



# The YAWG Project

[www.yawg.info](http://www.yawg.info)

## Alcohol Factsheet

38 young Aboriginal women and girls participated in the YAWG project and were asked their thoughts and experiences around fighting, offending and drinking

# The National Picture<sup>1,2</sup>

There is a lack of data about alcohol use and young Aboriginal women. From the

NATSISS, we know about **13%** of young Aboriginal women aged 15-24 years drink at levels exceeding health guidelines on single occasions.

Among young Australians in general large national surveys have found that the average age young people start drinking is 16 years.

More than one-third (34%) of young Australians reported they had NEVER consumed alcohol.

Almost half (46%) of young Australians had tried alcohol in the past year and 27% in the past month.

**43%** of school students who were current drinkers obtained alcohol *from their parents*.

## YAWG Project Findings

The YAWG study found a high level of participants were drinking alcohol at levels which placed them at a higher risk of harm:

The majority of the participants (**66%**) had consumed alcohol. Seventy one per cent had tried it by the time they were 14.

Participants knew about emotional and behavioural effects of alcohol, like becoming an angry or sad drunk, but they didn't know much about the physical effects.

Most of the participants had been introduced to alcohol at a young age by a family member.

Some participants had felt very unsafe when adults or friends were drinking because it had **led to fights** or unwanted sexual attention. This influenced some to make the decision not to drink at all.

Many Aboriginal girls **didn't want to talk** about challenges of living within families where drinking was regularly occurring in case they were taken away from their families by child protection services.

## Recommendations

Young women do not have enough information about the physical effects of drinking. There is scope for **more education** about drinking and its effects.

Young women **want more discussion and knowledge around drinking** to be initiated by service providers including schools, community groups and specialist AOD services.

Young women **want discussions to happen much earlier**, from the age of 10 years.

Young women want service providers to **understand** their lives and the impact alcohol has for some families so they **do not feel judged**.

The YAWG website can help **inform** and educate service providers about the lived experiences of young Aboriginal women and girls.

<sup>1</sup> NATSISS: <https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4714.02014-15?OpenDocument>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia/contents/priority-populations/young-people>

