-testing incorporated “Plan B” t-shirts and poster into the breath-testing presence at Bello Music Festival.



The Plan B drink driving campaign began in August 2012. It is about making positive choices to get home safely after a night out, highlighting that driving is not an option. With practical options to avoid drink driving, Plan B takes a humorous and positive approach designed to engage the community about making alternative arrangements to get home after a night out.

Some patrons at the STEER breath-testing stall would joke about the Plan B options as they were waiting for a breath-test. And as much as many of the suggestions on the Plan B poster are humorous, the STEER breath-testing volunteers could easily steer the conversation towards suggestions of practical and safe transport options.

PLAN A

- Drink and drive, face the consequences.

PLAN B

- Walk home.
- Run home.
- Do that combined run/walk sort of thing.
- Catch taxi home.
- Share taxi with mates.
- Share taxi with potential new mates.
- Get mate's mum to drive us home.
- Get girlfriend to drive us home.
- Get girlfriend's friend to drive us home.
- Order home delivered pizza and get lift with pizza guy.
- Catch bus.
- Catch train.
- Sleep on mate's couch.
- Sleep in mate's spare room.
- Sleep on mate's lounge room floor using doggy cushion for pillow.
- Sleep in cheap motel room.
- Sleep on floor of motel room someone else is paying for.
- Go to girlfriend's place.
- Go to ex-girlfriend's place.
- Go to future girlfriend's place.
- Camp
- Rent on-site caravan.
- Weave hut out of reeds, banana tree leaves or palm fronds and sleep in it.
- Be shot out of cannon in general direction of home.*
- Get towed home on homemade sled by a pack of huskies.
- Marry a cabbie.

* Assumes availability of nearby cannon, safety helmet and properly weighted cabbage and

**RBT MEANS
YOU NEED A
PLAN B**

IF YOU'RE DRINKING, DON'T DRIVE.

 Transport
for NSW

Improvements

Additional measures for Bello Festival 2017 might include:

- increase awareness of safe celebrating and driving prior to patrons arriving at Festival;
- increase awareness of STEER breath-testing amongst patrons at Festival;
- amend Survey to specifically ask for Alcohol consumption details:
 - Number & Type of Drinks
 - Time Period
- conducting research into the deterrent impact on drink driving of voluntary person-to-person breath testing.

Thank You

STEER Breath-testing is a community initiative and relies on widespread community support to develop and evolve. We would like to acknowledge and thank:

- all patrons who participated in STEER breath-testing;
- our STEER Breath-testing volunteers;
- Bello Winter Music Festival organisers and staff;
- RMS;
- Alcohoot;
- NSW State Library

We would also like to thank community members for expressing their overwhelming support for STEER breath-testing:

Contact

We appreciate questions, comments and suggestions regarding STEER breath-testing.

We welcome the opportunity to work with government, organisations and businesses who support our vision to ***“to positively change drink driving behaviour at festivals, community events & private activities likely to involve consumption of alcohol and driving”***.

Please contact:

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



Appendix

Survey Sheet

NOTE: Participants were given the option of answering “no idea” when asked their estimated BAC.



Breath Testing Survey

Day/Date:

Time:

1. Male Female
2. L Plate Green P Plate Red P Plate Full Licence
3. Under 20 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70+
4. Are you currently intending to drive home? **NO** **MAYBE** **YES**
5. How much alcohol have you drunk and over what period of time?

READ TO EVERY PARTICIPANT:

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

EST
BAC

ACTUAL
BAC

6. After breath testing what is your intention?
 I will drive home safely
 I will stop drinking and retest;
 I will get a friend to drive my car;
 other...
 I will get a lift with a friend;
 I will get a bus/taxi;
 I will stay onsite/nearby;
7. If you are driving... what is your destination postcode? ... and how many people in the car?

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS FOR A CHANCE TO WIN AN ALCOHOOT ALCOHOL TRACKER

* What is one word you would use to describe an Alcohoot?

* On what occasions are you likely to use an Alcohoot?

- at festivals, parties & gigs
- at work
- at home
- for testing friends & family

* How much do you think an Alcohoot is worth? \$10 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$150 \$200 \$300

Name:

Mobile:

Email:

Your contact details will remain confidential and only be used by STEER and Alcohoot to contact you occasionally.

