Pre-loading of alcohol and associated harm in Palmerston North

A quantitative and qualitative study of the general public

[May 2013]
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Executive summary

1.1 Key issues and activities

- To gain some understanding and background around issues Palmerston North young people might be facing the qualitative research explored personal issues participants were facing and perceived community issues. Financial pressures were high on the list of personal concerns raised by the focus group participants. This flowed into the access and range of leisure activities participants could take part in. The other key personal issues raised by participants were health concerns, family issues, study, and for those new to Palmerston North, missing family and friends.

- Discussion on important community issues, highlighted a struggling local economy, drinking issues, lack of entertainment, and what was seen as evidence of an immature community.

- The focus groups also explored the types of activities that participants enjoyed. This discussion was used to look at where ‘drinking’ currently ranked in terms of activities that these young people currently enjoyed and also looked to identify factors that made specific activities enjoyable. By identifying enjoyable aspects, messaging can be developed that cuts through to what is important to young people and also help avoid messages that would make young people discount the message or ignore it. ‘Drinking’ currently ranked highly as an enjoyable activity as it was seen as a cost effective way to socialise with friends. The groups clearly showed that activities with a social aspect were enjoyed most. When outlining the most enjoyable activities, the commonly nominated activities included spending time with family and friends, taking part in sports, drinking, having a meal or coffee, and going on Facebook.

1.2 Drinking attitudes and behaviour

- What would normally be seen as negative experiences from over-drinking were often viewed positively by participants which will be a key barrier to stop over-drinking. On the positive side, not getting too drunk and everyone having a good time were key elements of a good night which are clearly linked to people placing limits on their drinking. However, finding messages that drinkers will listen to, and help drinkers assess these limits accurately, are the challenge.

Participant’s personal descriptions and values were often not reflective of drinking habits especially across students where a culture of over-drinking was prevalent. However, a tendency to over drink seemed more prevalent across those that had less parental support and were more reliant on friends to provide a sense of stability. This finding can only be seen as indicative as it is based on qualitative findings.

- In the quantitative survey nearly half of respondents declared that they had had a negative experience while in town on a typical weekend. However, as noted earlier, this figure might
under-represent actual negative experiences as some experiences that might be deemed as negative were viewed positively by some. On a prompted basis the most common negative experiences were ‘doing something they later regretted’ (36%), ‘partner/relationship negatively affected by drinking’ (30%), and ‘injuring or hurting themselves or someone else while drunk’ (24%). Many negative experiences recorded higher incidence across pre-loaders with 42% claiming to have done ‘something they later regretted while drunk’.

In the focus groups just about all participants recounted negative experiences resulting from over-drinking but apart from the control group, no participants felt that the negative experiences had put them off drinking or going out. A number felt that these negative experiences helped people learn their limits so that they can drink more responsibly.

- Most respondents claimed to go out on Friday (60%) or Saturday (88%) night. In the qualitative research, Friday and Saturday night were the preferred nights as there were more people in town, and as a result, a better atmosphere.

- There was a trend by age with younger participants likely to go out more frequently with most saying they go out once or twice a week. Younger participants were also more likely to have multiple groups they would go out with and noted that “there is always something on if you want to do it”.

- The most favoured mode of travel into town were by car or motorbike (40%), followed by walking (28%) and taxi (26%). Respondents were more likely to take a taxi home (43%), followed by a car or motorbike (30%) and walking (22%).

In the focus groups all participants claimed to walk between venues as they were seen to be relatively close and it was also considered a way to socialise along the way.

- Over two thirds of respondents visited two (36%) or three (33%) venues during an evening out. The choice of venue was mainly determined by friends (32%) or that they followed a similar routine each time (30%). However, over a fifth claimed that there was no plan and they just went with the flow.

- There was a wide spread in alcohol spend, 5% claimed to spend nothing, 33% spent up to $20, 41% spent between $20-$50, and 19% spent over $50. Most drank spirits (55%), RTDs (38%), and beer or cider (34%). The mean alcohol spend while out on the town was $38 while total spend including pre-loading was $62.

- In the focus groups the younger participants (25 years and younger) seemed more knowledgeable about the equivalent standard drink volumes by alcohol type. It was noted that the number of standard drinks was on the back of the bottle or can. However, most did not think about the number of ‘standard drinks’ they consumed in an evening but gauged their drinking levels by the ‘buzz’ or how happy they were feeling.

- In the quantitative survey most (60%) respondents claimed to arrive in town between 11:00 pm and 2.00 am. Nearly a third claimed to arrive between 7:00 pm and 11:00 pm, and 6% between 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm.
When asked the triggers that made them stop drinking during the evening, the main triggers were feeling too drunk (31%), that people were going home (30%), and when they felt relaxed (24%).

In the focus groups, most felt that they had learnt their limits from drinking in the past. These so-called limits might include starting to feel sick, feeling woozy, or starting to slur words. Another trigger was reaching a state where they felt happily drunk “but not too drunk”.

### 1.3 Pre-loading attitudes and behaviour

- In the quantitative survey most respondents claimed to pre-load because it was a chance to socialise with friends (59%) and it was cheaper (57%).

While the rationale for pre-loading was consistent in the focus groups with key reasons for pre-loading being the cheaper alcohol and it providing a chance to socialise, there were additional reasons raised including, that it was too early to go to town and that it filled time, that it was fun, and there was peer pressure to drink before hitting town.

- Over two thirds of respondents claimed to drink before going out on the town. With 77% of these saying they pre-loaded ‘every time’ or ‘most times’.

Pre-loaders were more likely to be younger and also students. They were less likely to view themselves as conservative and less likely to ‘think about and debate key issues of the day’. There were no significant differences by gender or ethnicity.

- Most alcohol purchases were from a liquor store (79%) or supermarket (35%). In the focus groups the choice of outlet was determined by price, availability of their preferred liquor and convenience.

When estimating spend on alcohol before hitting town, 37% claimed to spend less than $20, 29% between $20-$30, 16% between $30-40, and 18% more than $40. The mean alcohol spend on pre-loading was $34.

The preferred alcohol was beer or cider (45%), spirits (45%), and RTDs (41%). The type of alcohol chosen was driven by price (62%), what they felt like drinking that night (27%), and the taste (24%).

- The favoured venue for pre-loading was at their own home (63%) or a friend’s home (60%). Younger participants in the groups noted that they often pre-loaded at multiple venues before hitting town.

Most claimed to start pre-loading between 6:00 pm and 9:00 pm (71%) followed by 15% after 9:00 pm and 9% before 6:00 pm.

The most popular time to finish drinking at home and head into town was between 11:00 pm and midnight (44%). 28% claimed to head into town between 9:00 pm and 11:00 pm.
1.4 Communications and initiatives

- Most felt it would be difficult to get people to limit their drinking as it was something most felt you had to learn from experience. Some possible measures raised to curb drinking were:
  - **Learning limits:** Providing goal posts for people to recognise limits with examples given such as setting limits before heading out, taking limited cash out, “just drinking for the glow”
  - **Showing consequences:** Some participants felt that showing people fighting, not enjoying themselves and being sick might put some off drinking so much
  - **Providing good role models:** There was seen to be a lack of good role models and most noted that they had grown up with older people saying how “cool it was to get wasted” or actually over-drinking in front of them. Younger role models they could relate to were seen as more effective
  - **Showing health impacts:** Some felt that showing how over-drinking can impact on a person’s health and looks may deter some
  - **Increasing police presence:** There was seen to be a need for a greater police presence in town and possibly ticketing people that are too drunk
  - **Reducing peer pressure:** Being surrounded with good friends that don’t pressure you to over-drink was seen as important.

- Some suggested messages raised by participants to stop over-drinking were:
  - Always drink with good friends that will look out for you
  - Don’t push friends to drink and don’t drink to make other people happy
  - There is no need to hurry into drinking, there is plenty of time and plenty of fun to had without over-drinking
  - Don’t mix your drinks
  - Over-drinking can stop you having a healthy, happy family life
  - It is time to grow up and move forward with your life
  - It’s sad seeing people who don’t grow up
  - Over-drinking can threaten your job and career
  - You can enjoy time with friends without drinking
  - Staying in control keeps you safe.

- Most participants were cynical about advertising and initiatives to stop pre-loading. They were critical of ads that were seen to trivialise and make fun of the situation - and they felt most people made fun of these ads.

- The suggestions to stop pre-loading and some of its negative impacts tended to be more action focused rather than identifying specific messages. The suggestions raised were:
  - **Cheaper drinks in town:** There was a suggestion to have happy hour later in the night or to reduce the price of drinks in town across the board. They felt that this would mean people would head into town earlier and be less likely to pre-load so heavily
  - **Providing more activities in town:** Another suggestion was to have entertainment in town to get people going to town earlier. Some examples raised were activities put on during Orientation week such as foam parties and toga parties
- **Showing and providing alternative entertainment:** Showing that entertainment and having fun can be achieved without over-drinking. This might be achieved by having role models showing alternative ways to socialise. Activities unrelated to drinking such as the ice skating rink set up in The Square in the past were seen as good ways to keep young people occupied without needing to drink and other sports could be used in a similar way.

- **Using emotional messages:** Some felt that messages needed to be future focused and to have an emotional impact such as the impact of being hungover on family life.

- **Banning glass:** There was a suggestion to ban glass bottles to limit the amount of broken glass and related potential for injury.
Introduction

2.1 Background

Palmerston North City has around 80,000 residents, making it the seventh largest city in New Zealand. Compared to the rest of the country it has a young population; 10% are in the 20-24 year old category and the median age is 32.4 years (compared to 6.7% and 35.9 years respectively across New Zealand). Having various tertiary education facilities located in Palmerston North (Massey University, UCOL, International Pacific College and ETC Learning Centre) as well as the largest Army base in New Zealand (Linton Military Camp), all contribute to this high population of young people. In addition; Palmerston North is a destination for domestic visitors, with close to 0.4 million (2.5% of the national total) overnight visitors in the year to December 2010.

The combination of having a large cohort of young people, high visitor numbers and an active night life have all contributed to public concerns being expressed about alcohol related harm in Palmerston North. There is an assumed association between pre-loading and anti-social behaviour. However, there is very limited research on the prevalence and associated harm arising from ‘pre-loading’ of alcohol across New Zealand audiences. Research internationally indicates that pre-loading is highly correlated to increased levels of alcohol-related harm.

ACC on behalf of the Palmerston North Safety Advisory Board (PNSAB) has commissioned a study of the impact and prevalence of pre-loading across Palmerston North residents. The PNSAB is comprised of representatives across key social agencies operating in the region.

2.2 Objectives

The primary objectives of the research are:

- To understand the extent of any pre-loading problems in Palmerston North and identifying the groups who might be exhibiting such behaviour.
- To explore the relationship between pre-loading and alcohol-related harm experienced by drinkers in Palmerston North.
- To understand the patterns of behaviour associated with pre-loading, especially transiting from an unlicensed premise to a licensed one, and whether this transfer between locations having already consumed alcohol further increase the probability of alcohol-related harm.
- To identify potential points of intervention for reducing alcohol-related harm due to pre-loading, both locally in Palmerston North and more generally.

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1 There was a population of over 75,000 according to the 2006 Census (Statistics NZ)
2 Manawatu Region sector profile developed by the Palmerston North City Council (www.pncc.govt.nz)
3 Strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm produced by the Safety Advisory Board, August 2008
Methodology and sample structure

The research consisted of three key stages:

- Project planning and set up.
- Quantitative research (Face to face, online and telephone interviews).
- Qualitative research (four focus group discussions).

3.1 Quantitative stage

The quantitative research was conducted in March 2013 and consisted of a mixed methodology (Face to face, Online and Telephone Interviews) survey of Palmerston North residents aged between 18-35 years of age that go out in Palmerston North and consume alcohol.

The primary methodology for the quantitative stage of the survey was to use face to face interviewing to contact young people in-situ (in and around the drinking and socialising areas of Palmerston North). The face-to-face fieldwork was conducted between 8 and 9 March 2013. In total, 156 people were interviewed using this methodology.

To complete the quota of 200 surveys, an online version of the survey was sent to respondents that refused to complete the survey face-to-face but provided an email address. Due to a low response to the online survey, respondents were also contacted via a telephone methodology. The remaining interviews were conducted between 13 and 23 March 2013.

- Notes on methodology

Due to a small base size, comparisons cannot be made between the methodologies.

It is noted that the population of Māori is higher in this research than the population statistics of Palmerston North. The data from the 2006 census shows a population of 17.7% Māori aged between 15 and 39 while this research has a proportion of 27.2% of Māori (aged 18-34). UMR believe that this proportion describes the proportion of people, of this age group, who go into town at the weekend rather than an over representation of this group.

- Margin of error

The margin of error for a sample of 201 is 6.9% at the 95% confidence level. Please note that this refers to the ‘All’ figure and for sub-samples (Males, Full or Part Time Students etc), the margin of error will vary.
3.2 Qualitative stage

The qualitative stage of research followed up on the quantitative survey to explore some of the behaviour evident in the quantitative findings.

The qualitative research comprised of four focus group discussions. Three groups were conducted with respondents who claimed to pre-load and one ‘control’ group who did not pre-load. Research was conducted over two nights; Wednesday 17th and Thursday 18th April in a central Palmerston North location.

The group specifications were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>DATE/TIME</th>
<th>SPECIFICATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1     | Wednesday 17th April 5.30 p.m. | - Pre-load  
- Aged 18-21  
- Mix gender  
- Mix RTD, spirit and beer drinkers  
- Mix of those who have and have not had a negative experience while in town |
| 2     | Wednesday 17th April 7.30 p.m. | - Pre-load  
- Aged 21-25  
- Mix gender  
- Mix RTD, spirit and beer drinkers  
- Have had negative experiences while in town |
| 3     | Thursday 18th April 5.30 p.m.  | - Pre-load  
- Aged 26-35  
- Mix gender  
- Mix of wine, spirit and beer drinkers  
- Have had negative experiences while in town |
| 4     | Thursday 18th April 7.30 p.m.  | - Do not Pre-load  
- Mix of ages and gender |

Groups 1, 2 and 3 also included some Māori respondents as Māori recorded a slightly higher propensity to pre-load in the quantitative survey.
3.3 Report structure

This report contains the combined results of both the qualitative and quantitative findings. The quantitative findings are reported first; supported or explained by qualitative findings where appropriate.

The qualitative stage covered a lot of areas not included in the quantitative questionnaire. Specific qualitative findings are mainly reported in the first section of the report.

The executive summary contains the main findings and suggested recommendations from both stages of research.

- Respondent descriptions

Respondents who claimed to drink alcohol before going into town on a typical (x) night are referred to as pre-loaders.

Respondents who claimed to not drink alcohol or were ‘unsure’ are referred to as non pre-loaders.
Key issues and activities

4.1 Personal issues

To gain some understanding and background around issues Palmerston North young people might be facing the qualitative research explored personal issues participants were facing and perceived community issues.

The key personal issues raised by participants in the qualitative focus groups were financial concerns, health concerns, and family issues.

Financial concerns: Most participants felt under financial pressure. Non-students noted that the cost of living continued to rise and there was little left over after paying for essentials.

[Key things that concern you.] Not having enough money and not having enough fun time with my family. [Is there any solution to that?] I think having more money would help, we would be able to take them out and not have to worry about having to pay for the movies. [Has money always been an issue or has the cost of living gone up?] As soon as you have kids and you go from two to one income and the cost of living going up. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Mine is not getting paid enough, I work my butt off. Teenaged kids and living costs. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Well being a student ‘money’. But future career development and stability in terms of being financially independent. I guess that is also related to money because being a student and having to worry about the future is a big thing. [Is that why you are studying to get a better wage or salary?] Yes and no. I want a better future I guess, but money is a part of that as well. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

[What things are currently issues for you?] Money, trying to find living and socializing money. [Do your parents give you an allowance?] Stuff like this, study allowance pays for my rent and food and then anything else I have to work for. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

Employment: There were a few seeking employment in a tight job market and some concerned about job security.

My husband is in a trade, he is a sparkie and his hours have been cut in the last six months. [Is that looking up now?] Off and on he has had a couple of weeks of big hours again. [Have you thought of moving away from the area?] No we have got family here, built in baby sitters. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Most students had part-time work or were looking for work. The lack of work for students was seen to impact on their discretionary spending and quality of life.
For me I have been struggling pretty much this whole year to find some part time work which is why I am here. I have done a whole lot of student job search jobs so really trying to find work because I have signed up to volunteer in Thailand and I need to raise money. So that is my primary thing and study on top of that as well. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

And just jobs as well living in a student city, we are desperate for jobs. [So you would like a part time job?] I would love a job. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

Study: Students were also worried about getting good grades.

Same, worrying about passing my degree, when you are getting to the end it is more important to pass than it was at the start. At the end you are like shit I really need to pass. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

Health concerns: Keeping fit and healthy was an issue for a number of participants, generally in the 22 plus age groups. Some noted that they were finding it harder to keep fit and were putting on weight.

For me personal issues I had the physical fitness thing, want to lose my stomach fat. The main problem with that is the cost. [Joining a gym?] I have done that but the ongoing cost of that is a bit much so that is why I am changing soon. The cost of healthy food compared to McDonalds or a bag of rice. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

And also health and fitness is also my worry as well. [Is that more now, do you feel you are not as fit as you used to be?] Yes it is harder. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

I wrote down the fact that in February I got diagnosed with a rare disease and my mum also has this disease which we only found out last year, she had been mis-diagnosed with MS but she actually has cadasil which means that you are prone to having strokes and you get dementia and it is pretty much all downhill. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Some participants were dealing with health issues across family members including children. Some also noted the strain of having to look after aging parents.

I have been trying to get my son assessed, I know he has got ADHD but I have been on it for two years and am not getting anywhere. He is 11. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Family issues: Many students missed spending time with their families now they were studying away from home.

I also put down family and friends, I am quite far away from home and keeping old friends and making new ones and I have got two little sisters who are in their awesome teenage years so I worry about them. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)
Parents were also concerned about the pressures on their children and being able to provide for all their needs.

Personally raising a teenage daughter and she is actually a good kid I haven’t got much to moan about but it still worries me, they kind of make or break you and unfortunately what you decide at 13 does impact on you when you are 25 or 26. That whole life path. Because if she was like me at that age oh my God. And money as well, I would love to have more of it just so that we could do more fun things. Because unfortunately it always costs money. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

I am juggling between ADHD and autism with my 5 year old. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Relationships: A few noted that maintaining a relationship was a key focus.

Trying to maintain a long distance relationship, but she is trying to come here next year so trying to work it out. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

4.2 Community issues

There were a range of community issues raised by participants in the groups. The key concerns related to a struggling local economy, drinking issues, lack of entertainment, and what was seen as evidence of an immature or parochial community.

Local economy: The local economy was seen as flat which meant many businesses were struggling and jobs were scarce.

No work. Lots of friends have been made redundant in their jobs. [Did they have full time jobs?] Yes they are my flatmates and stuff, older people. [So the economy is not that good around here?] No. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

Businesses around town a lot of places are closing down. And trying to find part time work too. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

Some noted the increase in homeless people and poverty which they felt was sobering for a provincial city like Palmerston North.

Just a lot of people being homeless. [Did that surprise you coming down here?] It did actually. I had never really come across it when I was in Auckland. Where I work I notice a lot of homeless people will go down to the parking area and that is where a lot of smokers go to so they have their tin where the butt out their smokes and you see the homeless people empty it out and smoke off the butts. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

[What about community stuff?] Hobos. You go down Broadway and they are like “do you have some change?” And you go “nah, nah not right now” but it is awkward and your pocket is full of it and you go into a shop and come out and pass the same guy again. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)
I had poverty as well, when I was 20 I lived in Wellington and hadn’t seen a homeless person apart from that blanket guy and just seeing it around here. I know sometimes it is a choice but there are still things that led them to get to that point in their life. And that is sad, I always as a kid imaged that was an American problem. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

The sad thing is five years ago it was the middle class like ourselves that donated to the food bank but we can’t any more. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

**Drinking issues:** There were various issues raised in relation to drinking, drugs and violence. Most noted that there was evidence of over-indulging over the weekend, with the city area very noisy, full of broken bottles and vomit.

When I was living just over here on Rolleston Street it was bad for noise because it is right next to Ada Street which is notorious. Broken bottles just everywhere as well, as vomit. You even get that quite a bit in town, I run every morning pretty much and I always find vomit. Every street there is a vomit and broken bottles everywhere. [Is that Friday, Saturday?] You would be surprised. Three or four times a week. If they keep indoors it is fine but they spill it out quite a bit. If we are talking about going out in town at night I have had quite a few friends who have had negative experiences with the army boys. [Fights?] Yes they can be quite aggressive. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

[What are the wide community social things you had down?] Mine is the alcohol and crime of the youth in Palmy. [What age do you think that is?] I would say 16 to early 20’s. I think because it is labelled a student city. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

I had the use of legal highs with teenagers, they can just go into a dairy and buy those herbal things. In Ashurst you can imagine the teenagers are even more bored and they are legal highs, easy to get their hands on, it is legal so we can do that in front of the police and the police can’t do nothing about it. And it is turning a lot of them really crazy. Even though they are legal substances they are messing with minds. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Some also noted that drinking often led to violent behaviour and there were specific references to “army guys” acting up. Underage drinking and casual sex was also noted as a problem in the early teen age (13 to 14 year old) group.

I think we need to be worried about the 13 and 14 year olds who are having sex and into drinking. In the Square in the middle of the day it is just ridiculous. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

There are teenagers who hide behind cars parked in the car park and they will be smoking weed there. That to me is kind of shocking. [That they are willing to do that outside in the open?] Yes. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)
I definitely agree about the drama, an example: last weekend there was so much drama it is just ridiculous, it is not just Home and Away. It is next level Home and Away it is ridiculous. It is silly as well, over stupid stuff. [What is causing the drama is it drinking, drugs, their nature?] Drinking and then people are bored so they start stuff. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

**Lack of entertainment:** Many noted the lack of entertainment options and late night shopping in Palmerston North.

[What about community stuff?] Late night shops are limited after 9 o’clock. [What sort of shops do you want?] In Wellington they have those personal fix it 24/7’s like little dairies they have everything. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

There were seen to be few entertainment options, especially low cost options.

Not really issues but just a pet peeve of mine is that there aren’t really many attractions here. [Not much entertainment?] Yes, you can go to the movies, go for a walk. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

[What do they joke about it?] That it is not that great a place to visit, there is not that much to do like you said. Just movies we don’t really have any attractions. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

**A parochial community:** A few felt that Palmerston North exhibited parochial traits with examples given where some participants felt residents were narrow minded, prone to bullying behaviour, and racially abusive.

I think social technology has got really bad, I love social technology, but with Ask FM; I just think it is disgusting, I think that is a terrible website they should shut it down. You ask anything or say anything you want anonymously and everyone can see it. [So people are propositioning each other?] Yes. It’s affecting bullying. That is a huge one as well bullying. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

I just think that Palmy is not a place that you want to stay forever because you get so stuck in high school. I went and studied in Auckland for a year before I came back and having that space and realising that the world is a much bigger place than Palmerston North. The drama is ridiculous, I am over it. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

**Other issues:** There were other issues mentioned by participants which are worth mentioning.

One participant noted the pollution of waterways, in particular the Manawatu Gorge.

The Manawatu Gorge and River with its pollution and the Gorge with it always being closed with slips. [What is the pollution?] The gorge is one of the most polluted rivers in New Zealand and I think the Southern Hemisphere. [What is that from?] Farms. Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)
The youngest group were aware of gang activity and initiations.

[What are some of the local issues?]  
Gangs, there is a rape gang.  [Are the Police on to them?]  Not sure, I think the other gangs are trying to stop them.  They are only young people.  [So the gangs are they evident when you go out?]  Not normally.  Depends if they are patched.  (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

There were complaints about the cost of parking and the lack of public transport options.

Parked at the plaza having to pay is really bad, you can’t do shopping in and out.  And there is nowhere else where you have to pay for parking in a mall.  Then even the streets around it have the sensors and the parking people are really strict, if you are a minute over they are there ticketing you.  It is pretty expensive to park anywhere.  Sometimes public transport in holiday times is really bad.  You might get two buses a day.  (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

Certain days they have no buses at all, like Easter there were no buses.  [No do you have a car?]  No.  (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

Some immigrants felt that there was little support to get them into decent work especially when they were highly skilled jobs in their previous country.  Another participant felt that those in real need were not supported by the government.

I don’t know whether it is social or not but Work and Income are not helping people enough that are in genuine circumstances.  For example I have some friends who are on a joint benefit with three children, they get $780 a week and my husband has to work about 46 hours, he is on $23 and you think that is alright and everything would be pretty good and yet he gets something like $815 in the hand.  One week my husband couldn’t work because my daughter was in hospital and I rang WINZ and they refused to even make us an appointment.  So I went to the food bank Fielding and they made me wait three hours with my three kids and they gave me half a plastic bag of food.  (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

The cost of land was seen to make it difficult for people to build affordable housing or have access to good schools.

[Did you have anything else?]  Cost of land in Palmerston North especially if you want to buy land, a 540 square metre block depending where you want to buy.  If we build we will probably go out past Summer Hill because land is a lot cheaper out there but then it is a matter of driving into town for kids sports.  But it is just to get the right school zone.  So the land for the good schools is quite expensive.  (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

One participant felt that many roads were poor quality and needed upgrading.

[Did you have anything on the community social thing?]  I think our roads are pretty bad.  (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)
4.3 Key activities

The focus groups also explored the types of activities that participants enjoyed. This discussion was used to look at where ‘drinking’ currently ranked in terms of activities that these young people currently enjoyed and also looked to identify factors that made specific activities enjoyable. By identifying enjoyable aspects, messaging can be developed that cuts through to what is important to young people and also help avoid messages that would make young people discount the message or ignore it.

The groups clearly showed that activities with a social aspect were enjoyed most. When outlining the most enjoyable activities, the commonly nominated activities included spending time with family and friends, taking part in sports, drinking, having a meal or coffee, and going on Facebook. Many older participants also enjoyed their jobs.

The key activities and reasons participants enjoyed the activity are outlined in the following table.

**Spending time with friends:** Spending time with friends was a key activity nominated by nearly all participants.

It was seen to provide a sense of connection which made participants feel supported and understood.

- [What else do you get from spending time with friends?] *Different conversations.*
  *You talk about completely different things with your friends than you do with your family. I would open up more with friends.* (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, female)

  *Connecting with people and that face to face contact rather than just internet.*
  (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

- Some participants felt that they could share, catch up, confide, and be open with good friends which was seen as a way to relieve stress and help with situations they may be going through.

  *You can talk about your husband and your kids, everything. It is like getting rid of it.* (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

  *I think it is who you can confide in and that is really important.* (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

- It was also seen as a way to relax and have fun.

  [What do you get out of a quiet drink with friends?] *Socialising, girl talk, we just talk shit.* *It is like a good old gossip session and having fun.* *Valuable girl time because lots of my friends don’t study so we have got different lives and it is time we can get together.* (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

- One participant noted that experiences are more enjoyable when shared with friends.

  *Anything that is good is better with mates.* (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)
While a few other participants acknowledged that friends help keep them balanced and down to earth.

[Hanging out with friends?] Keeps a balance, you can’t have too much me time you have to balance yourself time, study and socializing. So keeps you all in balance so you don’t go mental. [So it relieves stress as well?] Yes. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

And it keeps you down to earth as well, you don’t get too “me” involved. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

**Drinking:** Spending time drinking was closely aligned to ‘spending time with friends’ with many similar benefits. However, there were also some additional aspects that were noted.

A few noted that they often drank to fit in and to feel included as part of a group.

If I think about it, all the times I have done it, there hasn’t been a reason I have wanted to do it, it is more the way to be included, the way to fit in, everyone is doing it. I know when I sober drive it is just so annoying, everyone is so hammered and you are like - oh. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

Going out and drinking was also seen as a way to socialise, see people in a different context, and meet new people.

[Let’s look at getting drunk what is so good about that, what are you getting out of it?] You see a different side of people which is great fun when you hang out with friends. Some people are really shy at course and then they start drinking a bit and they become quite interesting. And meeting other people out while they are drunk as well. Just talking crap. Socialising. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

I like being able to meet new people as well, there is generally somebody at the party you don’t know. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

While time with friends was also seen as a way to catch up and relax, drinking was seen to have an added ‘fun’ factor’.

[This one here, what is so enjoyable about that?] Just having a laugh, relax, antics. And you catch up with friends you don’t see during the week because they are working. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

A few with children noted that it was a time to forget their responsibilities and just focus on themselves.

It’s mummy’s night off. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

There were some that noted that going out drinking was not about just being social but letting loose and there was a definite intention to get drunk rather than just drink as social lubrication.

I drink to get drunk so having a few social ones is pretty much a waste of money and alcohol. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)
**Spending time with family:** Spending time with family was also important for many participants. Most felt that the time spent with family was different from time spent with friends.

Many participants noted that they felt a sense of belonging, comfort and unconditional love when around family.

[What is it about hanging out with family?] *Unconditionally they are always going to support you and love you.* (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

[Spending time with family, what do you get from that?] *Just that whole attraction thing you have with your family, you feel loved and you give love. Just your place where you do belong whether you like it or not.* (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

A few also noted that family understood them better than anyone else. One participant felt a sense of achievement and satisfaction when she spent quality time with her husband and kids.

**Sharing a meal or having coffee:** Sharing a meal or having a coffee was also seen as a social experience; another way to spend time with friends or family.

However, it was also seen to be uniquely pleasurable experience.

[What do you get from eating out?] *Pleasure. Food is great.* (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

[Eating out, what is enjoyable about it?] *The taste, getting ideas. Socialising comes into it as well.* (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

Some keen cooks got a sense of achievement from cooking a meal that friends or family enjoyed.

*I like the compliments as well and knowing that people are really going to enjoy it.* (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

One participant felt that having a coffee was something you did as you got older and made him feel ‘grown up’.

*Coffee actually makes you feel that you have a reason to live. [Do you get a buzz from the caffeine.] It just keeps you awake. I feel like an adult when I drink coffee.* (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

**Sports:** Taking part in sports was seen to have many benefits along with another chance to spend time with family and friends. It was viewed as a good activity for kids, fostered a competitive spirit, built confidence, and provided a sense of achievement.

*Getting them to stick at something. And it is somewhere where they can be competitive, school is getting so damn PC. It is all participation.* (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

*You get a sense of achievement as well, bit of competition.* (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)
One participant felt it was an escape from her family and something she could do for herself.

*My afternoon softball is my kid free time.* (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

It was seen as a good way to relax and relieve stress.

*I run, that is my stress release from studying too much.* (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

Sports were also viewed as a healthy activity that helped cleared your head and provided a sense of freedom.

*What do you get out of the sports?]* Just the freedom, like you say about the adrenaline I think it just clears your head. Plus you have laughs with your mates if they go with you. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

For those that took part in adventure sports it provided an exciting activity and adrenaline rush.

**Spending time outdoors:** Outdoors activities were viewed similarly to sports. They were something you could do with friends or family, and relaxing.

Many outdoors activities were also viewed as a chance to get away from the city and get some fresh air. Some also felt it gave them a sense of freedom.

*Walking, similar to this?]* Something to do as well, get out of town. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

**Facebook:** Nearly all participants had Facebook accounts. It was seen as another way to socialise and keep in touch with people in other places. This meant that some felt it filled the gap of spending time with friends and gave them a chance to vent and relieve stress.

*It is my guilty pleasure. I think because you can stay in touch with people that you wouldn’t have before and I like it because it is just fun seeing people and updating your photos and putting up photos from the weekend before, it is just fun.* (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

*Is it social?]* You feel like you are socializing but you are not. Sort of like reading the news but it is your friends. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

It was also a way many communicated and organised events.

*One of the main ways of organizing events is Facebook. I deactivated my Facebook before exams last year and there was so much stuff I wasn’t invited to because nobody texts people or talks to them face to face.* (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

*We use it for communicating for our course as well. People share references and stuff.* (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)
Many found it fun way to fill in time.

A lot of it is sharing funny stories you have seen on Facebook or funny videos or inside jokes. There is a lot of that. And if you have got lots of friends in common gossiping and what not. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

**Work:** Those in employment got a sense of satisfaction and purpose from their work.

[Anything else you get from your jobs?] Helping others. It is like it gives you something to work towards. You are not stagnant. [So you have a purpose.] Yes. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

[Why do you enjoy your job?] The satisfaction that I am helping raise future generations. I am hopefully putting some positive input in. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, female)

Some in caring professions liked that they were helping people.

You feel happy when you see you are helping others. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

**Reading:** A few participants enjoyed reading. They found it a way to escape and relax.

It is a way to escape, you can get into your book and it is not life any more it is the characters. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

**Watching television:** Watching television was viewed similarly to reading with many finding it relaxing, educational, and a way to escape.

You can just loll in front of the TV and not think about anything, that is the best, that takes your mind off anything. You start living someone else’s life which is the same as reading. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

Television was different in one respect to reading as it could also be seen as a social activity.

[Is TV similar?] Yes and also socializing as well because if someone has watched the same thing as you. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

**Shopping:** Some female participants enjoyed shopping. They found it pleasurable, satisfying and relaxing.

[Shopping what do you get from it?] I get pleasure from shopping. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

[Shopping?] It is just satisfying when I want something. And it can be relaxing too. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, female)
One participant also found it a way to socialise and felt it provided a sense of freedom, in that, you could choose what you wanted to buy.

[What do you get from shopping?] Socialising and a bit of freedom going on as well. You decide what you want. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

Movies: A number of participants enjoyed going to movies and most noted that they enjoyed it mainly for the social aspect of getting together with friends.

[Movies?] It is just getting together with friends and going out and doing something different once in a while. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

It is definitely the social aspect, it is easy enough to get movies online if you want to. But you go out to the movies to be with friends really. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)
Drinking attitudes and behaviour

5.1 Views of a good night

To gain a better understanding of what young people valued from going out on the town, participants in the focus groups were asked to outline what constituted ‘a good night out’. For a number of the younger participants a good night out featured what would be seen by some as negative experiences.

Some enjoyed reviewing pictures and texts the next day, often covering activities they can’t remember doing or texts they don’t remember sending.

P: Pictures is usually a good one, having a look at how drunk you are in pictures and you piece together how good the night was and who you have called, drunk texts. [Is that fun if you can’t remember doing it?] It is quite funny at the time and then you semi regret it in the morning. [What are you regretting?] Depends what you have sent to them. Or who you have woken up next to. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

There was also an element of one-upmanship when recounting a night on the town with participants acknowledging that “the worst nights out can be the best stories”.

[In terms of when you are going out into town or have a good night out, what constitutes a good night out?] A couple of funny stories. Sometimes you don’t even remember you just wake up in the morning knowing you had a good night last night. Spend Sunday morning trying to figure out why it was such a good time. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

Sometimes the worst nights can be the best stories though. I have had some shockers, there was one night where I actually lost my pants and they got found a week later in a tree. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

Not being able to recall events or even blacking out during the evening were not necessarily viewed negatively but it was seen as fun to piece together the evening the next day.

[Is it a good time if you don’t remember it?] Yes. You miss a couple of hours and have no idea what happened. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

That is the best part of Sunday trying to figure out what happened, recap. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)
One participant felt that spending a lot of money usually meant he had had a good night out.

[When you have had a really good night what are the sorts of things that have happened?]  You wake up in the morning and check your bank balance and go oh wow. [If you spend a lot is that a good night?] If you spend a lot it has normally been a good night. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

There were other more benign aspects linked to a good night out which could be leveraged when considering messages to limit drinking.

A number of predominantly female participants said that a lack of drama such as no fights both physical and verbal during the evening made for a good night.

[What else is a good night?] No dramas and just having a laugh. If I have cried once in the night from laughing that is a mean night. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

[What sorts of dramas happen?] Someone’s ex boyfriend turns up, some creep that is trying to hit on the whole group and someone threatens to beat them. My friend is 5 foot nothing and thinks she is 6’ 7” and she always tried to stiletto some guy. She is the best person ever. [Does drama happen a lot?] Yes. [Would it be more likely you would have a drama night?] Yes. But even if there is a drama it doesn’t mean your night is awful, it just isn’t a great night. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

[What makes a good night out?] Friends. Not doing anything stupid. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

There appeared to be a sweet spot during the evening when a person was seen to drink a lot but not too much so they were happy but unlikely to have any negative impacts like a hangover. Achieving this balance was seen to be part of a good evening.

Generally I would say a successful night would be one where I got drunk but not too drunk. So if I didn’t vomit I would say it was a good night. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

The good buzz where you are not too drunk but you don’t sober up. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

It was also seen as good when everyone in the group had a good time and lots of laughs.

Knowing everyone has had a good time makes me think we have had a successful night. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

I would say what constitutes a good night is how many laughs you have had, if you are laughing the whole night doesn’t matter what happened. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

I kind of like the being stupid. As long as it is not hurting anyone, I am usually the stupid one. Like being the clown. [So making jokes and clowning around?] Yes. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)
Spending time with a good group of people or meeting new people was seen as making a good night.

If you drink with new people and you say we should meet up and have a drink and then it is like wow you are different when you are drunk. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

I just like getting the girls together and getting ready and we don’t have the kids there it is all the girls and we meet at someone’s house. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Across female participants, a number felt they had a better night when they were feeling attractive. Unfortunately, some felt more attractive when they had had a lot to drink.

Feeling good about yourself at the time. Meaning if you are going out and dressing up nicely. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Unfortunately the more I have to drink the skinnier I feel, I am not joking. I feel skinny which means I am drunk. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

A few noted that dancing or listening to good music made for an enjoyable night.

Going to town with your friends and dancing. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

[What else makes a good night?] Good music at clubs. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

For female participants, safety was a concern and a few mentioned that everyone getting home safe was prerequisite for a good night.

One thing for me is making sure that myself and whoever I am with gets home safely. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

It is evident that a key barrier to over-drinking and pre-loading is the perception that over-drinking and its negative impacts are actually fun. On the positive side, not getting too drunk and everyone having a good night are key elements of a good night which are clearly linked to people knowing their limits or placing limits on their drinking. Finding messages that help drinkers assess these limits accurately are the key.

It was evident that peer pressure often played a big part in continuing to drink even if a person felt like easing up on drinking during the evening.

I kind of have a bit of a reputation for being a big drinker now so if I say I am not going to drink much they will give me a bit of a hard time. And I guess over the years I have talked myself up as well. So come on don’t be weak. [And do you drink then?] Yes generally. It doesn’t take much. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)
[Over drinking?] I am a pretty slow learner. I never got hangovers and it was just a bunch of guys in a flat egging each other on basically. [So peer pressure?] Yes. It is the competition, you have to beat that guy at drinking, have to win. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

When we go out we know if we are going to get wasted or if we are just going to have a quiet night and we are always on the same level, no one teeters over the edge before the other one. If we go down we go down together basically. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

Pretty much I am the same if my friends say keep going, I keep going. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

Some participants noted that drinking was often the way people coped with difficult situations so finding alternative ways to cope with negative events may help.

[If there is always one in the group who gets out of control what is it that drives them to that point?] Some people go through phases like that, they break up with somebody or whatever. Or I haven’t drunk in awhile so I am really going to get on it tonight. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

My friend is between relationships and he is that guy at the moment, almost passing out every night, just going crazy. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

Participant’s personal descriptions and values were often not reflective of drinking habits especially across students where a culture of over drinking was prevalent.

Student culture as well. Everyone just gets on the bandwagon of doing something. Doesn’t matter what sort of person you are. Then it becomes habit. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

[We talked before about the type of person you are, in terms of drinking does it relate to the type of person you are?] I think it is just how we do it in Palmerston North. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

[Do you think binge drinking is a big issue for Palmerston?] I feel it is the New Zealand culture. Most Kiwis they keep the drinking culture so younger people look up to that as well. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, female)

Students were also looking for relatively low cost activities and drinking was seen as low cost considering the fun they had and length of time spent drinking.

I would still like to enjoy life and go to town. [Why does it change as you get older?] I think probably you find more things to do as you get older. [Is that because you are working?] Probably and you have more money to go out and do other things rather than just drinking. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

However, a tendency to over drink seemed more prevalent across those that had less parental support and were more reliant on friends to provide a sense of stability. This finding can only be seen as indicative as it is based on qualitative findings.
[If you were going to describe yourself.] Maybe alternative, spontaneous and enjoying life, money is meant to be spent, if my friends want to go out and I don’t have much money I will go out anyway. Because you can never have too many good times. [Does that come from your family?] No my parents are really straight. [What do they think of you?] They don’t really talk to me much. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

In terms of traits and personality, many participants noted that they had picked up aspects from their parents.

I hate being by myself. And I am emotional in every aspect of the word. [How do you think you have ended up that way?] My mother. I am definitely my mother’s child. [What about your values what would you say they are?] Being fair, equal. [Where have you picked that up from?] Probably definitely my parents because I have got three sisters and we were brought up completely equal, people say who was your parent’s favourite but I never felt there was anything like that in our house, we were all treated the same. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

There were also some examples provided where parents were seen to over drink and be negative role models.

[Going back to your family life and how that affects you as a person do you think that impacts on the way you drink?] My parents socialised a lot when I was a kid. They didn’t get drunk all the time but they always watched the rugby at a friend’s house. And my dad is such a piss head sometimes and if we had a house warming or something he would stay up until 7.00 in the morning with my father still drinking last ones up. But it is still safe because you are in a safe environment. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

I once came out of a club and my dad was taking a leak on the side of the road. So I don’t think he’s the best of judge. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

You see your parents at your 21st and they are just as bad as you if not worse. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

However, some participants felt that they had deliberately chosen to be totally different from their parents.

In regards to bringing up my kids one of the strongest things in my mind is that I don’t want to bring them up like my mum brought me up. Don’t make the same mistakes she did. She just wasn’t there, not active. I made my own social life and that was from an early age doing it all myself. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

[Why do you think you are opinionated?] I am the baby of the family and I have quite a weird family. So the start of my life was quite crazy, dad in jail, drugs, alcohol, all the rest of it but then my mum made the break and gave me a better life and great step father so my life went from rags to middle class. So that has made me quite opinionated on a lot of things. That is probably the whole reason I went
into social work, you can change if you want but you have to have that want. [So your mum is a role model for you?] *Kind of in a way but she is also a person that I don’t want to be like, it took her way too long to do those things.* (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

5.2 Negative experiences from over drinking

However, nearly half of respondents in the quantitative survey (47%) reported having had a negative experience while in town on a typical weekend.

- Negative experiences were more common amongst 26-29 year olds (68%), Māori respondents (58%) and those who visited three or more licensed premises (58%).

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*Base: All respondents; n=201*

- Prompted negative experiences

Respondents were shown a list of things people may have experienced after drinking and asked to identify which, if any, they had personally experienced.

- Thirty-six percent of respondents had done something they later regretted while drunk, including 42% of pre-loaders and 46% who visited three or more licensed premises, 48% who spent more than $40 and 45% who had had a negative experience while in town.

- Relationships and/or partners had been affected for 30% of respondents, more so Māori respondents (47%), pre-loaders (35%), who visited three or more licensed premises (38%), spent more than $40 (40%) and 50% who had had a negative experience while in town.

- Twenty four percent of respondents had hurt themselves or someone else while drunk. This was more common among 22-25 year olds (35%), Māori respondents (38%), pre-loaders (30%) and those who had had negative experiences while in town (39%).

- Twenty percent had not spent time with family or friends as a result of being drunk or hungover, in particular 26-29 year olds (36%).

- Nineteen percent of respondents had got into a fight while drunk (this was not specifically defined and may have been interpreted as either physical fighting or just arguing). Males (29%), Māori respondents (30%), pre-loaders (25%), those who visited three or more licensed premises (28%), who spent more than $40 (31%) and
who had had a negative experience while in town (36%) were more likely to have got into a fight while drunk.

- Seventeen percent of respondents had taken time off work/ study due to drinking; more commonly pre-loaders (22%).
- Ten percent had suffered a financial impact as a result of their drinking.

### NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES (PROMPTED)

*Here are some things people have experienced after drinking. Which, if any, of these have you personally experienced?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>All %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I did something I later regretted while drunk</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner/ relationship negatively affected by drinking - e.g. arguing, relationship break up</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injured/ hurt yourself or someone else while drunk</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not spending time with family/ friends as a result of drinking or being hung over</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got into a fight while drunk</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days off work/ study due to drinking</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial impact due to drinking - e.g. can’t afford to pay bills</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents; n=201 Multiple response

Just about all participants in the qualitative stage recounted negative experiences resulting from over-drinking. Apart from the control group, no participants felt that the negative experiences had put them off drinking or going out. A number felt that these negative experiences helped people learn their limits so that they can drink more responsibly.

**Blackouts and alcohol poisoning:** A number of participants had blacked out or could not remember parts of an evening. Some had even woken up in alleyways and had their wallet stolen while unconscious.

*I woke up in an alley way once covered in vomit, that was pretty bad, probably could have died if I had fallen asleep on my back and choked on my own vomit, I got hypothermia it was a really cold night, back in New Plymouth, I woke up at 4 o’clock in the morning and called one of my friends to pick me up. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)*

*I have woken up in an alley way too, just too drunk, tried to get to town and got lost. Woke up at 5.00. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)*

*I started drinking a bottle of bourbon and I remember drinking it and I woke up in a park the next day under a tree without my wallet. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)*

Apparently this girl I know took me home and I spewed in her bed and up her driveway. And ever since that night I had black outs, they said if I hadn’t spewed I would have had to get my stomach pumped out. So that has put me off ever getting to that state again so I am pretty careful. [Do you still get black outs now?] No
not so much. I thought I had better tone it down a bit. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

**Embarrassing situations:** Some had done embarrassing things, had embarrassing photos taken and also sent text messages they regretted sending while drunk.

> I think I make really bad decisions, I tried to kiss my ex-boyfriend’s best friend and that is not something I would ever do sober. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

> Rark up the flat mates when you rock in at 5.30 waking them up clambering about and they wake up with vomit on the floor and broken stuff. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

> One of my best friends rocked up with my ex boyfriend who she was going out with and I had a bit of a screaming fit at them and didn’t say some very nice things which to this day I don’t remember what I said but it wasn’t good. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

[In terms of negatives have you ever had any negatives or regrets from too much drinking?] *Acting like a fool. Just drunken idiot stumbling around everywhere.* (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

**Sexual experiences:** While no-one admitted to being forced into a sexual situation, a number regretted sleeping with certain people with the implication they would not have if not drunk.

> I slept with someone that I shouldn’t have. And also I ended up in a relationship and I didn’t even know how that happened. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

**Hangover:** All had experienced a hangover and noted that it sometimes takes days to recover.

[Have you ever regretted anything from drinking?] *It is a negative when you are really ill the next day.* [What sorts of things do you miss out on?] *Being alive. I drunk way too much and I have not drunk properly for about four months afterwards because I felt so sick the next day.* [How long did it take you to recover?] *Probably about two days.* (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

**Cost of evening:** A few had spent significantly more money than they had planned to with a number now refusing to take credit or EFTPOS cards with them.

> I spent $750 in one night. We were in Wellington and I hadn’t seen my friends for ages and I ended up buying lots of people drinks and we went to strip clubs. I didn’t regret that part but I regretted it the next morning when I saw my whole month’s payment gone. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

> I worked full time last year and it was sort of like that. You have money and you waste it and go to town when you don’t really need to. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)
**Injuries:** A few had hurt themselves or knew friends that regularly hurt themselves while drunk.

One of my friends has had a couple of shockers where he blacked out completely and one night he was found in our lounge with this massive gash down his back and doesn’t know how he did it and the other night he ended up under a tree in campus and he was originally in town. [Do you worry about him?] Nah he’s alright. He can fend for himself. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

I have had a couple of nights in Hamilton, I don’t know what it is about that town but I lost a tee shirt in town, got covered in vivid in town and got whipped by a prostitute. And I got stupidly drunk one night and fell over and knocked my head on the concrete. So that was me out for the night. My friends were with me. I was just too drunk. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

**Spiked drinks:** Two participants claimed to have had their drinks spiked.

I have had my drink spiked too actually that is a very negative experience. I was just lucky I was with someone who was really trustworthy. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

I stopped drinking in town when I had my drink spiked when I was 23 and that put me off and I don’t drink much at all now. [Was that common spiking drinks?] Not overly. It was the stupid army boys that did mine. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, female)

**Fights:** Being drunk was seen to increase the likelihood of violence and one participant noted that she was more likely to intervene if she sees a fight when she is drunk.

I am a really happy drunk and I am one of those people that if people start fighting around me even if I don’t know them I am going to help the victim. I got more or less assaulted, I was walking through the square me and a friend and this guy was punching his girlfriend up and I couldn’t keep walking and went “hey leave her alone”. And he came over and gave me a punch then I gave him a few. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

I hang out with guys because girls just have too much drama for me but the guys will hit each other and send one of them to hospital and they are completely fine, that is it, they are fine. I had to take a guy to hospital he had taken half of the bottom of his foot and he was fine, he got back and said let’s have a beer. They get angry, you are trying to steal my missus, then they have a fight and they are fine. Girls it goes on for much longer than boys. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

[Do you think people are more violent and aggressive when they are drunk?] Definitely. I think when they feel an emotion it gets times by about 10, so you get the ones who cry all the time or the ones that just want to kill everyone. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

[Do you think there is much violence?] I have had friends who have been hit in town for whatever reason but just wrong place, wrong time, just really unlucky. It is not necessarily them. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)
I find a lot of people cause shit in town, I see a lot of men hitting their girlfriends and stuff. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

[Have you had any negative things happen from drinking too much?] Fights. [You personally or around you?] Both. When I was younger I was arrested. [Was that part of the fights?] Yes. [So you just get a bit agro?] When I was younger, yes. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Impact on work: One participant felt that drinking had impacted on the work performance of a colleague when he had turned up late for work or still drunk while another had found it seriously impacted on his performance.

Where I used to work, one of the supervisors was a drunk and before that I used to drink with him at the pub every now and then and until I worked with him I didn’t realise he was a drunk. And then he used to come to work every day smelling like a pub, dehydrated and drink 2 litres of water. Then you could see he was still hung over and he was driving to work in the van. That wasn’t good from anyone’s point of view. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

[Would it have had an impact on your job if you kept doing that?] Yes, I would forget stuff if I didn’t have a clean head and arriving at work still half cut. One time I was four hours late for work. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)
5.3 Typical routines

Day of the week

In the quantitative survey, Saturday was the most popular evening for going into town and drinking among all of the sub groups (88% said they went out on a Saturday), followed by Friday (60%) and Thursday (33%). Least popular were Sunday and Monday evenings; 1% apiece.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents; n=201

In line with the quantitative findings, most participants in the focus groups would go out to drink on a Friday or Saturday with a few also drinking on a Thursday night. Friday and Saturday night were the most popular nights as there were more people in town and a better atmosphere. Thursdays were seen to attract an older crowd and appealed because of special deals by venues and the lack of queues.

[How often would you go out in a month?] I have probably been out twice this month. It depends if there are a lot of birthdays. [Is it usually the weekend?] Definitely. I prefer Friday because I hate being tired on a Monday. So I will drink more on a Friday. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Frequency

18-21 years

In the focus groups, the younger audience (18-21 years) were more likely to go out more frequently with most saying they go out once or twice a week.

I go to a Pub Quiz every Wednesday and then once or twice a week depending on what is on. We have monthly vet parties. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)
If I was getting drunk it is not that often but I go out for drinks maybe four nights a week but a few of those nights I would have maybe four drinks. [But you wouldn’t get drunk that often?] No maybe once a fortnight. Others it will be two. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

These participants were more likely to have multiple groups they would go out with and noted that “there is always something on if you want to do it”.

I have quite a few groups so normally someone is up for going out. I just give them a text and find out who is going out. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

I hang out with three different groups, my boyfriend’s friends, my friends from school and my friends from my uni course. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

22-25 years

The middle age group (22-25 years) were polarised with half still going out weekly while the others tempering their activity and going out fortnightly or less frequently. This group noted that they went out more when in their first and second years at university as there was a free bus into town and there were more people around to go out with.

The first year I was horrendous, three nights a week drinking and the second year it was pretty bad and then it died down the fourth year and now I am in my last year I have to make up for lost time because I will be working next year so just going out heaps. Depends on your friends as well and your flatmates. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

A number of their friends had finished university and left town and drinking habits appeared to depend on their current group of friends or flatmates.

Since I stopped studying, I drunk a lot the last three years when I had my course mates but they have all gone separate ways and a lot of them have gone home, so a lot of those mates I met over the last three years have gone. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

Even now when you go to town you don’t recognise everyone. Second and third year you knew everyone in town whereas now you know a couple of people but it is not quite the same. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

The group were also starting to feel a bit too old to be out on the town and coping with the after effects of a big night out.

Most of the time it depends on your level of intoxication. If you are so drunk that you don’t notice the people in town but sometimes if you are not in the best mood and you are looking around thinking I am way too old for this. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

I feel my age a lot more in the mornings now, the hangovers are a lot worse than they used to be. I think 21 was the plateau. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)
The oldest group (26-35 years) were most likely to go out every three weeks or monthly. Most had families so had to juggle other commitments to make time to go out on the town. While most had partners, they appeared to go out separately when planning a night out, partly to cover childcare costs and partly to cater for a preference for different activities with females finding dancing and karaoke more appealing than their partners.

[When you go out on the town is it usually not with your partner?] Sometimes it is with him and our rugby crowd and sometimes it is with my girlfriends and it is girl’s night. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

He is the sort of person who would rather sit at home and have some drinks and maybe invite his guy friends over to his house and hang out in the shed. He just doesn’t like going to the pub at all. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

[Does he go out with you or just pick you up?] He does go out but we will go together and go our separate ways. He is always wanting me to give him my attention and I don’t want to spend the whole time entertaining him. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

5.4 Modes of travel

Mode of travel into town

Private car or motorbike (40%) was the most popular mode of travel into town, followed by walking (28%) and taxi (26%). Five percent caught the bus.

- Those aged 26-35 (60%), full or part time workers (53%) and non pre-loaders (58%) were more likely to travel by private car or motorbike, compared with 40% overall.
- 18-21 year olds (36%), and those spending 2-3 hours in town (34%) were more likely to walk into town; compared with 28% overall. Māori respondents (38%) and pre-loaders (33%) were more likely to take a taxi in to town, compared with 26% overall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODES OF TRAVEL INTO TOWN</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private car/motorbike</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk (including all ready in the city centre)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents; n=201
The most popular travel modes into town outlined by the qualitative participants were either driving (with either a sober driver or opting to leave the car in town), being dropped off, or using a taxi. A few also opted to walk into town.

*My flatmates have a car, I don’t have a car, so they drop me off, but if there is a party we usually spend the night.*  (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

[What about you?] *I always taxi. I just prefer to pay money than getting raped. I got a real scare walking home from town one night and I live not even a 3 minute walk so now I taxi home from town, it costs me $4. I got such a fright I said I am never doing it again.* (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

*I usually walk home, it is about 20 minutes which isn’t too bad and you can’t remember.*  [By yourself?] *Yes usually. The walk is basically just down Rangatiki Street. [Why do you choose to walk?] I like walking. Often I will have people with me because most of the main group of friends come back to mine.*  (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

*We walk from where we are because it is $15 for a taxi just to get into town. So if you want to go out you have to get the flat involved and you have to make sure there is someone to go home with as well otherwise you end up paying the whole taxi fee and that sucks.*  [Do you ever end up going home alone or with friends?] *I used to all the time when I lived closer, I would just bugger off when I felt like it.*  [Is the price of the taxi off putting or safety?] *Price of the taxi. I wouldn’t consider walking I am too lazy to walk for 20 minutes.*  (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

*I walk, it is good to sober up a bit as well.*  [Do you walk home alone?] *Yes, depends what is happening, if I am not feeling it I just walk home.*  [Do you feel safe walking?] *It is alright in Palmerston North. As long as you stick to the main streets and don’t go to the square or the skate park.*  (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

*It depends on how many of us there is and if we can fit in a car and someone drives to town we will just leave the car in town and get a cab home then someone drives that person back the next day. But if there are heaps of us and we can get a taxi van thing we just put in money.*  (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

### Mode of travel between venues

All participants in the focus groups claimed to walk between venues while in town. It was seen as an easy walk and part of the social experience as you often struck up conversations with people walking between venues.

[How do you move between bars?] *We walk, they are all really close.*  [It is safe?] *Yes you are socializing and meeting people along the way as well.*  (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)
Mode of travel home

Taxis were the most popular mode of travel home from town (43%), followed by private car/motorbike (30%) and walking (22%). Four percent caught the bus.

- Pre-loaders (51%) were more likely to travel home by taxi, while 30-35 year olds (46%), full or part time workers (38%) and non pre-loaders (52%) were more likely to travel home by private car/motorbike. 18-21 year olds (32%) and those spending $20 or less on a typical night out (31%) were more likely to walk home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODES OF TRAVEL HOME</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private car/motorbike</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk (including all ready in the city centre)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents; n=201

In line with the preferred travel mode into town, most in the groups claimed to go home with a sober driver, by taxi, or stayed at a friend’s place in town.

[Do you go home the same way you came?] I crash normally and try and find a way home in the morning. Or you take your clothes to a mates place and go to course from your mates place. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

If it is with my husband we negotiate the sober driver or decide that we are getting a taxi. If it is my girlfriends we normally ask one of the husbands to drop us off. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

A few walked and one noted that a few venues provided courtesy drivers.

That is why a lot of people go to the pubs now because there is a courtesy ride home. [Do all the pubs do that?] The pubs not the clubs. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)
5.5 Routine changes on other nights

Twenty three percent of respondents claimed their routines changed when they were in town on nights other than their ‘biggest’ night out; more commonly those who claimed to visit three or more licensed premises during a typical night (30%).

When asked to describe these differences, 41% of respondents (whose routines changed (4)) claimed to drink less alcohol, 22% apiece visited different premises or spent less on alcohol, 16% apiece spent more or drank more alcohol and 13% visited more or less licensed premises. Other mentions included using different transportation (6%) and drinking different types of alcohol or stopping drinking for different reasons (3% apiece). A quarter of respondents stated ‘other’ routine changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROUTINE CHANGES ON OTHER NIGHTS</th>
<th>All %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drink less alcohol</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different choice of licensed premises (band/ promotion etc)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend less on alcohol</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink more alcohol</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend more on alcohol</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit more/ less licensed premises</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different transport to/ from town</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink different type of alcohol</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different reason for stopping drinking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents who have a different routine on other nights; n=32: Multiple Response

4 Small base size; findings are indicative only.
Drinking behaviour in town

6.1 Number of licensed premises visited

The majority of respondents (84%) migrated between two or more licensed premises during a typical night out in the city centre. Over two thirds (69%) visited two (36%) or three (33%) premises, 12% visited four and 3% visited five or more licensed premises. There were some demographic differences where the number of licensed premises visited was concerned:

- Non pre-loaders were more likely to visit one licensed premises; 29% versus 15% overall.
- Second and third year students were more likely to visit two premises (49%), as were those who had not had negative experiences in town (47%), compared with 36% overall.
- 18-21 years olds (42%), those who spent more than $40 on alcohol (43%) and those who had negative experiences in town (41%) were more likely to visit three premises, compared with 33% overall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF LICENSED PREMISES VISITED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On average, how many licensed premises do you go to (on a typical [X] night) out in the city centre?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents; n=201

6.2 Choice of licensed premises visited

Friends were a strong influence when respondents were deciding which licensed premises (and/or eating establishments) to go to; 32% followed what their friends were doing or met their friends wherever they were. Thirty percent claimed they followed the same (or a similar) routine every week, while 22% of respondents had no plan; they went with the flow. Non pre-loaders (26%) were more likely to report that they vary their routine or to have no plan and go with the flow; (31%).

- Thirty-four percent of respondents were more organised with 17% saying their routine varied but they decided before they went out. Older respondents (aged 26-29 (36%) and 30-35 (33%)) were more to report that they do this. A further 17% based their decision on what entertainment was on offer (e.g. a band playing).
Only 6% reported to be influenced by alcohol promotions (e.g. happy hours or offers on drinks).

- Although less statistically significant, 36% of those who have had a negative experience in town followed the same routine each time they went out compared to 30% overall.

### CHOICE OF LICENSED PREMISES VISITED

**And how do you decide which licensed premises (and/or eating establishments) to go to?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>All %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follow what my friends are doing/ meet my friends wherever they are</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same/ similar routine every time I go out</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No plan, I just go with the flow</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It varies; we decide before we go out</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends what entertainment is on offer e.g. a band playing</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends on alcohol promotion e.g. happy hour, offer on drinks</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents; n=201 Multiple response

#### Movements over an evening

While participants in the focus groups were recruited on the basis that they pre-loaded, the general journey over the evening differed across the different age groups.

- **18-21 years**

The younger group were more likely to pre-load at multiple venues before hitting town. This was generally driven by the need to pick different people up before heading into town.

[Then where do you go after home?] **We head into a mates place.** [So you go to a couple of friends places?] **By the time you get from my house to a friend’s house you start to sober up so you need a few more drinks.** [Why do you go to another friends?] **Sometimes you are picking them up or just to have a few more drinks.** [Do you have to go somewhere to buy drinks?] **Yes we normally buy them on the way back from course.** (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

This group were also more likely to claim to eat before and after going into town, even if the food was generally takeaways or snacks.

[Do you usually eat before you go out?] **Yes.** [What sorts of things do you eat?] **Takeaways or chips with dip and cheese and crackers.** (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)
Once in town this age group were more likely to visit three or more venues.

I would say four or five but it really does depend. If you are having a good night at one place and you don’t want to leave you might stay there for ages. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

We sort of know the order of places that we go. Do the same rounds and if somewhere is not feeling right you just go to the next place. [Why do you go in the same order?] Because those are the places we like and we like to finish the night in a certain place or start in a certain place because there are more people there or whatever. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

There were clearly favourite venues but most noted that if a venue wasn’t busy or lacked atmosphere they would quickly move on.

[How many places would you go to in a night?] We always go to our favourite bar called Bubbles, it is a champagne bar and I love it there and a real good friend is the owner so he gives us cool deals. And then usually Shooters, only the Cobb if we are out with the army boys and then the Beer Barrel sometimes. But if a place is fairly good we just stay there. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

Younger participants seemed to work more on a consensus basis when deciding on what they will do.

[Otherwise everyone just sort of says something?] You sort of just take turns, my best friend is my boss so sometimes we just say shall we do this or shall we do that. We joke no you make a decision, no you make a decision. It is more someone just says something and we just do that. [So more of a consensus?] Yes. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

[Who is the decision maker?] We just tend to say some ideas and make our mind up. It just happens. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

The middle age group were likely to pre-load at one venue before going into town.

Sometimes it can be the complete opposite though, it gets to 11 o’clock and people are passed out or asleep and there are only two people left so it is not even worth it. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

Normally you are at your own flat or at a friend’s place and then you go to town normally to the Beer Barrel and if that is sometimes crazy we go to EB or if there is something on somewhere else we might go there. So 1 or 2 max. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

The groups tended to be smaller and they also claimed to eat beforehand and a few also ate at the end of the evening. Once in town they generally went to two to three venues determined by a vocal ‘leader’ or a particular gig that happened to be on.
[In terms of who chooses what you do when you socialise who makes the decisions?] Usually the loudest person so I usually do. [So you make a suggestion and everyone just follows?] Yes. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

Usually someone suggests something and everyone is like yeah something to do. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

Once town closes everyone goes to food bars. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

26-35 years

The oldest group generally pre-loaded at one place and tended to only go to one or two places once in town. There appeared to be a preference for pubs rather than clubs as these were seen to cater to an older crowd and sold jugs.

[What is your usual night out?] I think when you go out in Palmy it depends what crowd you are with as to what pub you go to. And I think everyone knows what to expect at every single pub. I could name 10 pubs and say exactly what people go there. [So each one is a stereotype.] Yes. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

The ladies in this group were less likely to eat beforehand, noting that they were too busy feeding the kids before going out and they also liked to focus on drinking rather than eating on their rare night out.

[Eat before going out?] I am more worried about feeding the kids first and getting yourself sorted and ready on time. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

And I am either we are going out to eat or we are going out to drink. One or the other, if I eat I can’t drink and if I drink I just want to keep drinking. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

6.3 Typical on license alcohol spend

Respondents’ typical on license alcohol spend varied widely; at the extremes 5% claimed to spend nothing on alcohol and 4% to spend more than $100. One third (33%) of respondents spent up to $20 on alcohol and a further 41% spent between $20 and $50. Nineteen percent of respondents claimed to spend over $50. Mean spend at a licensed premise was $38.

- Females (54%), 18-21 year olds (48%), non-Māori respondents (43%), those who visited one or two licensed premises (48%) were more likely to spend less than $20 on alcohol during a typical night out; compared with 38% overall.
- Males (49%), those who were working full or part time (42%), Māori respondents (45%) and those who visited three or more premises during a night out (47%) were more likely to spend $40 or more on alcohol (versus 32% overall).
SPEND

How much do you usually spend in total on alcohol at licensed premises (on a typical [X] night?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LICENSED PREMISES</th>
<th>All %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1 - $10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10 - $20</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20 - $30</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30 - $40</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40 - $50</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50 - $100</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $100</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEAN</strong></td>
<td><strong>$38</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents n=201

Total estimated spend – including at licensed premise and pre-loading

A derived total spend has been estimated which combines the declared amount of alcohol purchased at a licensed premise with the amount purchased to drink before going out. Mean total spend was $62.

By total spend, nearly half of respondents (48%) spent over $50 during an evening (covering any drinks consumed before and while in town). Ten percent of respondents spent up to $20 and a further 38% spent between $20 and $50. Only 4% claimed to spend under $10.

TOTAL ESTIMATED SPEND – LICENSED PREMISE + PRE-LOADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL – LICENSED PREMISE + PRE-LOADING</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10 - $20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20 - $30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30 - $40</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40 - $50</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50 - $100</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $100</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEAN</strong></td>
<td><strong>$62</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents n=201
6.4 Type of alcohol consumed

Spirits were the most popular alcohol of choice in licensed premises (55% reported drinking spirits). This included 70% of Māori respondents and 67% of those who spent $40 or more on alcohol during a typical night out.

- Also popular were beer or cider (34%) and RTD’s (38%). Beer drinking was more common among male respondents (58%), non pre-loaders (48%) and those who spent $40 or more during a typical evening.
- Wine drinking was more common among females (24%), 30-35 year olds (31%), non pre-loaders (27%) and those who had not had a negative experience in town (21%); compared with 15% overall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF ALCOHOL CONSUMED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Derived from: How much of each of the following do you usually drink in licensed premises (on a typical [X] night)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LICENSED PREMISES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer or Cider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTDs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirits (including with mixer/ cocktails/ shots)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base: All respondents n=201 Multiple response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.5 Amount of alcohol consumed

The amount of reported drinking at licensed premises is much less than reported in comparison to pre-loading. Far fewer respondents report drinking more than 6 measures (i.e. glasses or bottles) of any specific type of alcohol in a licensed premises.

The majority of respondents consumed between 2 and 4 measures (i.e. glasses or bottles) at a licensed premises. This was usually achieved by drinking one (49% of those who drank in licensed premises stuck to one type of alcohol) or two (35% of those who drank in licensed premises drank a mix of two alcohol types e.g. RTDs and shots) types of alcohol.

Those who consumed over 11 measures of alcohol in a licensed premises were most likely to be beer / cider drinkers. Those who drink shots in a licensed premises, again, limit themselves to between 1 and 6 shots. Cocktail drinkers were slightly more likely to drink more in a licensed premises.
AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL

How much of each of the following do you usually drink in licensed premises (on a typical [X] night)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LICENSED PREMISES</th>
<th>1-6 %</th>
<th>7-10 %</th>
<th>11-15+ %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wine (Glasses – 6 = 1 bottle) (n=30)</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottles of beer or cider (n=55)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pints of beer or cider (n=20)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottles of RTDs (n=76)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasses of spirits + Mixer (n=58)</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocktails (n=16)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shots (n=60)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents n=201 Multiple response

In the focus groups, participants generally noted that the number and type of drinks consumed in town was very different to those consumed at home. A few claimed to not drink any alcoholic drinks in town, while the remainder reduced their consumption dramatically with many also changing to less expensive drinks like jugs of beer.

“We chip in and buy a super jug or take turns buying a super jug but it would just be the one to keep us going.” (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

A few bought cocktails, shots, RTDs and mixed spirits but clearly not in the volumes consumed at home.

[What about you _____?]  I have no idea how much I drink to be honest. I drink a mix of RTDs, pre load and then get into town and tend to buy shots and everyone has one.  [Do you drink much in town?] No nothing compared to what we would drink at the flat.  (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

[Do you drink more at home than in town?]  Yes I barely drink in town unless someone is buying drinks or I happen to have money at the time.  (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

One participant in the older group claimed to potentially drink as much in town as at home.

There would probably be a short list of what I don’t drink but I would usually drink either bourbon or wine before I went out. I would probably drink at least 8 to 12 and two or three bottles of wine.  [What about in town?] Everything. Shots, beer, spirits.  [You will have as much in town as you do at home?]  I could do.  (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

6.6 Awareness of standard drinks

The younger participants in the focus groups (25 years and younger) seemed reasonably knowledgeable about the equivalent standard drink volumes by alcohol type.
[Do you think of things as standard drink size?] One beer would generally be one standard drink. [So do you think that is a lot 16 - 20?] I would say it is above average, it is kind of a bit. [A cask of wine?] I think it is 29-31 standard drinks. [Could you drink a whole one by yourself?] I have done it before but that wasn’t good. [So you are pretty aware of what a standard drink equates to?] Yes. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

[Do you know how many standard drinks are in a bottle of wine?] Isn’t it 7? Depends how fast you drink it. [And RTD’s?] 1.3 or 1.4. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

[Do you take much notice of standard drinks?] Yes. I have had lots of bad nights on 8% so I don’t drink them and I check that you are not having something with too low a percentage but it is not too high either. [How many would you have in a good night?] I am a bit of a light weight and I like it that way because it is cheaper. The last big night I had, I had a box of 8% so that is 12 cans and I will never do that again. Normally I would have 6 to 10 maybe. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

It was noted that the number of standard drinks was on the back of the bottle or can. However, most did not think about the number of ‘standard drinks’ they consumed in an evening but gauged their drinking levels by the ‘buzz’ or how happy they were feeling.

[Do you think about the number of standard drinks you have?] Makes me sad actually when you are having a beer you have quite a tall glass of beer and you look at the back and it says 1.3 standard drinks. [Do you think about how many standard drinks you might have in a night?] No. Until I can’t drink any more. You either feel real sick or your friends are like no or the bartender doesn’t serve you. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

We always do the calculations. [So how many do you think is okay to drink?] Sometimes it depends on what you are drinking too. I have got a better tolerance for beer than an RTD or spirits. Your body is used to this as opposed to that. [What do you have normally if you go into town?] It used to be a 12 box but working up to 15 or 18. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

The focus group with older participants (26-35 years) were less aware and often dismissive. They disputed the number of recommended standard drinks as they felt it depended on a person’s tolerance to alcohol and their weight. A few stated that their ‘tolerance’ to alcohol had increased as they got older.

I would easily drink a dozen RTDs before I go to the bar, easily, and when I get out I would probably have 5 drinks depending on my pocket situation. I am a binge drinker if I am going to drink I will drink in a big way and I will keep going. [In town are they RTDs too?] Yes because it is easy when you are dancing to have it in a bottle. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

I am a fish. I like beer, Woodies, Bourbon, it has to be 8% can’t be 5%. [How many standard drinks would you have before you go out?] Maybe two or three left in the box when I come home. [So you might have 10?] Yes about 10. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)
6.7 Hours of activity

The majority of respondents in this survey (60%) claimed to arrive in town between 11.00 p.m. and 2.00 a.m. At the other extreme, 6% claimed to arrive in town between 3.00 and 7.00 p.m. and 32% between 7.00 and 11.00 p.m.

The most common time to leave town for respondents was between 2.00 and 4.00 a.m. (52%) followed by 22% who left town between midnight and 2.00 a.m. Fifteen percent left town between 7.00 p.m. and midnight and a minority of night owls (10%) left after 4.00 a.m. There were demographic differences impacting on when respondents arrived in town and left:

- Fourth year (or more) students were more likely to arrive between 9 p.m. and 11 pm; 44%, as were those who spent four or more hours in town (39%), compared with 19% overall.
- 22-25 year olds were more likely to arrive in town between 11.00 p.m. and midnight; 57% versus 40% overall, as were pre-loaders (50%), those who spent two-three hours in town (74%) and who visited three or more licensed premises during an evening (50%).
- 18-21 year olds (29%) and those who spent four or more hours in town (39%) were more likely to arrive in town between midnight and 2.00 a.m.; compared with 20% overall.
- 26-29 year olds (44%), Non Māori respondents (27%), those who spent four or more hours in town (29%) and those who were both working and studying (35%) were more likely to leave town between midnight and 2.00 a.m., compared with 22% overall.
- 18-21 year olds (67%) and pre-loaders (63%) and those who visited three or more licensed premises (60%) were more likely to leave town between 2.00 and 4.00 a.m. (versus 52% overall).
- Of those who have had a negative experience in town, 52% leave between 2am and 4am.

### HOURS OF ACTIVITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What time do you usually arrive in town?/ What time do you usually leave town to go home?</th>
<th>LICENSED PREMISES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before noon</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 noon - 3.00 p.m.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00 - 6.00 p.m.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.00 - 7.00 p.m.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.00 - 9.00 p.m.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00 - 11.00 p.m.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00 p.m - midnight</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midnight - 2 .00 am</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00 am - 4.00 am</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 4.00 am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents n=201
In the focus groups, nearly all claimed to stay until the clubs and pubs start closing at 3 am in the morning. This was generally because they did not go into town until midnight so it would seem premature to finish the night any earlier.

I like to be out by about 2.45 because after that fights will start and then the lights turn on. The few times I have stayed I have decided there is no point in staying that extra 15 minutes in the club because everyone just falls out and there are fights and gross people. [So a lot of them close at 3.00 and they turn the lights on.]

Yes. [Do you go to other people’s houses or do you go home?] I go home. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

While most go home after the venues close a few in the younger group would continue on to a friend’s place to continue drinking.

[What is home time?] You hit Empty Vessels and they kick you out and then normally there is a party until about 5.30. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

6.8 Reasons to stop drinking in town

When asked why they stopped drinking alcohol at a certain point in the evening, 31% of respondents claimed it was because they got too drunk, more so males and 18-21 year olds (38% apiece). Thirty percent stopped drinking when it was time to leave and 24% stopped when they felt relaxed. Fourteen percent stopped drinking when they ran out of money and 12% stopped when they got sick. Sober drivers (8%) stopped when they reached the safe driving limit and 8% when licensed premises closed.

### REASONS TO STOP DRINKING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>All %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I get too drunk</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends are leaving/ I am tired and want to go home/ I meet someone to go home with</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I stop when I feel relaxed</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I run out of money</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get sick</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am usually the driver so drink until I reach the limit to drive</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The bars/ clubs/ restaurants etc. are closed</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no one left to socialise with</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The bar person stop serving me/ bouncer will not let me in</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents; n=201 Multiple response
Most in the focus groups felt that they had learnt their limits from drinking in the past. These so-called limits might include starting to feel sick, feeling woozy, or starting to slur words.

[When do you decide you are not going to drink anymore?] When I feel it. I can tell when my limit is and I don’t like going over that limit because I have actually never been really drunk before. I drink all the time but as soon as I get to a point I don’t drink anymore because I don’t want to be that one that is spewing that everyone has to look after. I don’t want to be that girl and I have never been it before. [How do you know your limit?] I feel it. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

[When do you stop ____?] There is a point I get to where I know if I drink more I am going to end up puking so you stop or slow down from there. [Is that from experience?] Yes it has happened once and now I know exactly when to stop. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

[What is your trigger to stop?] When it starts coming back up. [So when you feel like you are going to be sick?] Generally. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

[What is your trigger to stop?] You stand up and you feel a little bit woozy or you are chatting to friends and start slurring your words. So you slow down a bit. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

[When do you stop?] It depends what kind of night I want. If I want a good night I will keep drinking until my body is like I am going to puke, then stop drinking. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

Another trigger was reaching a state where they felt happily drunk “but not too drunk”.

[Do you know when to stop?] Usually if it is near town time and you are feeling like a really good drunk, I usually stop then unless friends are like yeah have some more. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

A few noted that if they started feeling tired or it was getting late they would stop drinking. A lack of atmosphere would drive one participant to stop drinking while another stopped when venues refused to serve him.

If the birds are singing I go gee I had better go home those kids are going to be awake soon. [So it is the time of the morning?] Yes or if I am somewhere and someone kills the buzz. If there are drugs or drama I go “that is it I am going home”. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

[When is your stop trigger?] It depends on the crowd and the drama. When I was younger I used to do two days but I can’t do that now. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)
Pre-loading attitudes and behaviour

7.1 Reasons for pre-loading

When asked what was their main reasons for drinking before going out, 59% mentioned socialising with friends (e.g. people who weren’t going out). The second most common reason (57%) was that it was cheaper. Seventeen percent preferred the more relaxed (and quieter) off-license environment and for 11% it was an opportunity to meet friends before going into town together.

- Younger respondents (18-21 year olds) were less likely to mention cost as their main reason for pre-loading (48%). In comparison, 26 - 29 year olds were more likely to mention cost (73%) than any other sub group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN REASONS FOR PRE LOADING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the main reasons that you usually drink before you go out? Are there any other reasons?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialise with friends (e.g. who aren’t going out)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More relaxed environment/ licensed premises too loud to talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I meet my friends and we go into town together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can smoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to get the ‘brand’ of alcohol/ mixer that I want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All pre-loaders; n=139 Multiple response

The rationale for pre-loading was consistent with the quantitative results with cheaper alcohol and the social aspects of pre-loading driving this behaviour. However, there were other factors uncovered in the groups on why people pre-load, and on prompting most admitted that they would probably drink less over an evening if they did not preload at home first.

[Do you think you would drink less if you drank in town?]  *Probably. I probably wouldn’t get completely off my face.*  (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

*Before you go to town you try and down as much as you can before you go.*  (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)
[Drink more?] Yes, when you are in town you have to actually go up and get the drink whereas at home you have a box sitting next to you, it is the accessibility. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

**Cheaper:** Most participants pre-loaded as it was seen as much cheaper, especially for the type of drinks they preferred.

[Do you think drinking before you go into town makes some of these things happen more?] Yes but it is a necessity really. If you have a big night you have to drink at home unless you are really loaded. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

It would be so much more fun to drink in town. But you just can’t afford it because it is so expensive. It is like a 400% mark up. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

Drinks in town were considered expensive so most also wanted to drink enough so that the “buzz” lasted when they got to town.

You want it to last whereas you wouldn’t have to if you could still get drinks in town. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

If you are home you have to get yourself high to where you want to be once you get to town. Whereas if you are in town you can stop when you feel good. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

**Social:** There was a social aspect to pre-loading as it was seen as a time to talk and relax before heading into town.

One good thing about preloading or drinking at a mates place is the socialising and being able to sit down. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

It’s fun. It is that time with friends, the crap you talk about before you go out. [Is it easier to talk when you are home?] More relaxed. That is your time with your friends without all the kids saying I am hungry, I want this, I want that. When girls unwind they pretty much unwind. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Most noted that it was difficult to talk in town, while at home it was more relaxed and they could also play their own music.

You can talk to people and socialise. If you are in a club and there is loud music it is hard to talk to people. You can chat rather than yelling at people from across the table. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

You can’t talk in town, if you want to talk to somebody it has to be beforehand. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

It is your choice of music, your choice of volume, your choice of mates. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)
**Too early to go to town:** Town was seen as quiet until midnight so pre-loading was a way to keep occupied until it was time to go into town.

You don’t really go to town until about 12.00 so if you are sitting around not drinking at someone’s house for hours it would be boring. [Why would you not go into town earlier?] *Just no people.* (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

It was also seen as part of the organisation of the evening and getting the group together.

When you go to a friend’s place it takes quite awhile to move people out of your flat and into town. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

**Fun:** Most played drinking games while pre-loading which was seen as fun and a good way to kick off the night.

You want to meet more people when you have had a few drinks and it is more fun. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

Another reason will be drinking games. Drinking games are real fun, you can’t take a pack of cards with you and play at a pub. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

The drinking games at home. [Is that pretty fun?] *Definitely. It is a socialising thing too.* (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

**Peer pressure:** Participants did not want to be the only sober person and as everyone pre-loaded it was seen as necessary to take part too.

Sometimes there is a lot of catch up going on if someone starts drinking a bit later so they tend to drink heaps very quickly, especially if you are heading off to town in a couple of hours. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

Sometimes if you are sober in town you don’t really enjoy it as much. You have got to be quite drunk to enjoy dancing. [So if you went into town at midnight you would have to try and do a catch up if you hadn’t drunk?] *Yes try to. You know you have to be a certain amount of drunkenness to enjoy town.* (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

[Any other reasons why you preload?] *You have to be drunk to go out I think. I have to be drunk, I wouldn’t go out clubbing if I wasn’t drunk, honestly I wouldn’t bother.* (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)
7.2 Propensity to pre-load

Over two thirds (69%) of respondents drank before going out on a typical night. This was more common amongst 22-25 year olds (83%) and those who visited three or more licensed premises on a typical night out (78%). Thirty percent of respondents did not drink before doing out on a typical night out. 30-35 year olds (54%) and those who visited one or two licensed premises on a typical night (39%) were the least likely to do so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRE LOADING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now we are going to talk about drinking before you go out on a typical [X] night. Do you usually drink alcohol before going out? (on a typical [X] night)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I do drink before going out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I do not drink before going out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All respondents; n=201

7.3 Regularity of pre-loading

Forty one percent of respondents claimed to drink alcohol before they went out into the city centre on every occasion (on a typical night out), 36% did so most times and 19% occasionally. Four percent rarely drank before going out.

- 18-21 year olds (51%) and Māori respondents (59%) were the most likely to drink before going out on every occasion. Males (48%) were most likely to drink most times, before going out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRE LOADING HABITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often do you drink alcohol before you go out into the city centre (on a typical [X] night)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All pre-loaders; n=139
7.4 Shopping location for pre-loading alcohol

Off-licenses/liquor stores (79%) and supermarkets (35%) were the most popular outlets for purchasing pre-loading alcohol.

- Non Māori were more likely to purchase from supermarkets (40%) while Māori were more likely to use the off licence (95%).

**PRE LOADING PURCHASES**

*Where do you usually get the alcohol you drink, before going out (on a typical [X] night)?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Off-license/ Liquor Store</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supermarket</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varies; depends where it is the cheapest</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone else buys the alcohol</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base: All pre-loaders; n=139; Multiple response*

As found in the quantitative survey most in the focus groups claimed to purchase their alcohol at a discount liquor store or a supermarket. Their choice of store was generally determined by the type of liquor they were buying, convenience of the location, and any special deals that might be running.

**[Is Big Barrel the cheapest place?]** Big Barrel. They always have good deals. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

I tend to drink spirits so it is whatever is cheapest. [How do you find that out?] If I have driven past a few stores. I actually go to the one outside Pak n Save because it is convenient. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

I will go to whoever has the specials, not that I look for the specials, it is just people know them. If we have got something organised I will say what are you drinking and they say well the Barrel has got Woodstock for $19. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

In general, supermarkets appeared popular for beer and wine, while liquor shops were popular for spirits, RTDs and beer specials. Specific liquor stores mentioned were Big Barrel, The Mill, and Awapuni Liquorland.

There is a place in Awapuni, off license and that is one of the cheapest places we have found around town, that or The Mill. [Do you keep an eye out?] After six years of being in Palmerston North you now where the cheap places are. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

I actually go to the discount alcohol shop. Beer Barrel down Tremaine I know where they both are. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)
The amount spent was determined by the discretionary cash on hand and appeared to vary greatly.

*Usually any supermarket have got a special. I don’t spend any more than $10.*  
(Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

### 7.5 Pre-loading drinking location

Respondents were most likely to drink at their own (63%) or a friend’s (60%) home before going out (on a typical night out).

- 26-35 year olds were the most likely to drink at home (88%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRE LOADING LOCATION</th>
<th>All %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At a friend’s house</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club bar (e.g. Sports club/ RSA/ Con club)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At work</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a car</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a public or outdoor space e.g. park, while walking into town</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base: All pre-loaders; n=139; Multiple response*
7.6 Estimated spend on pre-loading alcohol

When asked to estimate how much they spent on the alcohol they drank before going out (on a typical night out), 37% of respondents spent less than $20, 29% estimated they spent between $20-$30 and 16% between $30-$40. Eighteen percent spent more than $40.

- Females (45%) and non-Māori respondents (48%) were most likely to estimate they spent $20 or less.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPEND</th>
<th>PRE LOADING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would you estimate how much you usually spend on the alcohol you drink, before going out (on a typical [X] night)?</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1 - $10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10 - $20</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20 - $30</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30 - $40</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40 - $50</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50 - $100</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $100</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>$34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean spend for pre-loading was $34. At the time of writing, shoppers could purchase the following for around or below this amount.

- A 1 litre bottle of whiskey, bourbon, gin or rum ($30)
- 18 330ml bottles of Steinlager classic or 12 330ml bottles of Steinlager pure ($29)
- 24 330ml bottles of Tui, Export Gold, DB Draught ($30)
- 12 440ml cans of Bourbon and Cola ($22)
- 15 250 ml cans of Rum and Cola ($18)
- 12 250 ml cans of Vodka Breezer ($18)
7.7 Type of pre-loading alcohol consumed

Beer or cider and spirits (including with mixer/cocktails/shots) was the alcohol of choice for 45% (apiece) of pre-loaders. Also popular were RTD’s (41%); wine less so (22%). Demographic differences were:

- Males (75%) and those spending more than $40 in licensed premises (60%) were more likely to drink beer (compared with 45% overall).
- Females were more likely to drink RTD’s; 51% versus 41% overall, interestingly, there was no significant difference between the age groups.
- Māori respondents (61%), those who spent 2-3 hours in town (54%), who spent $20-$40 at licensed premises (66%) and who had a negative experience in town (55%) were more likely to drink spirits; compared with 45% overall.
- Females (36%) and those aged 30-35 (47%) were more likely to drink wine (compared with 22% overall).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF ALCOHOL CONSUMED</th>
<th>PRE LOADING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Derived from: How much alcohol do you usually drink, before going out (on a typical [X] night)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beer or Cider</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTDs</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirits (including with mixer/cocktails/shots)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All pre-loaders; n=139 Multiple response

A range of drinks were consumed by participants in the focus groups, including, beer, cider, RTDs, wine and mixed spirits. There did not appear to be a strong trend by age according to the type of alcohol consumed and some claimed to purchase on the basis of price and percentage alcohol rather than type of alcohol.

[It is always beer pretty much?] Depends what is on special. What is cheap to be honest, could be a cask of wine. But that is never pretty to be honest. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

I just go for percentages. Just whatever is the cheapest with the highest percent. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

Some claimed to take caffeine pills with their alcohol.

We have got into the habit before we go to town of doing shots, no doze and a shot of tequila and it is caffeine to kick you on. No doze is a caffeine pill you can buy from Countdown. I think that is just the energy kick to go along with the alcohol. Because you get sleepy sometimes from drinking too much. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)
The volumes drunk by the older groups (over 22 years) appeared larger compared to the younger participants. This seemed in line with the perception across older participants that their tolerance to alcohol had increased with age.

*Probably between 16 and 20 beers and nothing in town. My tolerance has gone up a bit over the years, it used to only be a dozen. But doesn’t do it anymore.*
(Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

### 7.8 Choice of alcohol consumed

Respondents most frequently mentioned cost (cheap/ on special) as best describing their reason for their choice of alcohol before going out; 62%. For 27%, it was what they felt like drinking and 24% mentioned taste (or probably to a lesser extent, being able to match alcohol and food). This latter description was most common among non-Māori respondents; 30%. Eighteen percent of respondents mentioned the alcohol effect i.e. its intoxication or non intoxication or its hangover effects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASONS FOR ALCOHOL CHOICE - BEFORE GOING OUT</th>
<th>All %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost (Cheap/ on special)</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I feel like drinking that night</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste/ food matches</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect (Intoxication/ non intoxication levels/ hangover effects)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All pre-loaders; n=139 Multiple response
7.9 Quantity of pre-loading alcohol consumed

The majority of respondents consumed between 4 and 6 measures (i.e. glasses or bottles) before going out on a typical night. This was usually achieved by drinking one (54% of pre-loaders stuck to one type of alcohol) or two (36% of pre-loaders drank a mix of two alcohol types e.g. beer and spirits) types of alcohol before going out.

Those who consumed over 11 measures of alcohol in a pre-loading session were most likely to be beer / cider or RTD drinkers. Most wine drinkers drink around one bottle of wine in a pre-loading session. Those who drink shots in a pre-loading session limit themselves to between 1 and 6 shots.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL</th>
<th>1-6 %</th>
<th>7-10 %</th>
<th>11-15+ %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wine (Glasses – 6 = 1 bottle) (n=31)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottles of beer or cider (n=57)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pints of beer or cider (n=7)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottles of RTDs (n=57)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasses of spirits + Mixer (n=44)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocktails (n=6)</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shots (n=25)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All pre-loaders; n=139 Multiple response
7.10 Hours of pre-loading activity

The most popular time for respondents to start pre-loading was between 6.00 and 9.00 p.m. (71%). Fifteen percent started drinking after 9.00 p.m., 9% before 6.00 p.m. and 5% weren’t sure.

- 30-35 year olds (59%) and those who spent between $20-$40 on alcohol at licensed premises (49%) were more likely to start drinking between 6.00 and 7.00 p.m. compared with 29% overall.
- Females (53%), full or part time students (71%), those who visited 1-2 licensed premises on a typical night out (52%) and those who spent less than $20 on alcohol at licensed premises (55%) were more likely to start drinking between 7.00 and 9.00 p.m. (versus 42% overall).
- Respondents who spent two-three hours in town were more likely to start drinking between 11.00 p.m. and midnight; (63% versus 2% overall).

The most popular times to finish drinking and head into town was between 11.00 p.m. and midnight (44%). 28% finished drinking and headed into town between 9.00 and 11.00 p.m., 7% before 9.00 p.m. and 16% after midnight. 5% were unsure.

- Non Māori respondents (32%) were more likely to finish drinking and head into town between 9.00 and 11.00 p.m. (versus 28% overall). Respondents spending two-three hours in town were more likely to head into town between 11.00 p.m. and midnight (63% versus 44% overall).

### HOURS OF ACTIVITY

**What time do you usually start drinking, before going out (on a typical [X] night)?/ What time do you usually finish drinking and head into town?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRE LOADING</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Finish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before noon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 noon - 3.00 p.m.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00 - 6.00 p.m.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.00 - 7.00 p.m.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.00 - 9.00 p.m.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00 - 11.00 p.m.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00 p.m- midnight</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midnight - 2.00 am</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00 am - 4.00 am</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All pre-loaders; n=139 Multiple response

The declared timing of pre-loading was backed up by the focus groups. Most participants in the groups did not think it was worth arriving in town until midnight as that was when more people were around and there was a better atmosphere.
Last year we went in Street and there was us and no one else at 12 o’clock and then they started coming at 1 o’clock, it was a bit weird that people go crazy at home and then come to town. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

[Most of you go into town about the same time, why is that around 11ish?] Because that is when everybody goes, you don’t want to be the only one in a pub because that is boring. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

7.11 Routine changes on other nights

Respondents were asked if their routine before going into town differed on other nights. Twenty-four percent respondents agreed they had a different routine.

These respondents were then asked the main differences in their routines before going into town on other night (\(^5\)). Fifty-four percent of respondents said they drank less alcohol, 21% didn’t or were less likely to pre-load and 18% spent less on alcohol. Thirteen percent apiece obtained their alcohol from a different source or spent more on alcohol. Eight percent of respondents apiece claimed they drank more alcohol, drank different types of alcohol or pre-loaded at a different location.

- There were no significant demographic differences in routine changes on other nights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROUTINE CHANGES ON OTHER NIGHTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What are the main differences (in your routine before you go into town on other nights)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink less alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t/ less likely to preload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend less on alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get alcohol from a different source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend more on alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink more alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink different type of alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preload at different location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All pre-loaders who have a different routine on other nights; n=24

\(^5\) Low base size. Findings are indicative only.
Communications and initiatives

8.1 Limiting drinking

Most in qualitative research felt it would be difficult to get people to limit their drinking as it was almost viewed as a “rite of passage” that had to be learnt from experience.

As a kid no one could tell me not to do something basically and even somebody who was a little bit older than me saying “no you shouldn’t do that”, I feel like you have to learn from your own mistakes with some things in life. You just have to make the mistake and learn from it because when you are young you think you are bullet proof anyway. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

There is always that feeling that you have waited 18 years to drink so you are going to anyway and going to make your own mistakes. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders)

I think if they get drunk one time then they will know their reaction and just like me, I know if I feel a bit heady I have to stop because it will get worse. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

There was a perception that most people gradually grow up and stop drinking excessively.

I think first, second and third year I drank a lot but you get over it a bit, if I go to Auckland and catch up with friends they drink heavily so I will drink with them but because you have spent a lot of time drinking already, you do grow up a bit. [Gets a bit old?] Yes you have experienced a lot of it already. Don’t go out just for the sake of drinking any more. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

I feel I am passed my peak already so probably in 5 years time I will hardly be drinking. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

There was ample evidence of how difficult it is to stop over drinking with some participants fully aware of the negative impacts but who nevertheless continued to binge drink.

I watched my dad die from liver cirrhosis and I still binge drink. I condone it to myself that I don’t drink every night I save it all up for that once a month but I think that affects your body more than one or two drinks a night. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Some possible measures raised to curb drinking are outlined following.

Learn limits: Need to provide goal posts for people to recognise limits with examples given such as setting limits before heading out, taking limited cash out, or “just drinking for the glow”.
That is the thing rather than deciding to stop drinking while you are drinking you have to decide how much before you start. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

Taking cash into town and not your card. I do that all the time now. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

[How about limiting it?] If I am going to a friend’s place and I have got spirits I will get a big Coke bottle and so much spirits and so much mixer and that is my drink for the night. [Is that a way of limiting what you drink?] Definitely. I sort of know what gets me good drunk. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

There was a clear message not to try to enforce hard limits such as outlining the number of standard drinks to be drunk as this was seen to potentially encourage people to break the rules.

[What would not work.] Not a hard limit so only drink 8 standard drinks a night or something. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

Yes limits definitely make you want to try and break them. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

Show consequences: Participants were polarised over the benefits of showing the consequences of over-drinking but some felt that showing people fighting, not enjoying themselves and being sick might put some off drinking so much.

[So how do you learn to try and convince people not to drink quite as much as they do?] If you could it would be great if you could take them into town at 3.00 in the morning and show them the aftermath of what happens when you drink too much, people lying on the floor in their own sick and people fighting and it is just not a pleasant place to be. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

One participant thought that documentaries on the impacts of over-drinking could deter some people.

Maybe more programmes on the affects of alcohol, I know there have been some documentaries. [Do you watch stuff like that?] Yes I do. I am quite interested in stuff like that and I even record it. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Provide good role models: There was seen to be a lack of good role models and most noted that they had grown up with older people saying how “cool it was to get wasted” or actually over-drinking in front of them.

To be fair I think the majority of it is the role modelling we are doing. We are really bad role models, we have a really huge night and get wasted, be puking and the next day we will talk about it like it was the greatest night of our lives. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

You never brag that I had a hangover for three days. I might say I got drunk and lost my pants and my younger siblings think it is hilarious and I do glorify it a bit. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)
Younger role models they could relate to were seen as more effective.

[Is there anything that would put people off if they tried to get messages out there to people?] I think they need to be told by younger people because they get told by teachers or older people but have you heard of that Attitude Programme. There is this Attitude Programme and they have people our age, really funny and really easy to relate to and they go around and say the consequences, like they say everything and they were the only people I listened to when I was young. I took in everything they had to say. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

**Health impacts:** Health impacts were starting to become more important to some older participants so showing how over-drinking can impact on a person’s health and looks could potentially deter some from drinking.

I am kind of one of those people now so I think for me it is the health benefits and weighing up is it worth spending money on that. It is kind of that I don’t like drinking for the sake of drinking any more. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

I went without for quite awhile over summer, just found the benefits quite good. I didn’t really miss it that much and I have got a lot healthier and a lot fitter. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

[Impact of drinking?] I put on weight. [Is that enough to stop you drinking?] Obviously not. I don’t do it often enough. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

Health issues, headaches, falling over, I think you would have lots of health issues as well if you kept doing it. [Like liver damage?] Yes. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

**Police presence:** There was seen to be a need for a greater police presence in town and possibly ticketing people that are too drunk. There was a suggestion to ticket the parents of underage children caught drinking in town.

I think if you have more Police around in The Square. It is not really the clubs where it is happening it is around them. When people are walking in between the clubs. If you had a couple of Police on the edge of the square and you could see the Police then you are more than likely going to keep out of trouble. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

I have seen on some TV programmes in other countries where Police hand out those notices that they are not allowed in town and if they don’t they will be arrested if they are too drunk or not behaving properly. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

[Ideas or messages that might hit home to people to make them think about limiting how much they drink.] We said about a fine for being overly drunk, like when you are driving you are fined. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, female)
Perhaps the only way to have more discipline with the kids is to punish the parents, if you picked up a 13 year old in town who was drunk and the Police picked them up and took them to the parent’s house and fine the parents. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

Peer pressure: Being surrounded with good friends that don’t pressure you to over-drink or having someone in the group that was sober was seen as a good way to curb negative impacts.

You have to be with people who will pull your head in. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

[What would you do to stop getting it to that point?] Just having one sober person in your group all the time. It is no good if everyone else is drunk they just egg you on. If I saw one of my friends too drunk I would just laugh my head off but if I was sober I might say you have had enough mate. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

There is always someone who looks after you if you are too drunk it is pretty good. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

One participant noted that taking her own drinks and pretending they are alcoholic was one way she coped with peer pressure about drinking.

Sometimes if I find there is a bit of pressure to drink I will take a bottle of juice and if people ask I say it is Vodka and juice and then they leave you alone, you don’t get hassled why aren’t you drinking. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

There may also be merit in reinforcing a message that good friends look out for their mates as it was clear that some were aware of drinking problems among certain friends but often failed to do anything about it.

We have another friend who has really bad tolerance but he always felt he had to keep up with us especially doing drinking games and he would always be in a really bad state. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

One participant also felt that peer pressure diminished as you got older.

I think when you are getting to 23 or 24 people are becoming more understanding that you don’t want to have a drink. But when you are younger and you are usually playing drinking games. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)
8.2 Key messages to stop over-drinking

Some suggested messages raised by participants to stop over-drinking which are outlined following.

- Always drink with good friends that will look out for you.

  *My one and only rule is always drink with someone, never ever drink alone. Bad things happen when you drink alone and there is no one to stop it happening as well. If you have got someone then hopefully one of you is sober enough, even if you are both drunk one of you might be slightly more sober to call an ambulance or do something.*  
  (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

  [Is there anything you would say to someone from what you have learnt, from experience.]  
  *Just make sure you have got good friends. You can tell people not to drink but they are going to do it anyway. It is a rite of passage they are going to do it and they are going to learn from their own experiences. You can’t teach them that sort of stuff. As long as you have got good friends who keep an eye out for you. Know who your friends are.*  
  (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

- Don’t push friends to drink and don’t drink to make other people happy.

  [If you can talk together about ideas and messages to stop people getting excessively drunk.]  
  *I would say drink to make yourself happy not to make other people happy. Quite often I just do it to be the life of the party.*  
  (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

- There is no need to hurry into drinking, there is plenty of time and plenty of fun to had without over-drinking.

  *I say to my little sisters when they say mum won’t let me do this I say don’t worry there is going to be a time when you will be able to do whatever you want anyway, whatever you want to do there is a time in your life when you can do it. Try and put it into perspective that their teenage years are only a small portion of their lives.*  
  (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

  *There is no reason to rush, enjoy your childhood.*  
  (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

  *Try and not rely on drinking to have a good time.*  
  (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

- Learn to know your limits so you drink but don’t get overly drunk.

  *Drink but not over-drinking, I think drinking is fun but only a few drinks. But you can’t say to someone have ‘no alcohol’.*  
  (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non-pre-loaders, male)

- Don’t mix your drinks.

  *Mixing drinks as well is the worst thing.*  
  (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non-pre-loaders, male)
- **Over-drinking can stop you having a healthy, happy family life.**

  The government could set up a programme to show the negative effects of drinking on families and individuals. Not only health problems but like you were saying with the domestic abuse and stuff like that. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

**In the control group there were a number that previously used to over-drink that provided some indication of additional messages that may be effective.**

- **It is time to grow up and move forward with your life.**

  You have to grow up eventually but having a kid made it a bit faster. It happened when I was 23 or so. [Do you have quite a few friends that still go out?] No we have all settled down. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

- **It’s sad seeing people who don’t grow up.**

  We’ve got one friend who is seen as the joke of the circle now because she is still doing it. Her life is still stuck where she was five years ago, still drinking too much and we have all moved forward. [So she is like a cautionary tale really?] Yes. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

- **Over-drinking can threaten your job and career.**

  [Messages to stop drinking?] I think if you say that it will impact on your job, that would work or something which could equally affect your future. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

  [Did you used to go into town?] I used to go into town quite a bit. [What stopped you?] I sort of grew up once I had kids really. Got a better job and focused on the career. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

- **You can enjoy time with friends without drinking.**

  We now go out with friends and have dinner and a few drinks but somebody is sober driving and you are never intoxicated anyway. You can still talk and are not stumbling or slurring your words. [What do you think stopped you doing that?] I suppose it would be a bit of peer pressure, not your friends telling you to go and get drunk but if the majority of your friends are drinking people you would probably drink as well. Whereas the friends I have got when I stopped drinking they stopped going out as well. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

- **Staying in control keeps you safe.**

  As long as you have a support crew you can get through or stay enough in control so you can keep yourself safe. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)
8.3 Initiatives to stop pre-loading

Most participants were cynical about advertising and initiatives to stop over-drinking and pre-loading. They were critical of ads that were seen to trivialise and make fun of the situation - and they felt most people made fun of these ads.

I don’t like the idea how they take the piss out of things to try and get messages across. I just think it deters the meaning by making something funny, like a funny ad with a serious meaning. I don’t think it gets into their heads because that just makes it stupid. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

The suggestions to stop pre-loading and some of its negative impacts tended to be more action focused and are outlined following.

Cheaper drinks in town: There was a suggestion to have happy hour later in the night or to reduce the price of drinks in town across the board. They felt that this would mean people would head into town earlier and be less likely to pre-load so heavily.

[What about getting people into town earlier?] The only reason it is cool later is because no one goes into town. And the only reason they don’t go into town is because it is too expensive to drink there earlier. So you have to make the drinking cheaper in the pub to get them there earlier. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non-pre-loaders, male)

[Would it be better if there was more happening in town earlier?] It is just financial definitely. Get drunk at home and then hope it lasts in town. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)

I reckon if drinks were cheaper in town and there was something on in town I reckon people would go into town earlier and they wouldn’t drink so much beforehand. If town got really good at 9 o’clock who is really going to want to get really drunk at 7 o’clock straight after dinner. [So you tend to over-drink because you get so drunk waiting around to go into town.] That is honestly it. When we have girls night out the girls are like we can’t go yet, town is not going to be open just play another drinking game. Every time. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, female)

Activities in town: Another suggestion was to have entertainment in town to get people going to town earlier. Some examples raised were activities put on during Orientation week such as foam parties and toga parties.

They should have organised events and it keeps you all in one place as well rather than spreading out. (Palmerston North, 18-21 years, pre-loaders, male)

Going to BYOs are fun, you don’t get as drunk as well. It is like food places where you can bring your own wine. [Do you tend to go into town after that?] Yes but it is usually a lot tamer, not the outrageously getting drunk. You are mellow and having fun and it is more social. [Is that as good a night as any?] Yes that is a really good night. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)
Showing and providing alternative entertainment: Somehow showing that entertainment and having fun can be achieved without over-drinking. This might be achieved by having role models showing alternative ways to socialise. Activities unrelated to drinking such as the ice skating rink set up in The Square in the past were seen as good ways to keep young people occupied without needing to drink and other sports could be used in a similar way.

They need activities for people to socialise that are really cool. Places to socialise that aren’t just around alcohol. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, female)

[They also said maybe having things happening in town.] Like ice skating or things like that. That would help. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

I suppose what I said earlier about having more things to do would stop drinking. I went go-karting with some of my mates and that was awesome. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, male)

Emotional messages: Some felt that messages needed to be future focused and to have an emotional impact such as the impact of being hungover on family life.

Like being hungover for the kids and I am in bed most of the day and they are bored. But I never drunk when they were younger, they are older now. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

If it came to a day where I said sorry kids I can’t take you to sports then I would go that is ugly and do something about it. If it interfered in what I hold important. (Palmerston North, 26-35 years, pre-loaders, female)

I don’t think a video of physical pain would work, there are just so many videos of people hurting themselves, failing, it has just become normal. It would have to be something where someone mentally got damaged. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

Support groups: One participant suggested setting up support networks like Quitline to study the way this issue could be addressed and also offer support for those that want to stop.

Smoke Free New Zealand there is a lot of success in that area so I wonder if it would work with these issues. Preloading they could be involved in some groups where it could be addressed. [So preloading is dangerous for your health like smoking?] Yes. [So do a study why people do that?] Yes study them and keep in regular touch. Because it is their own choice you have to convince them to stop. (Palmerston North, 18-35 years, non pre-loaders, male)

Banning glass: There was a suggestion to ban glass bottles to limit the amount of broken glass and related potential for injury.

[People getting injured?] Well, could ban glass bottles - just have cans and plastic. (Palmerston North, 22-25 years, pre-loaders, female)
Sample profile

9.1 Sample profile and lifestyle statements

The table below shows the distribution of the overall sample that regularly goes out to licensed premises. This group is split into two: the distributions of those who drink before going out and those who don’t.

- Fifty-six percent of the sample was female and 44% male. Looking at those who pre-load, 54% were female and 46% were male. Among those who do not pre-load, 60% were female and 40% were male.
- Sixty eight percent of the sample was aged 18-25; they represented 77% of those who pre-loaded before going out and 48% of those who did not pre-load.
- Forty one percent of the sample was students (full and part time studying and/or studying and working); they represented 44% of those who pre-loaded before going out and 35% of those who did not pre-load.

Near the conclusion of the interview, respondents were also shown a list of things people sometimes say about their lifestyle and were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with each of the statements. The following describes those who ‘agree’ with each statement - that is those who strongly agree and agree with each statement.

- Eighty four percent of respondents agreed they ‘liked to make new friends and expand their social network’.
- Sixty six percent agreed they were ‘sporty, outdoor people’; more so males (75%) and those who visited three or more licensed premises during a night out (73%).
- Over half of respondents (52%) agreed they ‘like to think about and debate key issues of the day’; more commonly those aged 26-29 (76%) and non pre loaders (71%).
- Thirty five percent of respondents agreed they were ‘quite conservative and traditional’, in specifically those who were working full or part time (43%) and non pre -loaders (47%).
- Thirty percent agreed they ‘were under financial pressure’. This was more common among 18-21 year olds (38%), those working and studying (42%), in their fourth or more year of study (89%) and spent $20 or less at licensed premises on a typical night (40%) and 26% vs 21% for pre-loaders vs non pre-loaders.
- Twenty two percent agreed they were ‘quite shy in social situations’, more so those aged 26-29 years (40%) and full or part time students (43%).

Pre-loaders were more likely to be younger and also students. They were less likely to view themselves as conservative and less likely to ‘think about and debate key issues of the day’. There were no significant differences by gender or ethnicity.
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<th>No, don’t drink before going out/Unsure</th>
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Base: All respondents

(*) : Base All studying; n=83
## SAMPLE PROFILE (continued)

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Base: All respondents

(*) : Base All studying; n=83