

Report on Voluntary Breath Testing at Ballina Prawn Festival 2016

Alcohol consumption and stated driving behaviour
at Ballina Prawn Festival 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 driving. STEER breath testing is currently a regular part of many 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 minimal volunteers. The new model worked perfectly at the smaller scale Ballina Prawn Festival, and demonstrated the ease with which STEER breath testing can be incorporated at small to medium scale community events and activities.

The breath testing initiative at the Ballina Prawn Festival was conducted as a collaborative project by STEER, Ballina Shire Council and the NSW Roads and Maritime Service. Ballina Shire Council are involved through their Road Safety and drink drive projects that are supported by the Roads and Maritime Service. These projects aim to address local road safety issues, such as rates of drink driving, and to contribute to community education and responsible driving behaviours.

The breath testing initiative received an overwhelmingly positive response from Ballina Prawn Festival patrons. Many people came in curious to check their Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC), some never having had a breath test. Many patrons were surprised their actual BAC was significantly different to what they thought.

Breath testing volunteers actively engaged patrons in conversations, providing information and resources about standard drinks, the rate bodies process alcohol and alternative transport/accommodation options. The volunteers provided over 200 breath tests and conducted over 130 surveys with Festival patrons. The surveys give a snapshot of drinking and stated driving behaviour for Prawn Festival patrons both before and after breath testing...

- 94% of patrons had full licences;
- 75% of patrons were over 30 years old;
- 49% of those intending to drive had been drinking;
- 65% of patrons had no idea of their BAC;

STEER concludes 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 complements 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. From Jan 2013 to Dec 2015, there were 32 crashes in the Ballina Local Government Area where alcohol was a contributing factor.

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

The Ballina Prawn Festival is an annual one day festival held in Missingham Park, Ballina, NSW. Approximately 7,000 patrons passed through the Ballina Prawn Festival gates between 10am and 10pm on Saturday 12th November 2016. Historically, entry to the Ballina Prawn Festival was by gold coin donation. In 2016, the Festival was conducted as a ticketed event, with adult tickets sold for \$10 and pensioner and child tickets sold for \$5. It is currently unclear how this change in entry policy may have affected attendance numbers or composition of patrons.

The Ballina Prawn Festival is a licensed event with a dedicated licensed area. There was one liquor license operating with no special conditions. The bar was open from 11.00 am to 9.45 pm. Beer (light, mid and full can options), Wine (red and white 185 ml bottles) and Spirits (premix cans 3 options) were sold along with water and soft drink.

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

What We Did

In discussion with the Ballina Chamber of Commerce, STEER and Ballina Shire Council supported by the NSW Roads and Maritime Service (RMS) hosted a 'Plan B' Hub at the Ballina Prawn Festival in 2016. This project was undertaken in order to increase community awareness of the risks of drink driving, and to increase individual awareness of transport options and personal blood alcohol limits. The key aims of the Hub were to promote the concept of 'planning ahead' for those patrons planning to drink, to increase community and individual awareness of the effects of alcohol through person-to-person conversations, and to prevent or minimise the overall incidence of drink driving.

Prior to the Festival, STEER and Ballina Shire Council prepared promotional material for the Plan B Hub. Alternate Festival transport options and the Plan B message was promoted through advisory material for the Prawn Festival Website, the Festival Program, and Festival social media (Facebook). This material focused on the RMS 'Plan B' message that if you are planning to drink, then plan not to drive and organise alternative transport options.

For the purposes of the Festival, Plan B collateral was prepared to promote the RMS road safety messaging. This included Plan B retractable banners, A4 Plan B poster sheets, pocket guides on standard drinks, other drink drive information (such as booklets on the Interlock Program), and free bottled water. Disposable collateral was kept to a minimum, as requested by the Chamber of Commerce, in order to reduce potential Festival litter.



Some patrons at the STEER breath testing stall joked about the Plan B options as they were waiting for a breath test. Hub volunteers were provided with instructions on breath testing and key messaging for the event, and were also provided with RMS Plan B t-shirts worn during the Festival.

Key messaging for the Plan B Hub include:

- Don't risk trying to guess your Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC);
- Under 0.05 is the legal limit for full licence holders;
- 0.0 is the legal limit for Learner, P1 and P2 drivers and riders. If you are on a zero alcohol limit, you must be alcohol-free while driving or riding;
- A blood alcohol (BAC) limit of 0.02 can be reached after the consumption of only one standard drink (a middy of beer, a nip of spirits or a small glass of wine);
- Your BAC begins to rise as soon as you start drinking and can continue to increase for up to two hours after you've stopped drinking;
- If you are planning to drink, plan not to drive. Alcohol affects different people in different ways;
- Make a plan for travel from the Festival;
- Use public transport. Local buses and courtesy buses will be operating;
- Take a taxi. Check Festival maps for taxi drop off and pick up zones;
- Get a lift with a safe driver;
- Stay at a friend's house;
- Tell a friend or let someone know if you've been drinking and are not safe to drive home;
- Walk or ride your bike to the Festival and home, but take extra care as you will be more vulnerable on roads and footpaths;
- If you have a big day out drinking, plan not to drive for most of the next day. If you had a lot to drink, you may be over the limit for much of the next day and should not drive;
- Coffee, water, or a big meal will not reduce your blood alcohol content;
- There is no way to speed up the rate your body gets rid of alcohol. The only thing that sobers you up is time.

A breath testing unit was supplied by the RMS for the purposes of the Hub. The Breath Testing Unit used at the Prawn Festival was compliant with the Australian Standard for Blood Alcohol Testing Devices for Personal Use (AS3547). These units have a minimum calibration period of 30 days. Persons using the Breath Testing Unit are advised that their blood alcohol concentration can rise for up to two hours after the last drink, and that it can take ten hours or more for blood alcohol concentration to return to zero after a high blood alcohol level is recorded.

Survey sheets were also prepared for participants undertaking voluntary breath testing. The purpose of the surveys was to ascertain individual awareness of BAC limits in the context of their stated number and type of drinks. Basic demographic information was also collected, such as age, gender and driving license type. All information was collected anonymously. Survey participants were also asked to nominate their motivation for undertaking the voluntary breath test. The collection of motivational information is needed to evaluate how voluntary breath testing is perceived or valued by the community and to ascertain whether it is primarily used for personal education or as a justification for drinking and/or drink driving behaviour.

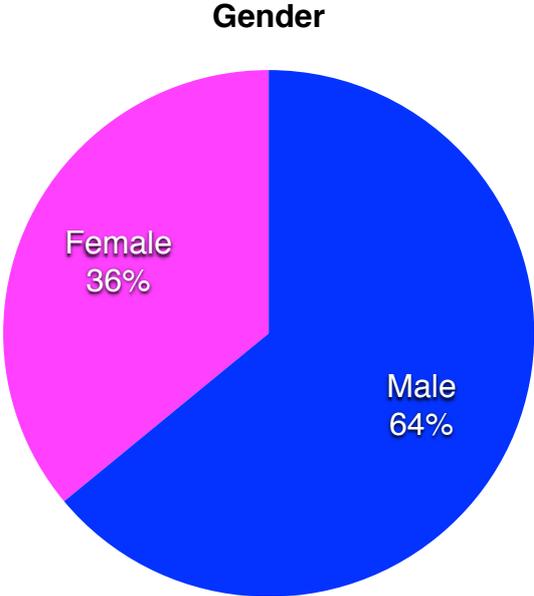
On the day of the Festival, the key purpose of the Hub was to make available voluntary breath testing. The breath testing facility was operated from the start of the Festival (10am) until Festival close at 10pm. It had previously been predicted that the breath testing facility would attract low interest until the evening when it was expected that most drinking might occur. However, the Prawn Festival Plan B Hub attracted many persons at regular intervals from 10am, with many visitors interested to assess their BAC resulting from previous evenings drinks, and from morning, lunch and afternoon drinking either at the Festival or at local licensed venues outside of the Festival. Anecdotal evidence suggests only a minority of drinkers who attended the Hub in the final 20 minutes of the Festival (approximately 30 persons) were not genuinely using voluntary breath testing for personal information or assessment of their condition. Visitation to the Hub by these final departing participants (most of whom were over the legal BAC for their license conditions) appeared to be an extension of their event and drinking experience, and exhibited minimal interest in actual results. This observation, combined with the fact that the Hub was regularly visited during the day by Festival and other participants, suggests that voluntary breath testing at community events has a significant value and role in community education (not just in validating or 'approving' drinking or drink driving behaviour).

A key advantage of the voluntary breath testing program, such as the Ballina Prawn Festival Plan B Hub, is that it is voluntary and affords people the opportunity to assess their own blood alcohol levels in a non-confrontational and non-litigious context. The majority of people only experience breath testing in the situation where they are driving and may be detained by police for a random breath test (RBT). Voluntary breath testing units are available in some licensed venues, including in Ballina. However, these units are unmanned and while they do collect BAC data, they do not provide an opportunity to discuss the results or their significance. Voluntary breath testing as conducted by STEER at many community Festivals, and as conducted by STEER and Ballina Shire Council at the Prawn Festival, emphasises that the results from any tests taken are not accepted by the police or the courts, and that results are not recorded against individuals. In this context, many participants were interested to assess their BAC as it presents a 'safe' space to talk about drinking behaviour (outside of interactions with law enforcers and RBT).

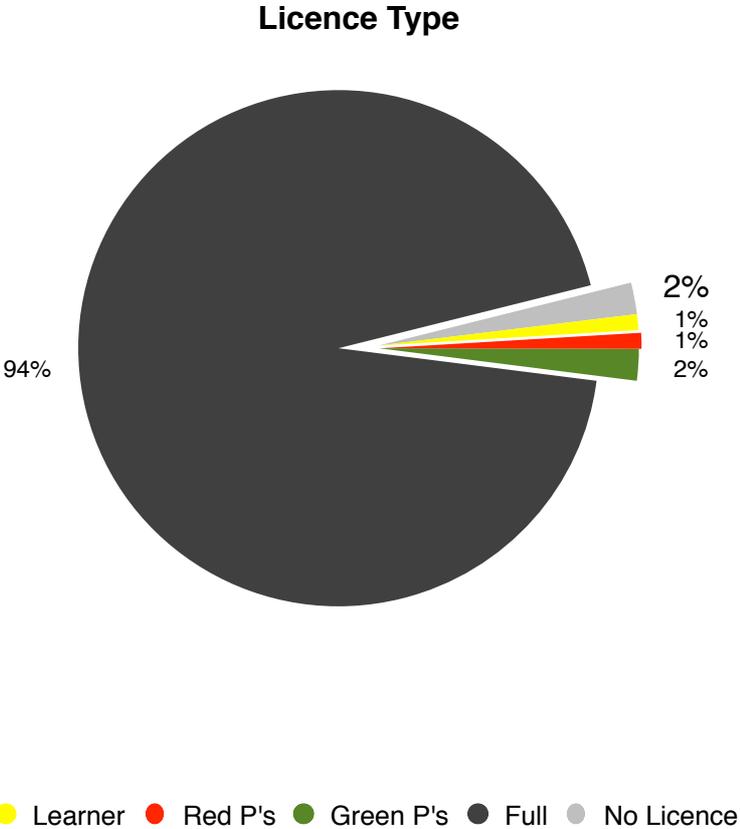
Breath testing volunteers provided over 200 voluntary breath tests and conducted over 130 surveys with Festival patrons. Each breath test offers an opportunity for volunteers to engage patrons in person-to-person conversations.

Profile of Survey Respondents

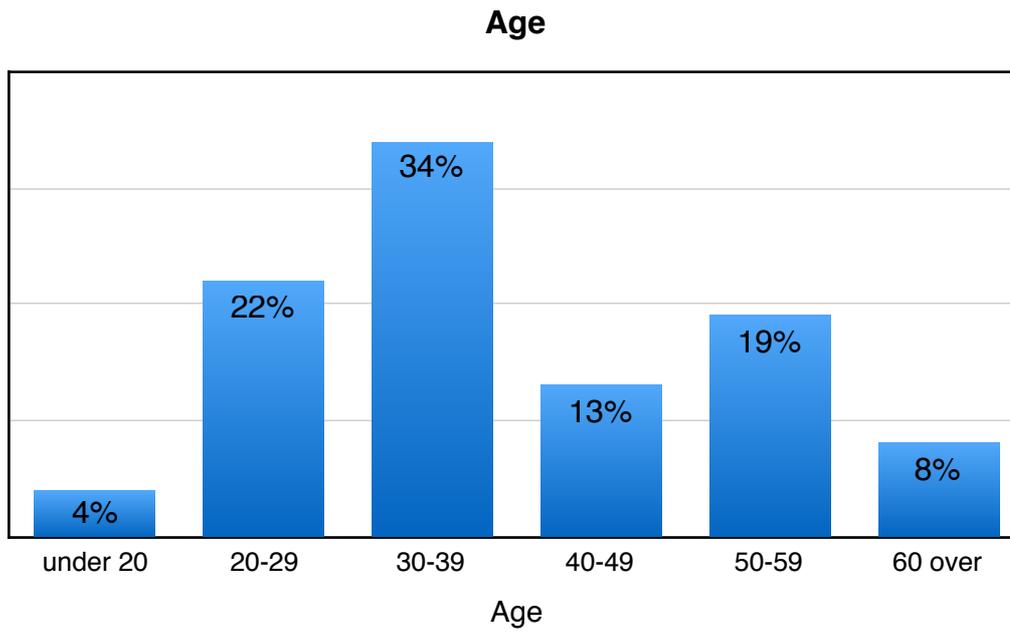
Gender



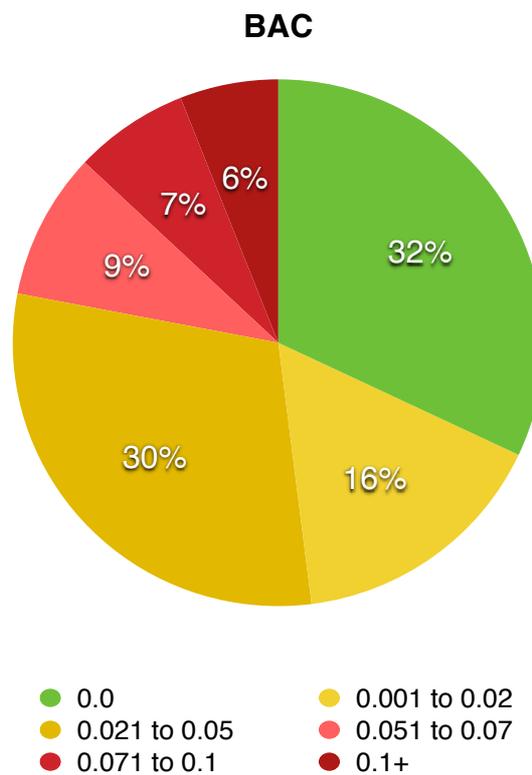
Licence Type



Age



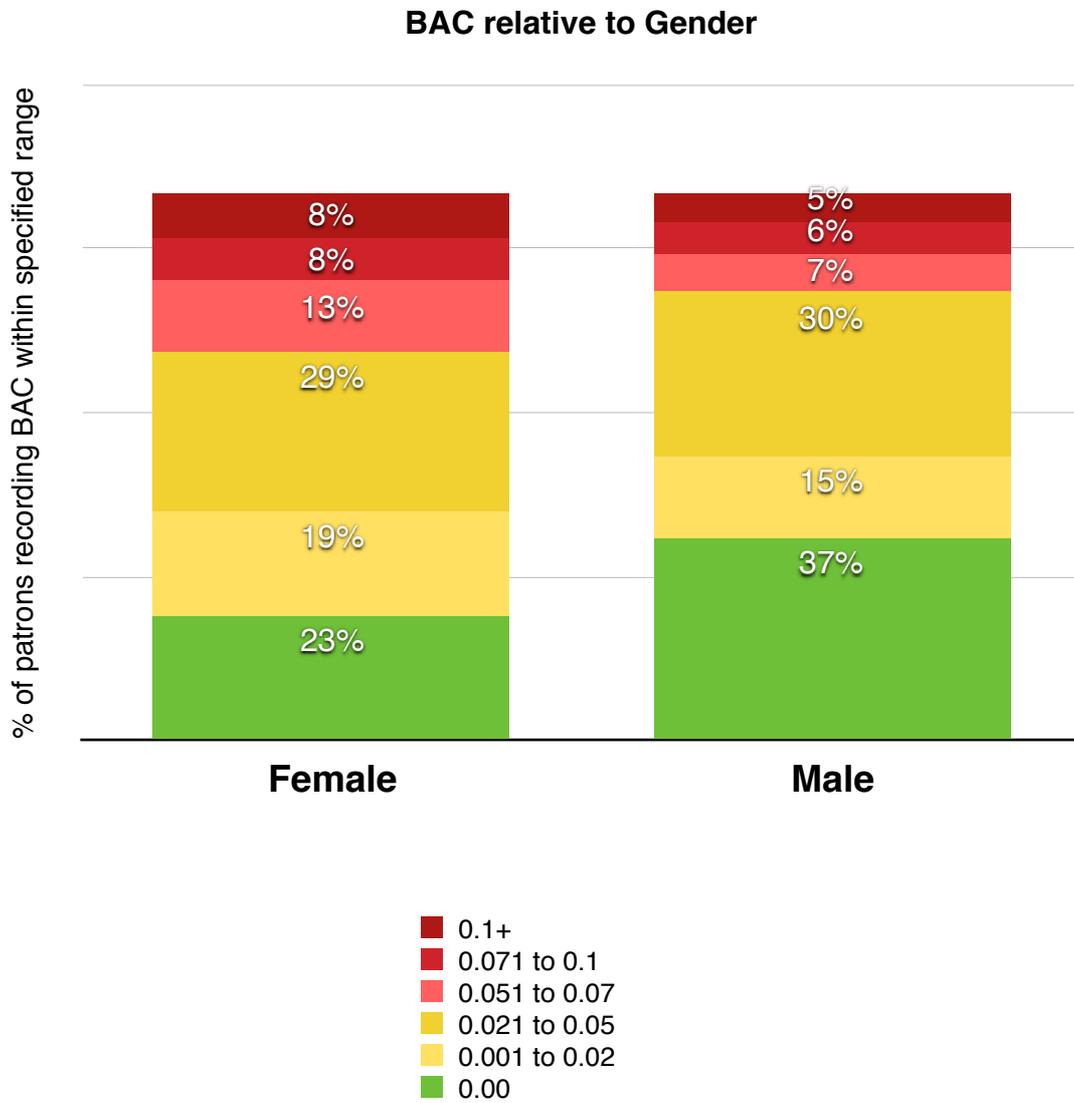
BAC



78% of patrons surveyed had a BAC under 0.05.

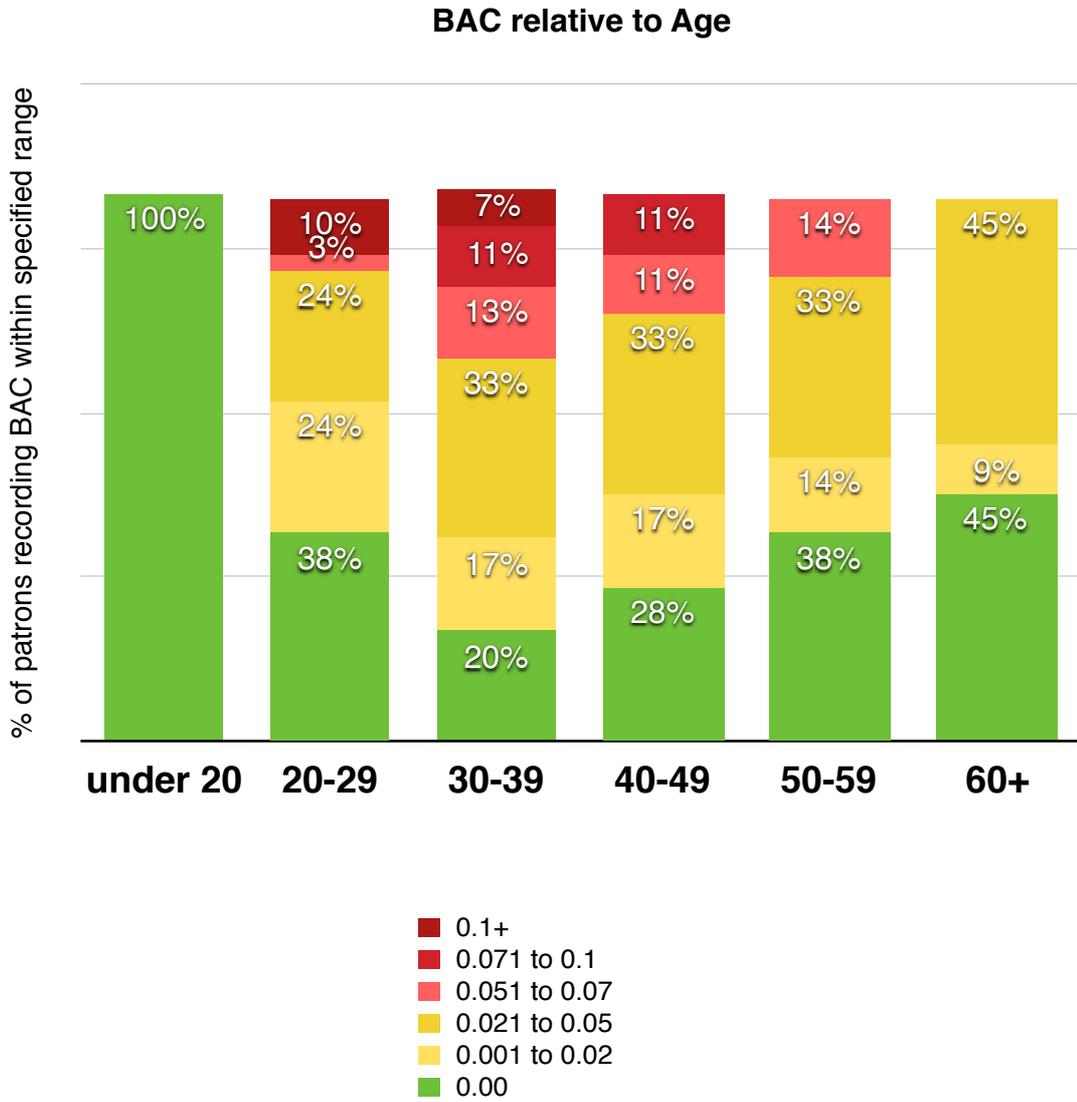
Quantitative Results

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) relative to Gender



83% of all males had BAC's under 0.05 compared with 71% of all females

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) relative to Age



NOTE: results for under 20 unrepresentative due to small sample size

31% of 30-39 year olds had BAC's over 0.05

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) of those Intending to drive

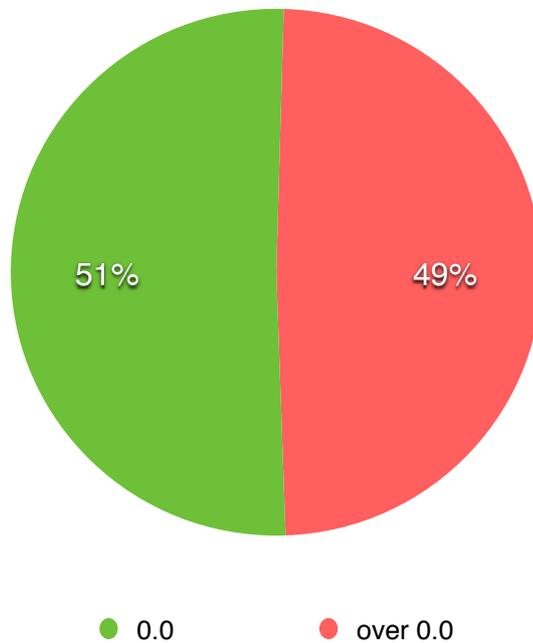
Prior to a voluntary breath test patrons were asked if they intended driving home:

Those intending to drive home -	27%
Those maybe driving home -	11%
Those not driving home -	62%

38% of patrons were intending to or maybe driving home prior to a voluntary breath test.

Of those patrons intending to or maybe driving home, 49% registered a BAC over 0.0 indicating they had been drinking.

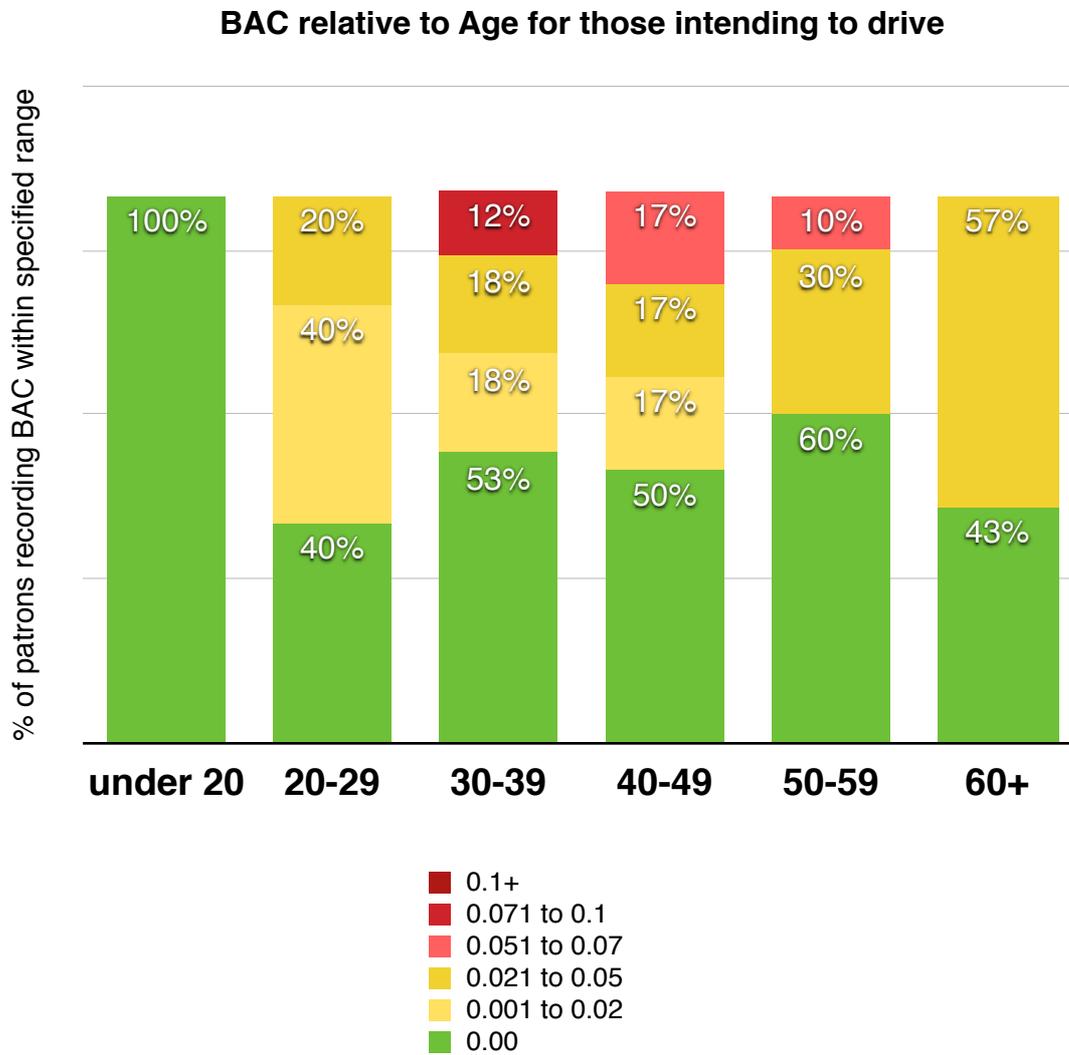
BAC of those Intending to Drive



49% of those intending to drive had been drinking.

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

Of those intending to drive home most people recorded a BAC under their legal limit.



NOTE: results for under 20 unrepresentative due to small sample size

Of those intending to drive home who recorded a BAC over their legal limit, the most common form of intended behaviour change was to catch a taxi followed by waiting and retesting.

17% of 40-49 year olds intending to drive home recorded a BAC over 0.05.

Estimated vs Actual Blood Alcohol Concentration

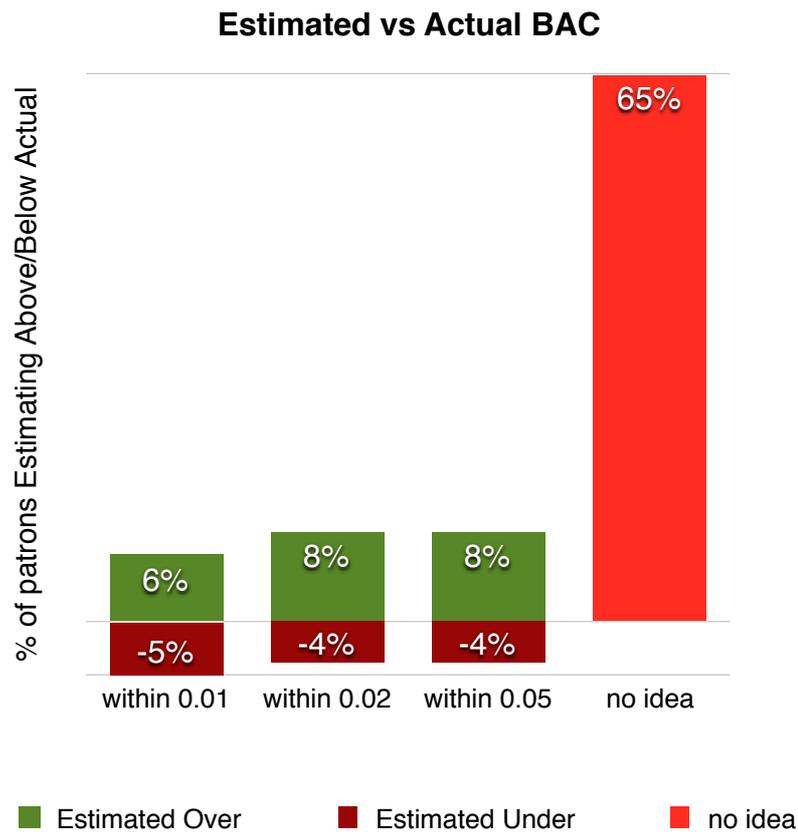
Patrons were asked to estimate their BAC prior to a breath test and were given the option of 'no idea' if they could not guess at their BAC. Those patrons who had not been drinking and recorded a '0.0' reading were not included in this data.

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

11% 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, 12% 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.

65% of patrons had no idea of their estimated BAC or estimated in excess of +/- 0.1.



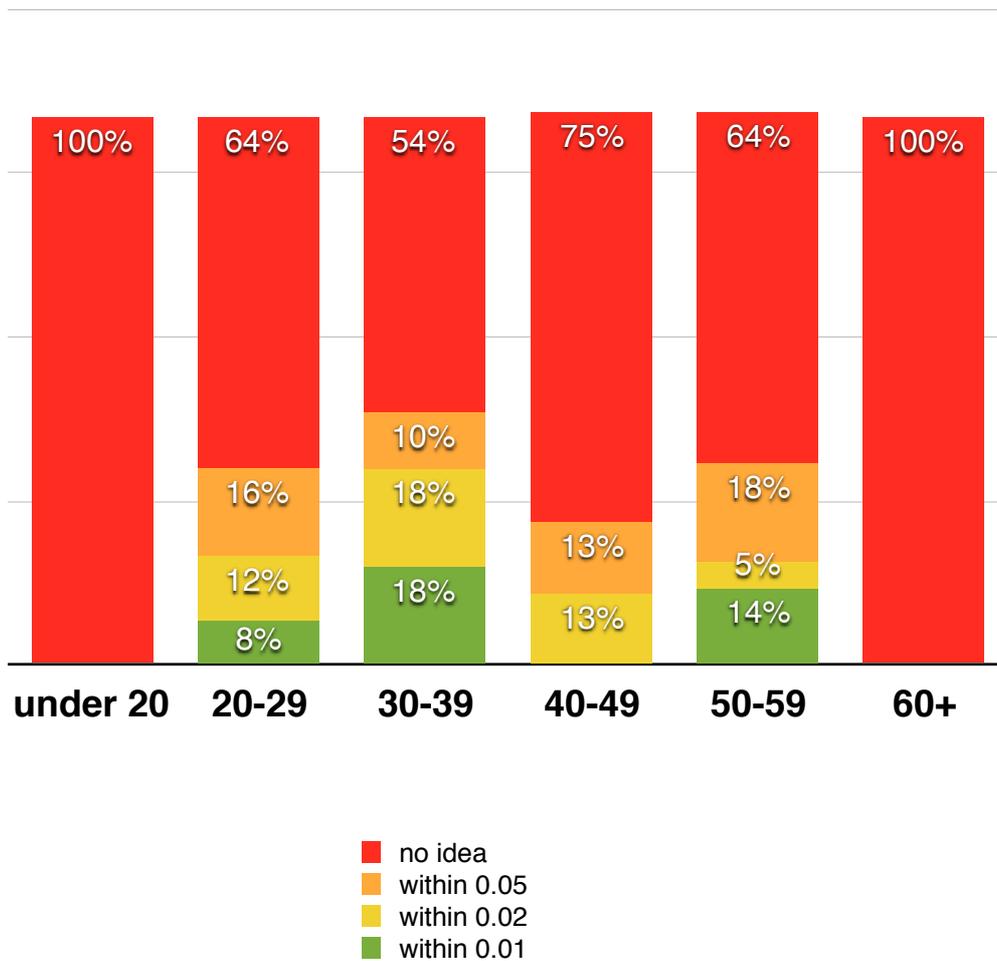
65% of patrons had no idea of their BAC.

Estimated vs Actual Blood Alcohol Concentration relative to Age

Over half of all age groups had no idea of their estimated BAC.

Most accurate were 30-39 year olds of whom 18% estimated their BAC within +/- 0.01.
Least accurate were 60+ year olds all of whom had no idea of their estimated BAC.

Estimated vs Actual Blood Alcohol Concentration relative to Age



NOTE: results for under 20 unrepresentative due to small sample size

Over half of all age groups had no idea of their estimated BAC.

Qualitative Results

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

“This will be interesting... I’ve got a gut full of beer. I’ve been drinking mid strength all day”

Estimated BAC: no idea

Actual BAC: 0.056

38 y.o. female, not driving

“My wife told me to have a breathtest”

Actual BAC: 0.0

28 y.o. male, driving home

“Just curious. There’s no hellin’ way I’d drive now.”

Estimated BAC: 0.07

Actual BAC: 0.1

40 y.o. female, not driving

“very enlightening”

Estimated BAC: no idea

Actual BAC : 0.017

48 y.o. female, driving home

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. Those drinking mid strength beer tended to over estimate their BAC.

3 mid strengths. His 2 young sons watched him have the breath test.

Estimated BAC: 0.04
Actual BAC: 0.016

32 y.o. male, driving home

4 mid strengths. Came in with 4 mates.

Estimated BAC: 0.03
Actual BAC 0.029

55 y.o. male, not driving

None today. was drinking last night

Estimated BAC: 0.0
Actual BAC: 0.031

50 y.o. female, not driving

8 fulls in 3 hrs.

Estimated BAC: 0.072
Actual BAC: 0.09

37 y.o. male, not driving

The qualitative data highlights the educative role of voluntary breath testing.

Conclusions

The quantitative results suggest...

- 49% of those intending to drive had been drinking suggesting increased focus on Plan B messaging i.e. “if you are drinking, don’t drive”;
- 65% of patrons had no idea of their BAC suggesting increased focus on improving individual awareness of Blood Alcohol Concentration through provision of voluntary breath testing;
- The 30-49 age group could be targeted in follow-up projects as those in this group intending to drive home had the highest incidence of BAC over their legal limit.

The qualitative results suggest...

- Voluntary breath testing represents a significant opportunity for individuals in the community to learn more about BAC and about their personal tolerances. Opportunities outside of voluntary breath testing are extremely limited;
- A proportion of patrons were testing themselves to demonstrate positive behaviour to younger drivers and family members, or were themselves younger drivers. These interactions represented a good opportunity to highlight Plan B messaging such as planning, self-awareness and responsibility.

Other results suggest...

- Data obtained from breath testing units in 4 venues in the Ballina LGA showed 63% of people using the units had BAC's over 0.05.³
- Voluntary person-to-person breath testing increases awareness of BAC, knowledge of standard drinks and choice of safe driving options at events likely to involve alcohol consumption and driving.
- Voluntary breath testing has significant educational value at all-day events, not just in the evening when drinking/ or celebrating is generally expected to occur. The general community and individual interest demonstrated at the voluntary breath testing unit at regular intervals during the day presents a key opportunity to promote safe drinking and driving behaviour. It could be suggested that this ‘out of context’ presentation of breath testing helps to demystify the process, helps promote the idea of planning around drinking and driving, and reinforces the message about taking responsibility for self.

³ Breath Testing in Ballina LGA: Sept - Nov 2015.

Improvements

Additional measures for the Ballina Prawn 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.
- 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".
- Expand the qualitative data collection tool.
- Develop a tool to collect more detailed information on the behavioural choices of persons who indicated they were intending to drink, test, re-test, and then make a driving decision i.e. these patrons are likely to be at 'high risk' of drinking and driving.
- Develop additional collateral to target and assist those modelling positive behaviour for others.
- Conduct peer-reviewed research into the deterrent impact on drink driving of voluntary person-to-person breath testing programs.

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 with a voluntary breath test;
- our breath testing volunteers;
- Ballina Prawn Festival organisers and staff;
- Ballina Shire Council;
- Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services NSW;
- State Library NSW;

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
Road Safety Officer	Ballina Shire Council
Phone	02 6686 4444



Appendix

Survey Sheet

Breath Testing Survey

Time:

1. Male Female

2. Your age:

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

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

READ TO EVERY PARTICIPANT:
Please be aware Blood Alcohol Concentration 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.

BEFORE TESTING - Estimated BAC

NOTE: "no idea" is an acceptable answer

AFTER TESTING - Actual BAC

NOTE: record BAC from breathalysers

5. How much alcohol (low/mid/full strength) have you drunk today and over what period of time?

6. How often do you drink alcohol?

NEVER MONTHLY 2-3 times 2-3 times 4 or more times
OR LESS a MONTH a WEEK a WEEK

7. After breath testing what is your intention?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will drive home safely | <input type="checkbox"/> I will get a lift with a friend; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will stop drinking alcohol and retest later; | <input type="checkbox"/> I will get a bus/taxi; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I will get a friend to drive my car; | <input type="checkbox"/> I will stay onsite/nearby; |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other - please specify... |

8. If you are driving... are you intending to give others a lift? NO MAYBE YES

If YES... what postcode are you driving to?

If YES... how many people in the car?

9. Thanks for completing this survey. Do you have any comments &/or suggestions about the voluntary breath-testing service?

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.

For more information: <http://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/campaigns/planb.html>

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 dobermann cushion for pillow.
- Sleep in cheap motel room.
- Sleep on floor of motel room someone else is praying for.
- Go to girlfriend's place.
- Go to ex-girlfriend's place.
- Go to future girlfriend's place.
- Camp.
- Rent on-site caravan.
- Heave butt 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 celeb.

* Assumes availability of nearby cannon, safety helmet and properly marked carriage etc

**RBT MEANS
YOU NEED A
PLAN B**

IF YOU'RE DRINKING, DON'T DRIVE. 