

# Report on STEER Breath-testing at Splendour in the Grass Music Festival 2016



Alcohol consumption and driving behaviour  
at Splendour in the Grass

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 Breath-testing received an overwhelmingly positive response from Splendour patrons. A couple both felt they could drive and wanted to decide who was driving. The male had been slowing drinking all day and had a BAC of 0.1+. The female had consumed 7 drinks all day and had a BAC of 0.01. Many patrons were surprised their actual BAC was significantly different to what they thought.

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 2000 breath-tests and conducted over 250 surveys with Festival patrons. The surveys enable STEER to paint a picture of the intentions of Splendour patrons both before and after breath-testing. Surveys at Splendour 2016 revealed:

- 67% of patrons surveyed were under 29;
- half of all patrons surveyed had a BAC under 0.05;
- 60% of 30-39 year olds had a BAC over 0.05;
- 87% of 50-59 year olds had a BAC under 0.05;
- 92% of Green P platers intending to drive had BAC's over their legal limit of 0.0;
- 43% of all patrons surveyed had no idea of their estimated BAC;
- 35% of all patrons surveyed intending to drive home and recording a BAC over their legal limit intended to stop drinking and retest

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 <sup>1</sup>.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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. In the 5 years from 2005-2010 there were 1,367 reported crashes in Byron Shire involving 17-20 year olds.<sup>2</sup>

Alcohol is a contributing factor in 15% of fatal crashes for young drivers aged 17-25.<sup>3</sup>

According to police, Tweed Byron LAC has ranked number one in NSW over 2012-2015 for alcohol related crashes.<sup>4</sup>

Splendour is a multi-day music festival held at North Byron Parklands, NSW. Approximately 32,500 patrons/day passed through the Splendour gates between Thursday 21st July and Sunday 24th July 2016.

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<sup>2</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>3</sup>Figures obtained from Safer Drivers Course for Learners (RMS) crashes for young drivers aged 17-25, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> From [Northern Star](#) 26th Nov 2015

# What We Did

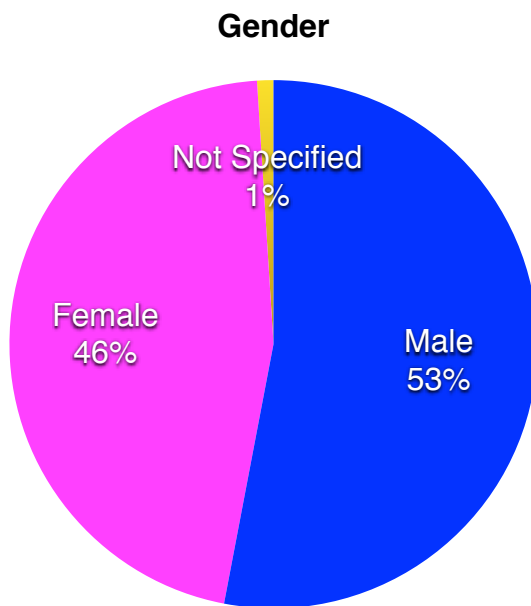
STEER Breath-testing provided over 2000 voluntary breath tests and conducted over 250 surveys with Festival patrons.

The breath-tests represent over 2000 conversations with Festival patrons in which STEER volunteers increase self awareness associated with alcohol consumption and safe driving amongst patrons. The conversations included...

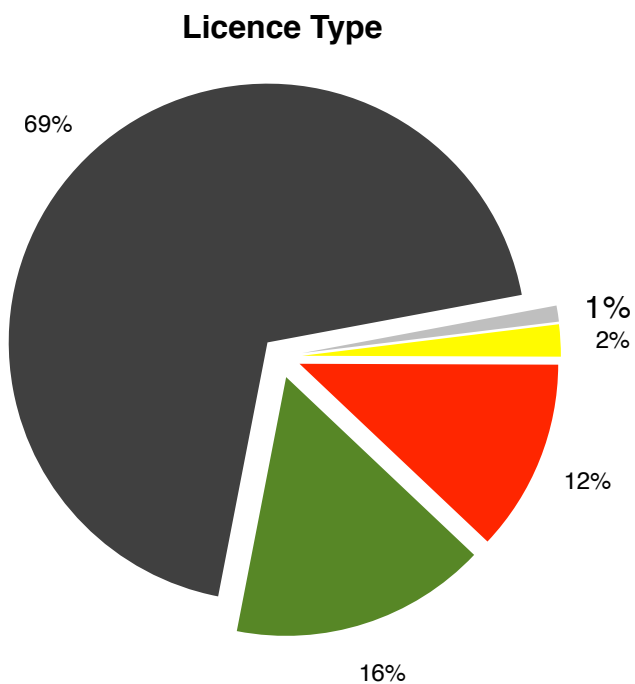
- discussing how much patrons had drunk over a given period of time;
- providing information about standard drinks;
- how the body processes alcohol;
- asking patrons to estimate their BAC;
- providing 'Plan B' collateral and resources;
- providing information about safe celebrating e.g. where to get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

# Who we surveyed...

## Gender

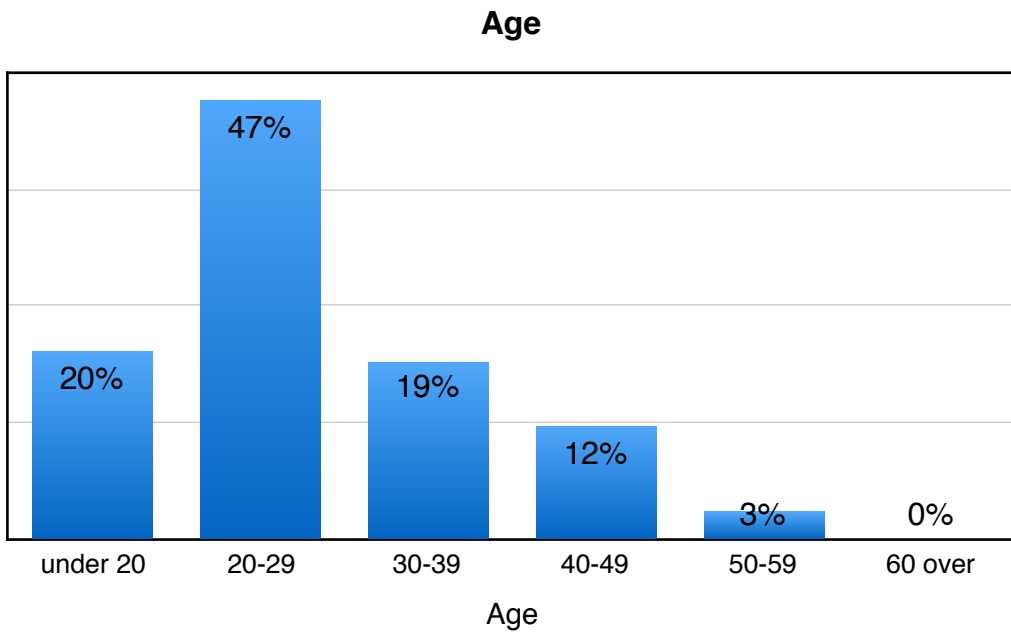


## Licence Type

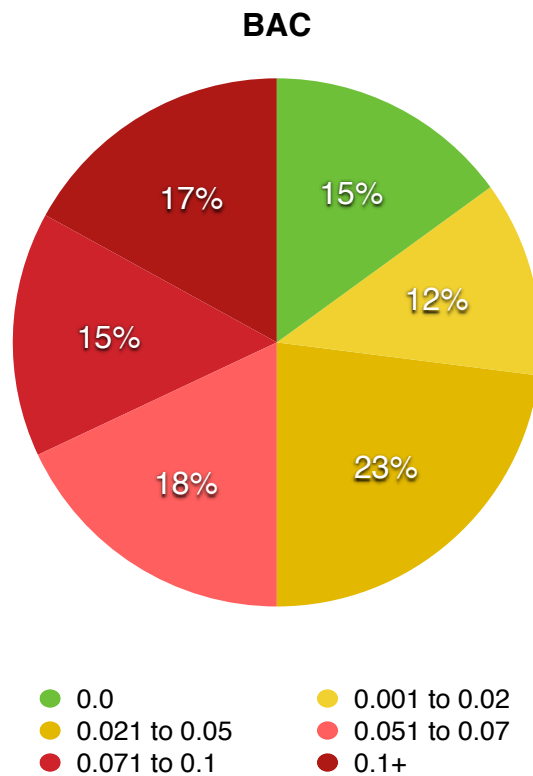


● Learner ● Red P's ● Green P's ● Full ● No Licence

## Age



## BAC

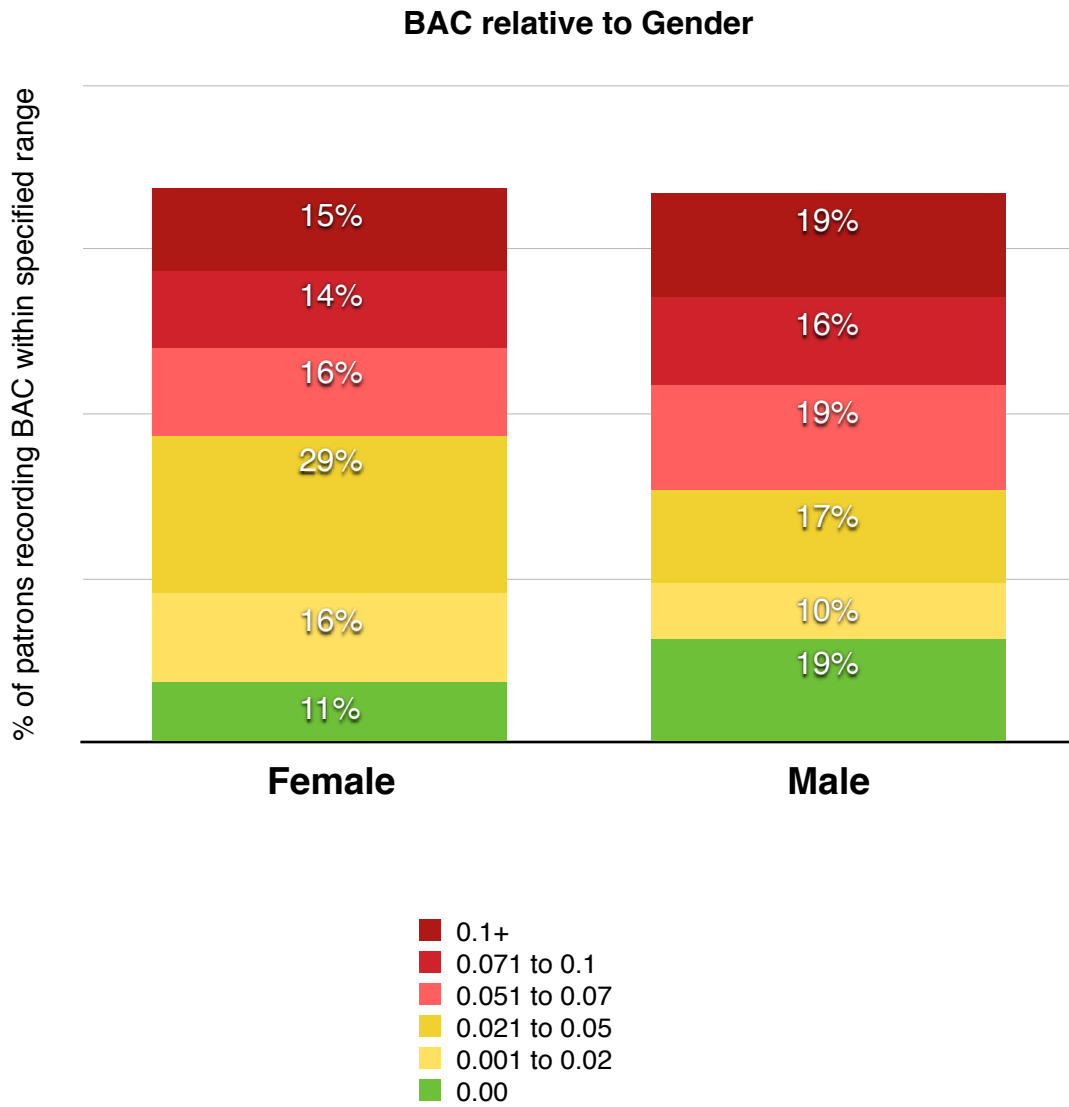


***50% of patrons surveyed had a BAC under 0.05.***



# What we discovered...

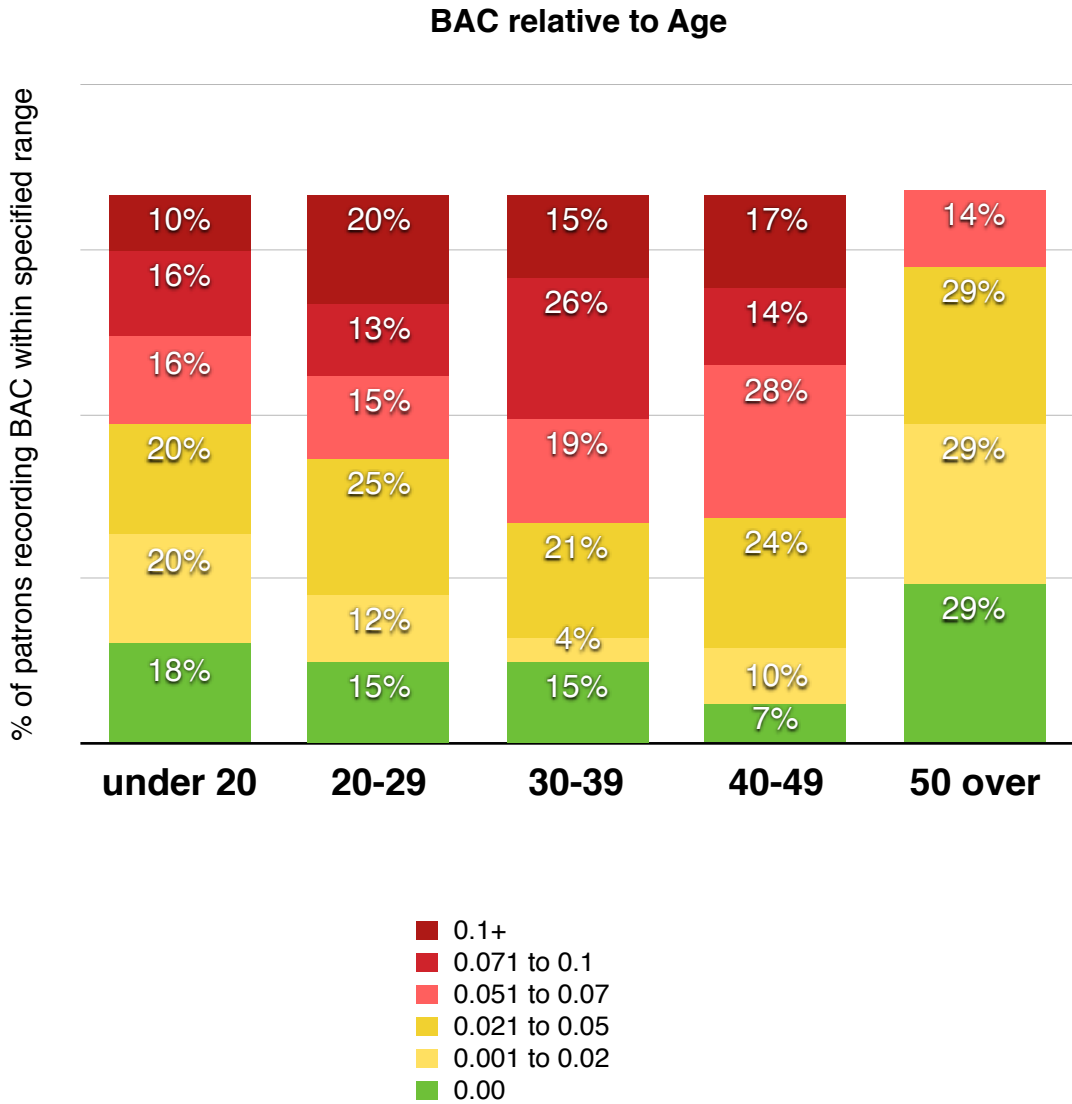
## Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) relative to Gender



***56% of all females had BAC's under 0.05 compared with 46% of all males***

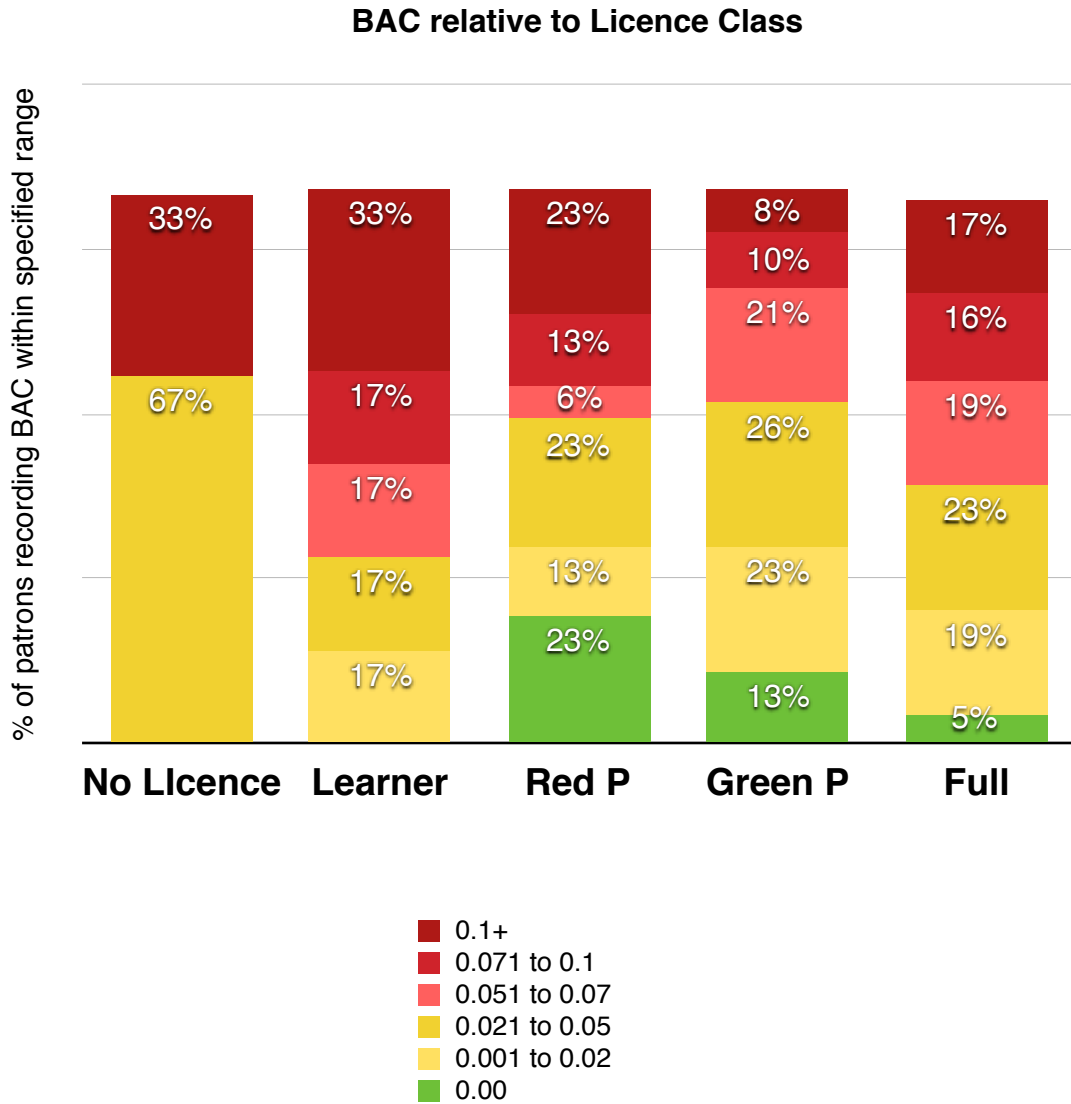
### Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) relative to Age

86% of 50-59 year olds had BAC's under 0.05.



***Those aged 30-39 had the highest proportion of BAC's over 0.05***

## Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) relative to Licence Class



NOTE: results for “No Licence” & “Learner” skewed due to low data

***Almost a 1/4 of Red P licence holders had BAC's of 0.0***

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

61% of full licence holders intending to drive had BAC's under their legal limit of 0.05.

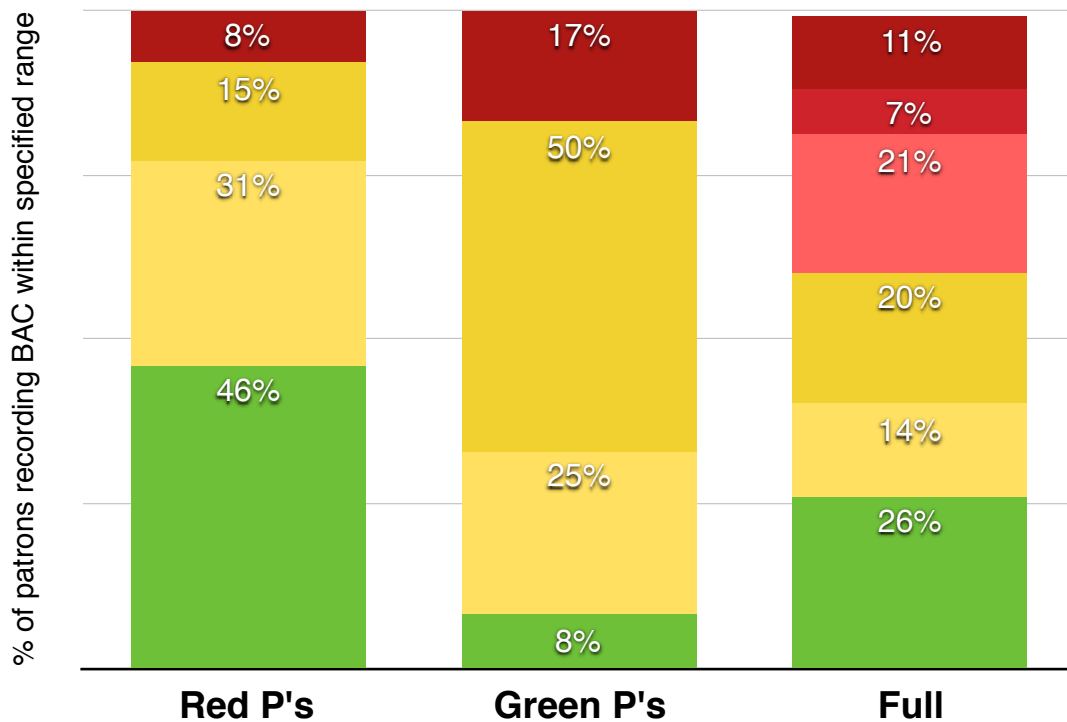
46% of red p plate holders intending to drive had BAC's at their legal limit of 0.0.

8% of green p plate holders intending to drive had BAC's at their legal limit of 0.0.

Of note were the 54% of red p platers and 92% of green p platers intending to drive home who had BAC's over 0.0. Many presented for breath-tests late at night, saying they had been drinking alcohol earlier in the day and stopped drinking in the late afternoon/early evening. Most believed they would be 0.0. STEER breath-testing believe their higher than expected BAC are a combination of:

- not keeping track of the amount of alcohol they had consumed;
- little knowledge of what constitutes a standard drink;
- little awareness of their body's ability to process alcohol.

**BAC relative to Licence Class for those intending to drive**



- 0.1+
- 0.071 to 0.1
- 0.051 to 0.07
- 0.021 to 0.05
- 0.001 to 0.02
- 0.00

**92% of green p plate holders intending to drive had BAC's over their legal limit of 0.0.**

## Estimated vs Actual Blood Alcohol Concentration

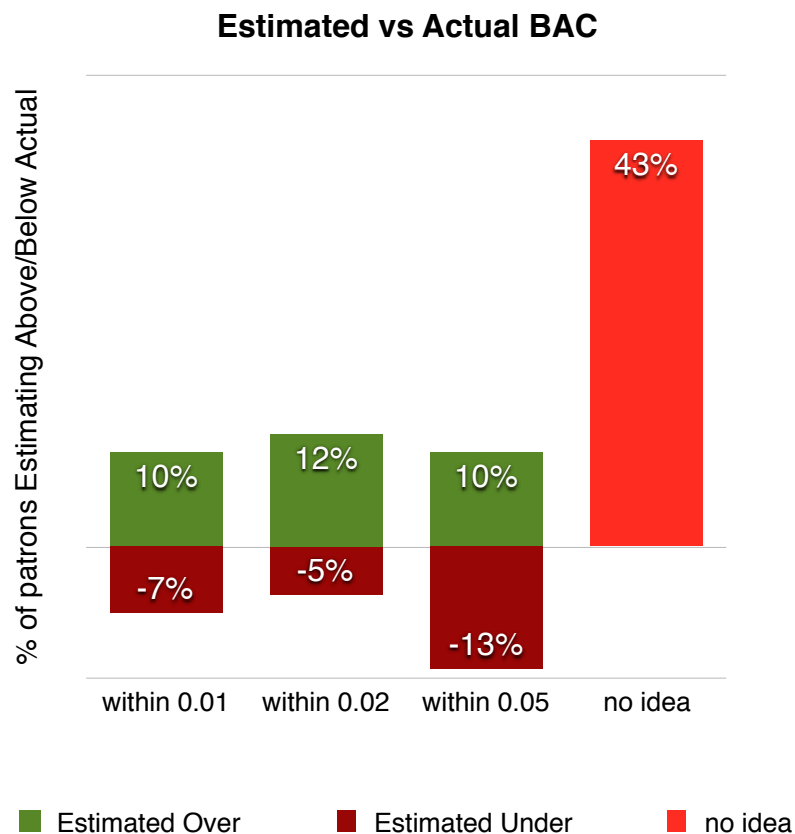
Patrons were asked to estimate their BAC prior to a breath-test and were given the option of 'no idea' if they could not guess at their BAC.

43% of patrons had no idea of their estimated BAC.

17% 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, 23% 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.



***17% of patrons estimated their BAC within +/- 0.01 of actual BAC indicating good self awareness of BAC.***

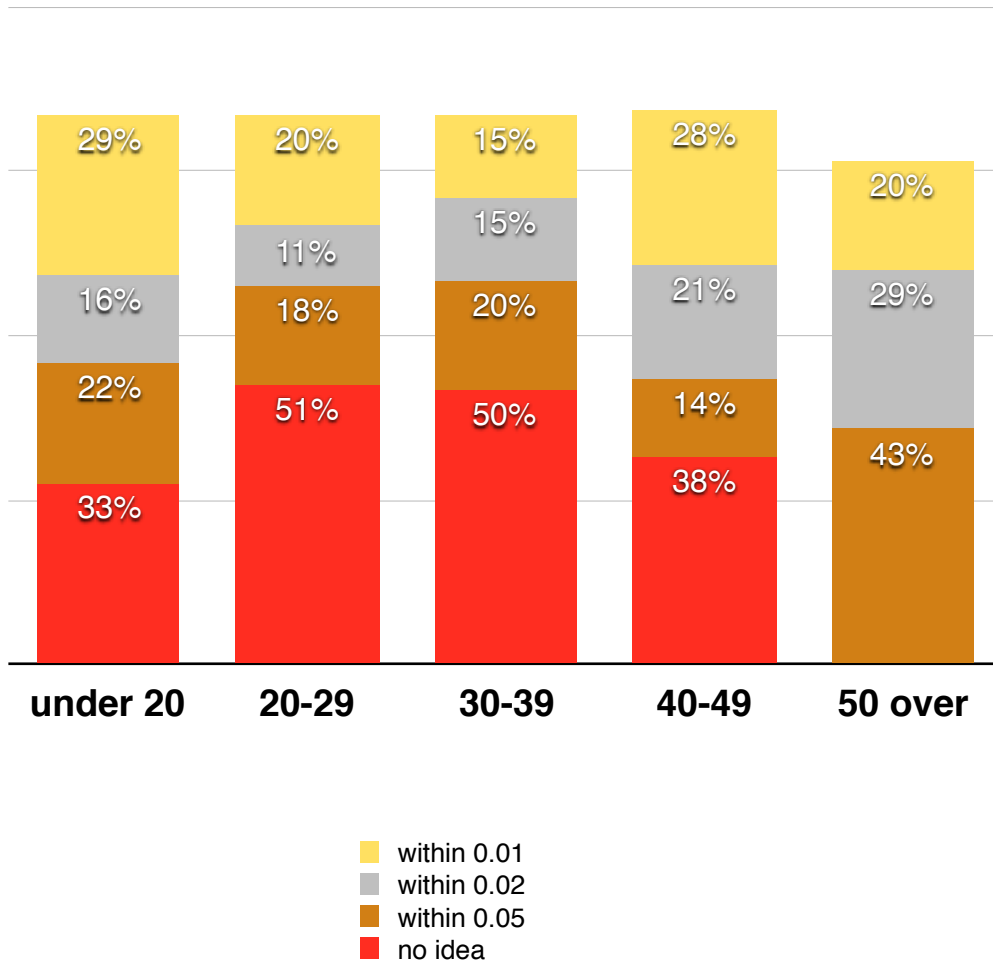
### Estimated vs Actual Blood Alcohol Concentration relative to Age

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

51% of 20-29 year olds and 50% of 30-39 year olds had no idea of their estimated BAC.

29% of under 20 year olds and 28% of 40-49 year olds estimated their BAC within +/- 0.01.

### Estimated vs Actual Blood Alcohol Concentration relative to Age



**Approximately a quarter of under 20 and 40-49 year olds estimated their BAC within +/- 0.01**

## Change of Intention

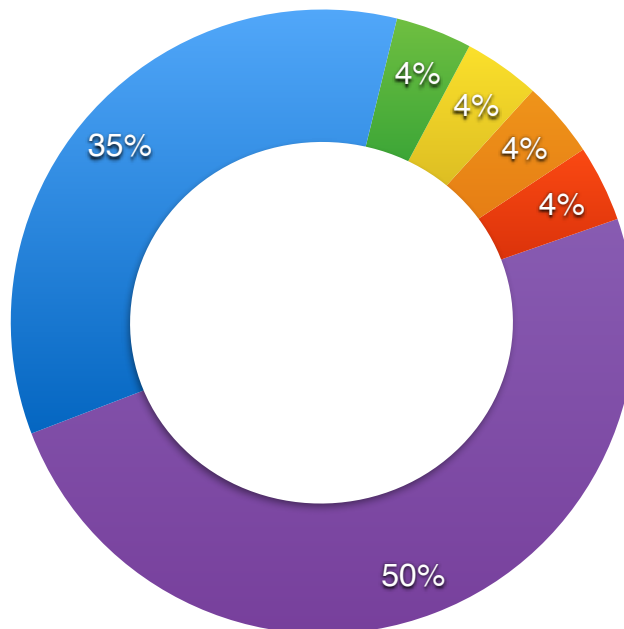
Prior to a voluntary breath-test patrons were asked if they intended driving home:

Those intending to drive home -	31%
Those maybe driving home -	13%
Those not driving home -	55%

NOTE: Due to a mutual misunderstanding, the STEER breath-testing stall was positioned within the 'lock in' area at the end of the Festival. As a result patrons were unable to access a 'morning-after' breath-test prior to driving home on Monday morning.

Subsequent to a breath-test those intending to drive home with a BAC over their legal limit

**Intention Change Subsequent to breath-test over legal limit**



- stop and retest
- lift w/ friend
- friend drive car
- bus
- stay onsite
- none stated

changed their intentions according to the following

***35% of patrons intending to drive home and recording a BAC over their legal limit intended to stop drinking and retest***

# Stories

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

**A couple both felt they could drive and wanted to decide who was driving. Female had consumed 7 drinks all day. Male had been slowing drinking all day. Male actual BAC was 0.1+ Female actual BAC was 0.01**

20-30 y.o. male, full licence  
20-30 y.o. female, full licence

**Girlfriend fell off the Red Bull bull and needed to go to hospital. Guy wanted to check BAC before driving... was 0.0.**

20-29 y.o. male, full licence

**Had consumed 1/2 bottle of wine over 7hrs. Actual BAC of .061. She was surprised BAC was so high.**

30-40 y.o. female, full licence

**Had 5 standard drinks all day and thought "I'd be way under" Actual BAC was 0.049**

20-30 y.o. female, full licence

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 actual BAC's are.

Another common theme at Splendour is patrons who had drunk significant amounts of alcohol had relatively low BAC's. STEER breath-testing attribute this to the provision of mid-strength alcohol at Festival bars.

**13 drinks in 7hrs. Actual BAC 0.05.**

40-50 y.o. male, full licence

**15 drinks. Actual BAC 0.013.**

20-30 y.o. male, green p plate

**8 drinks in 10hrs. Actual BAC 0.02.**

under 20 y.o. female, no licence

**6.5 drinks in 6 hrs. Actual BAC 0.023**

20-30 y.o. female, full licence



## Plan B

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.

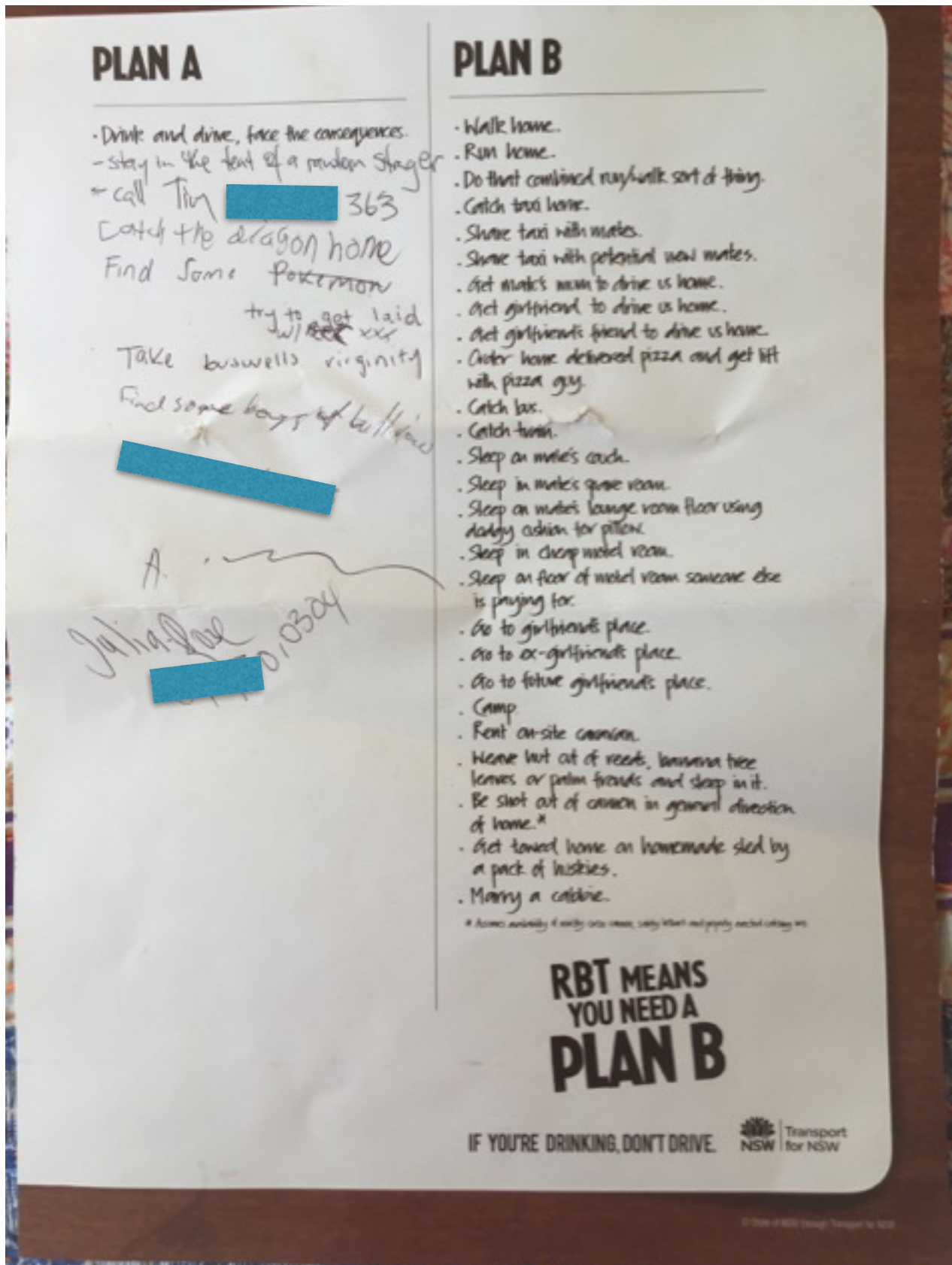
STEER Breath-testing incorporated “Plan B” t-shirts and poster into the breath-testing presence at Splendour Music Festival.



STEER breath-testing gave away a number of t-shirts and got the impression some patrons regarded the Plan B t-shirts as being 'kind of cool'..



Some patrons at the STEER breath-testing stall joked about the Plan B options as they were waiting for a breath-test. Some started to add their own 'Plan A' suggestions which added to the humour and increased engagement.



# Improvements

Additional measures for Splendour 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
- be appropriately placed for 'moring after' breath testing on Monday after Festival;
- improve Plan B collateral
  - focus on the positive and encourage patrons to have a Plan A;
  - engage patrons in 'Plan A' conversations prior to entering the Festival site;
  - provide a screen and/or whiteboard on which patrons can offer - moderated - suggestions for their "Plan A";
- 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;
- Splendour 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	<a href="mailto:phil@steerproject.org.au">phil@steerproject.org.au</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.steerproject.org.au">www.steerproject.org.au</a>



# 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.

