



New data: anxiety driving the reasons people are drinking; people drinking less during lockdown

Sydney, 17 May, 2020: New survey data has revealed that major changes in Australians' drinking habits happened early on during the COVID-19 lockdown. There has been only a slight increase in the number of people drinking more seven weeks into lockdown compared to the two week mark, up 3% from 17% to 20%.

In fact, the biggest overall change in drinking is people who are now drinking less: 22% rising to 29%.

This is the latest tracking data released by [Hello Sunday Morning](#) (HSM) and conducted by Hall and Partners, based on an online survey of 319 Australian residents, conducted on 6 May 2020. The baseline figures were collected via an online survey of 320 Australian residents between 2-3 April 2020.

Anxiety and stress has now replaced boredom as the key reason people are drinking (57% for those of family responsibilities age: 30-59 years old), likely reflecting that people have adjusted to the reality of stay at home measures but are weighed down by the economic realities

Isolation has also increased the habit of people drinking alone – rising from one in five, to one in four.

The proportion who say online assistance to manage drinking would be helpful remains steady month-to-month and surprisingly high at three in ten. Younger people are much more likely than older people to say such a resource would be helpful, with over half saying it would help them or someone they know (56%).

The importance of technology-driven healthcare has become more evident in the light of COVID-19 restrictions. Dr Kathryn Fletcher, Clinical Manager at Hello Sunday Morning said, "It's no surprise that anxiety and stress are key drivers of people drinking during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“There are compounding worries about the virus itself, increased family tensions, financial challenges, the stress of separation from their usual social support networks, and sheer uncertainty about how this is all going to play out. All of these factors increase the strain on people's relationship with alcohol.”

The Daybreak app, developed by Hello Sunday Morning, provides access to a supportive online community, self-guided behavioural interventions, and access to psychologists and counsellors to help people reduce harms from drinking.

About Daybreak

Around 400,000 Australians need access to treatment for alcohol problems, and of those who do get seen, 70 per cent won't get sufficient help because existing treatment services are unscalable and expensive. Daybreak is an online program that helps people change their relationship with alcohol through a supportive community, habit-change experiments, and one-on-one chats with health coaches. Not only can this provide valuable and anonymous support for individuals in need, it is also able to reduce the burden on the hospital system. Since 2016, Daybreak has been available across the PHN (Primary Healthcare Network), and since 2018 it has been funded by the Federal Government. More than 5,000 clients remain active in the program each month.

About Hello Sunday Morning

Hello Sunday Morning is an organisation based in Sydney, Australia. Its mission is to help people to change their relationship with alcohol, and to provide them with the tools for doing that. Hello Sunday Morning was born in 2009 when CEO, Chris Raine, undertook a year-long experiment to quit drinking. A nightclub promoter at the time, Chris blogged about the challenges and successes of this experiment when he woke up hangover-free every Sunday Morning, signing off with, “Hello, Sunday morning!” First extending the challenge to his flatmate, by 2014 Hello Sunday Morning had grown into the world's largest online community of people supporting each other to change their behaviour around alcohol.

This community has now merged into our key offering – a program called [Daybreak](#). The Daybreak program is helping people to change their drinking habits one day at a time. Daybreak is a digital service that people can access through either an app or the web. It provides an anonymous and supportive environment for consumers to set alcohol change goals and to then work with health professionals to achieve them.

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