



# Lifetime risky alcohol consumption

## Quick facts

Based on self-reported survey data from 2014–15:

- Around 1 in 6 (17.4%) Australian adults had lifetime risky alcohol consumption.



- Overall, a higher proportion of adults in regional PHN areas (20.4%) had lifetime risky alcohol consumption, compared with adults in metropolitan PHN areas (15.9%).



20.4%



15.9%

This fact sheet covers local-level results for the proportion of Australian adults (aged 18 years and over) who reported consuming more than 2 standard drinks of alcohol per day on average—thereby increasing their lifetime risk of harm from alcohol consumption. Results are presented by Primary Health Network (PHN) areas.

Please note, the results presented are crude rates, which reflect the actual level of lifetime risky alcohol consumption in the community. However, caution is needed when making comparisons across PHN areas as the rates presented do not account for differences in the age of the populations.

## What is lifetime risky alcohol consumption?

Alcohol consumption refers to the consumption of drinks containing ethanol, commonly referred to as alcohol. The quantity, frequency or regularity with which alcohol is drunk provides a measure of the level of alcohol consumption.

**Lifetime risky alcohol consumption** refers to Australian adults consuming more than 2 standard drinks per day on average. That is, alcohol consumption exceeding the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) *Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol* (see Box 1 for more information).

Based on self-reported survey data from 2014–15, 17.4% of Australian adults drank alcohol at levels that put them at lifetime risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury.

### Box 1 Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol

The NHMRC's guidelines for alcohol consumption provide advice on reducing the risks to health from drinking alcohol.

Healthy men and women are advised to consume:

- no more than 2 standard drinks of alcohol per day, to reduce their lifetime risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury
- no more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion, to reduce their risk of alcohol-related injury arising from that occasion.

### What is a Primary Health Network?

Primary Health Networks (PHNs) are organisations that connect health services over local geographic areas. There are 31 PHNs in Australia. Due to the availability of robust and reliable data at PHN area-level, results for 28 PHN areas are reported in this fact sheet.

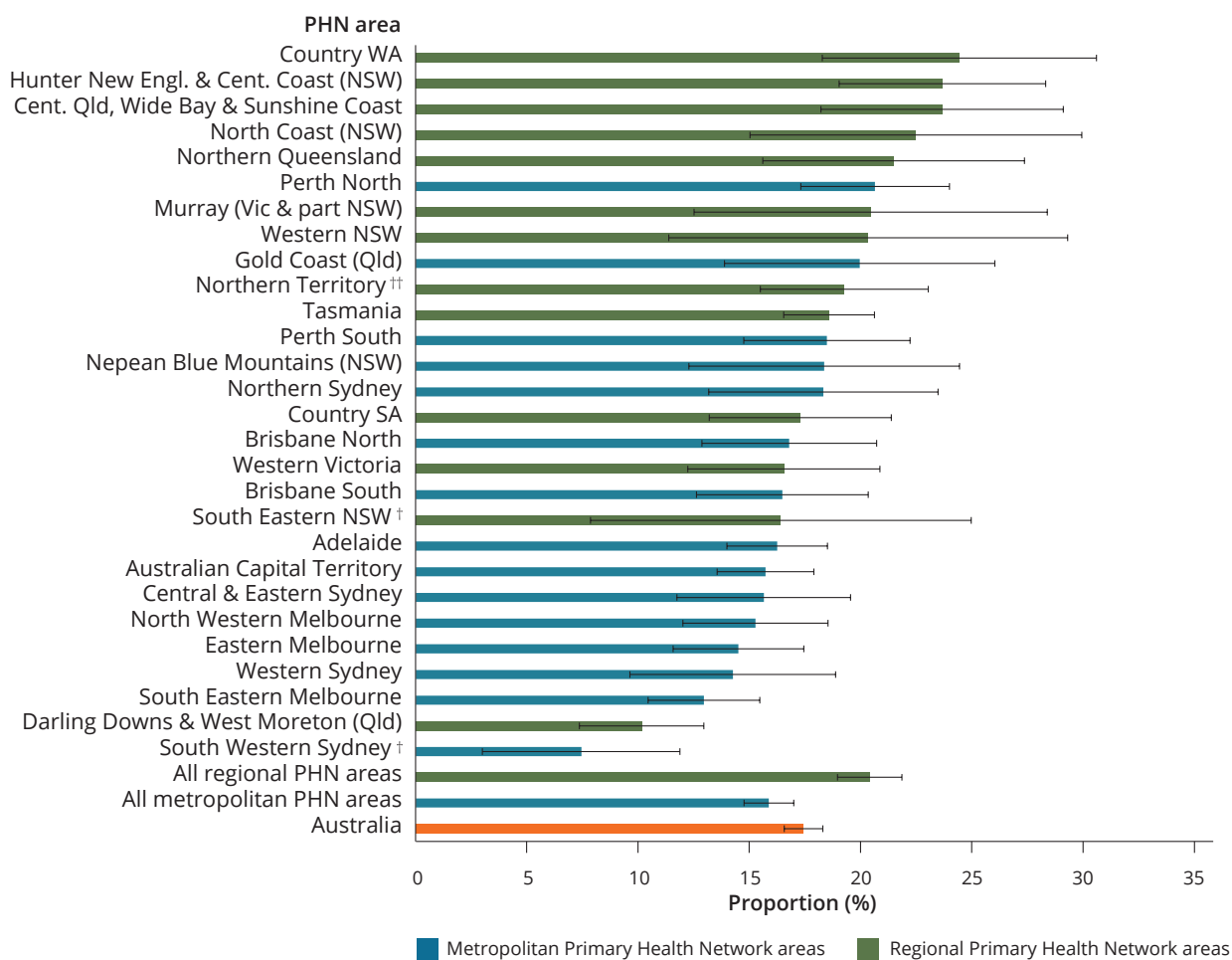
## Variation across metropolitan and regional PHN areas

In 2014–15, the proportion of adults who had lifetime risky alcohol consumption across all regional PHN areas was 20.4%. For all metropolitan PHN areas, this proportion was 15.9%.

The five PHN areas with the highest proportion of adults reporting lifetime risky alcohol consumption were all in regional areas (Figure 1).

Conversely, four of the five PHN areas with the lowest proportion of adults with lifetime risky alcohol consumption were in metropolitan locations.

**Figure 1: Proportion of adults who reported lifetime risky alcohol consumption, by metropolitan and regional Primary Health Network area, 2014–15**



Source: ABS, National Health Survey 2014–15: Customised report, 2017.

— 95% confidence interval.

† Data for South Western Sydney and South Eastern NSW should be interpreted with caution, as the estimates have a relative standard error of 25% to 50%.

†† Data for the Northern Territory should be interpreted with caution, as 28% of the population live in very remote areas and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and are therefore excluded from the survey.

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