

## Alcohol and other drug use at Vanessa festivals and events 2023

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**Introduction:** Vanessa is a program that delivers road safety messages at festivals/events. Since the pandemic, few studies have collected data from young people across multiple festivals/events. This study aimed to describe alcohol consumption and intentions to use drugs at festivals/events and identify factors associated with these behaviours.

**Method:** We conducted a survey with people who accessed Vanessa at 11 Victorian festivals/events between January and April 2023. We used multivariable logistic regression to identify factors associated with consuming five or more (5+) drinks in the past 24 hours and intending to use drugs (besides alcohol) at the festival/event.

**Results:** We recruited 650 participants from regional (n=145), metropolitan (n=215) and university/TAFE (n=290) festivals/events (median age 22, 62% female). In the past 24 hours, 55% reported no alcohol consumption, 29% had 1-4 drinks and 5% consumed 5+ drinks. Overall, 13% of participants had or planned to consume drugs at the festival/event they attended. Compared to males, females had lower odds of consuming 5+ drinks (adjusted odds ratio (AOR)=0.4, confidence interval (CI)=0.3-0.7) and planning to use drugs at the festival/event they attended (AOR=0.3, CI=0.2-0.8). Currently studying was associated with lower odds of consuming 5+ drinks (AOR=0.3, CI=0.2-0.6); no difference was observed for planning to use drugs (AOR=0.8, CI=0.4-1.3). Ever using illegal drugs was significantly associated with consuming 5+ drinks (AOR=2.2, CI=1.3-3.7) and planning to use drugs at festivals/events (AOR=17.9, CI=8.3-38.7). No significant differences were identified by age.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** A minority of participants had consumed 5+ drinks and planned to use drugs at the festival/event they attended. These behaviours were more common among males and participants who reported ever using drugs.

**Implications for practice:** Interventions developed with young people who plan to consume alcohol or use other drugs at festivals/events are required to minimise harms and meet the needs of this population.

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