

Report on STEER Breath-testing at BluesFest 2016

The facts about alcohol and driving behaviour at BluesFest



photograph of Vintage Trouble courtesy of Jeff Dawson 2016

April 2016

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Executive Summary

STEER Breath-testing positively change drink driving behaviour by making a person-to-person connection at the coalface i.e. where choices about safe celebrating and safe driving are made. STEER Breath-testing volunteers offer patrons a free voluntary breath-test and provide information and resources associated with safe alcohol consumption and safe safe driving- STEER Breath-testing is a part of major music Festivals and had the first presence at BluesFest in 2016.

STEER Breath-testing received an overwhelmingly positive response from BluesFest patrons. Many people commented on what a simple idea it was and were so grateful for an opportunity to increase personal awareness of their blood alcohol concentration. For some, breath-testing provided a type of game in which participants dragged their friends to the breathalyser and insisted they all take a test. Even in this 'play' context the breath-tester increased awareness amongst patrons regarding their BAC's. For most, breath-testing provided an increased awareness of their BAC assisting them to choose a safe transport option. Many people would test early in the evening and return regularly to monitor their BAC.

STEER volunteers were on hand to provide information and resources about standard drinks, processing alcohol and alternative transport/accommodation options.

STEER Breath-testing provided over 1100 breath-tests and conducted over 120 surveys with Festival patrons. The surveys enable STEER to paint a picture of the intentions of BluesFest patrons both before and after breath-testing. Surveys at BluesFest 2016 revealed:

- 64% of surveyed patrons were aged under 39;
- 57% were males;
- 47% were intending to and/or thinking about driving home prior to breath-testing;
- 28% of patrons had reasonable self awareness of their BAC;
- **100% of patrons intended to change their behaviour after a breath-test indicated they were over their legal limit.**

STEER Breath-testing recommend provision of voluntary breath-testing at Festivals and community events be at least recommended and at best compulsory.

Introduction

Australia is deemed to have the most successful Random Breath-Testing program internationally, having maintained RBT programs in all states since the 1980's.

STEER Breath-testing compliments government breath testing and aims to positively change drink driving behaviour by making a person-to-person connection at the coalface i.e. where choices about safe celebrating and safe driving are made. Our STEER Breath-testing volunteers offer patrons a free voluntary breath-test and provide information and resources associated with safe alcohol consumption and safe safe driving.



The STEER Breath-testing vision is ***“to positively change drink driving behaviour at festivals, community events & private activities likely to involve consumption of alcohol and driving”***. Our objectives at large festivals, community events and private activities are to...

- increase awareness of standard drinks;
- increase personal awareness of BAC;
- increase awareness of BAC relative to amount of alcohol consumed;
- increase awareness of safe celebrating options for those intending to drive;
- change intended behaviour of those intending to drive who test over their legal limit

STEER Breath-testing was initiated in 2013 with support from an Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal ABC Heywire Youth Innovation Grant and Transport for NSW.

Background

Regional areas, and the Byron Shire particularly, are disadvantaged by a lack of safe transport options. This results in many young people, particularly males, making unsafe transport choices. In the 5 years from 2005-2010 there were 1,367 reported crashes in Byron Shire involving 17-20 year olds.¹

Alcohol is a contributing factor in 15% of fatal crashes for young drivers aged 17-25.²

According to police, Tweed Byron LAC has ranked number one in NSW over the last three years for alcohol related crashes.³

BluesFest is a multi-day music festival held over the Easter weekend about 15km north from Byron Bay. Approximately 100,000 patrons passed through the BluesFest gates between Thu 24th Mar and Mon 28th Mar 2016.⁴

¹Figures obtained from Road Traffic Authority (NSW): crashes in the 17-20 yr age group in Byron Shire from 1/7/2005 to 30/6/2010.

²Figures obtained from Safer Drivers Course for Learners (RMS) crashes for young drivers aged 17-25, 2011.

³ From [Northern Star](#) 26th Nov 2015

⁴ www.echo.net.au - 29th March 2016

What We Did

STEER Breath-testing provided over 1100 voluntary breath tests and conducted over 120 surveys with Festival patrons.

Prior to the commencement of BluesFest we sent an email to over 1400 subscribers. The open rate was 35.1% which is well above the 22% industry average for non-profit organisations.⁵

The breath-tests represent almost 1800 conversations with Festival patrons in which STEER volunteers increase self awareness associated with alcohol consumption amongst patrons.

The conversations included...

- discussing how much patrons had drunk over a period of time;
- asking patrons to estimate their BAC;
- providing a “thinking drinking and driving infographic”;⁶
- providing information about ‘standard drinks’;
- providing information about safe celebrating e.g. where to get water, importance of eating/resting, providing suncream
- providing information about alternative transport options e.g. Festival shuttle bus;

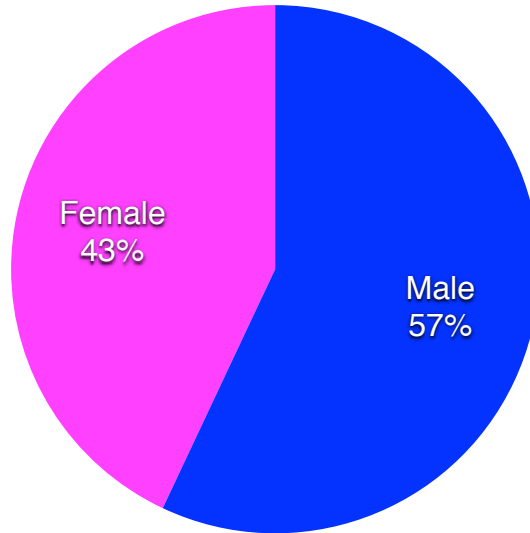
⁵ refer to Appendix for content of email

⁶ refer to Appendix for content of infographic

Who we surveyed...

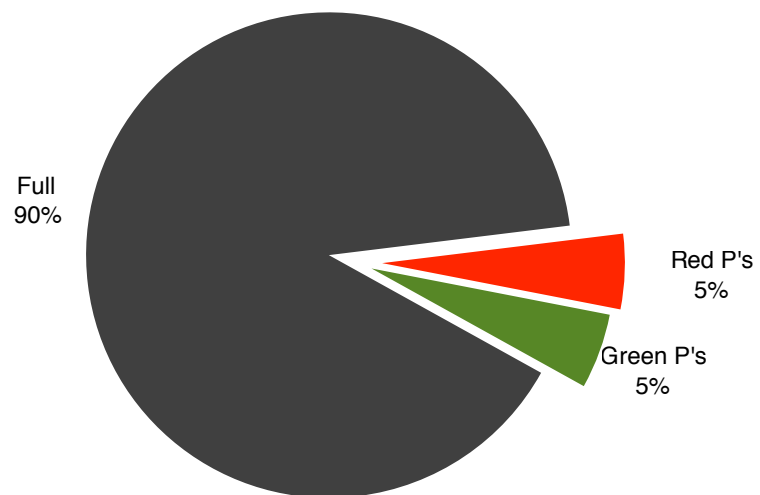
Gender

Gender

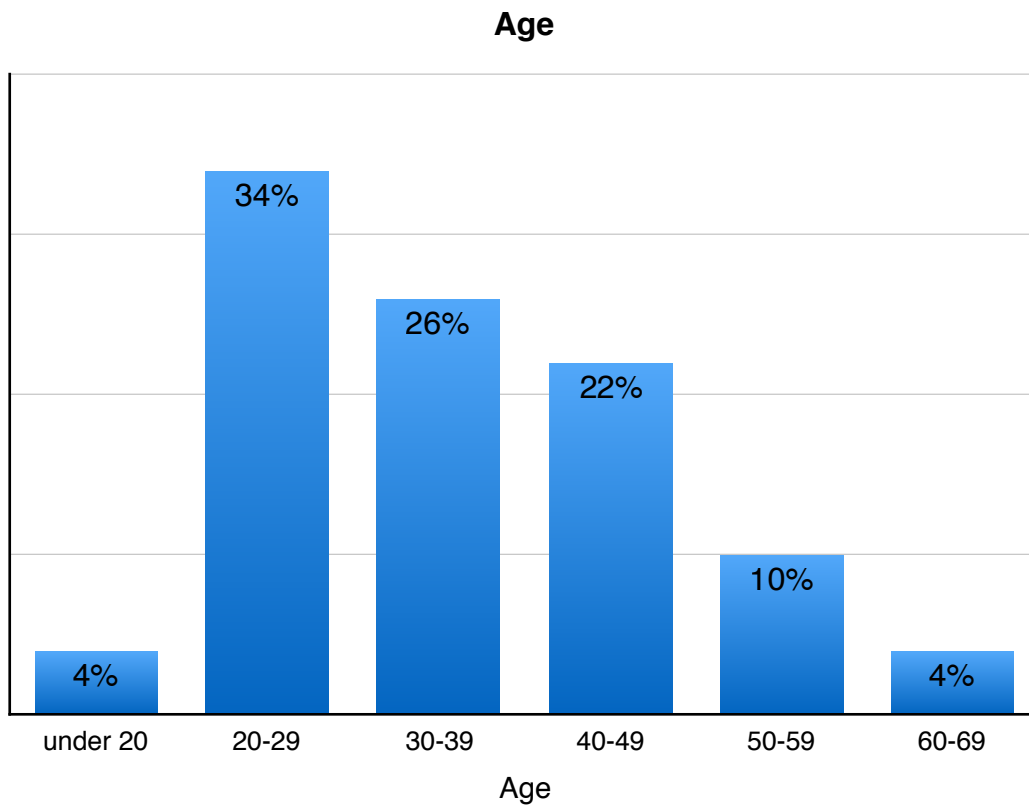


Licence Type

Licence Type



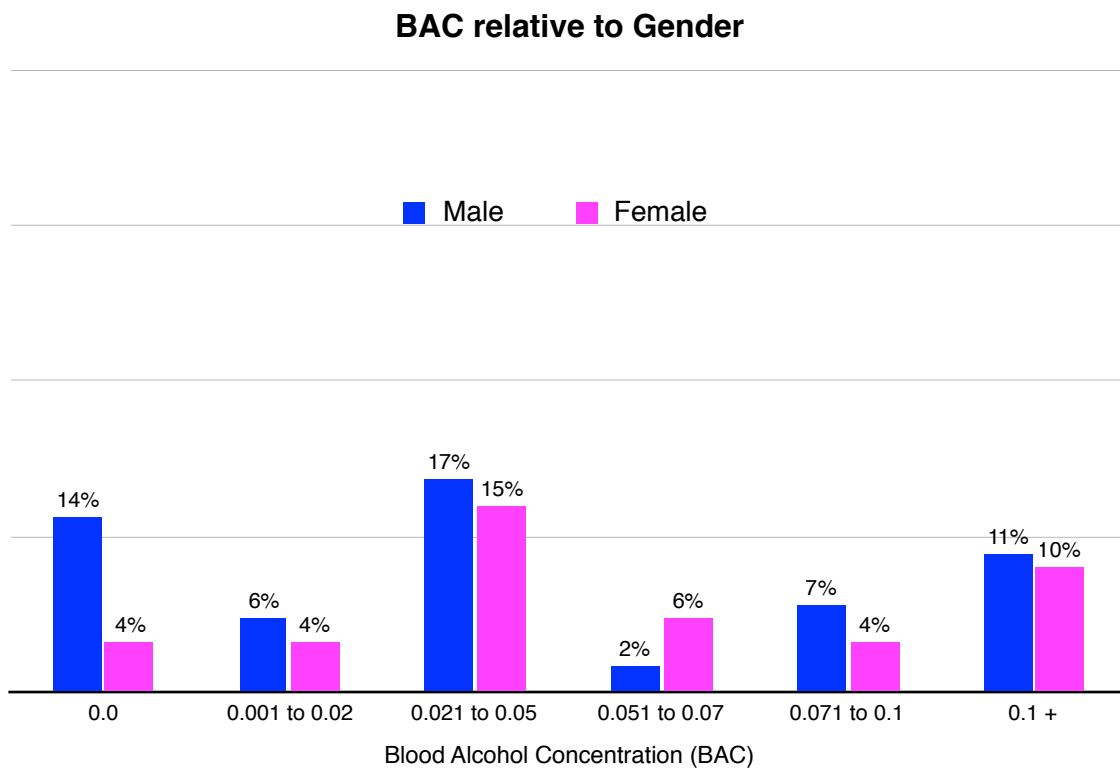
Age



STEER Breath-testing is particularly effective at targeting high risk males i.e. 57% of all those tested were males and 64% were aged under 39.

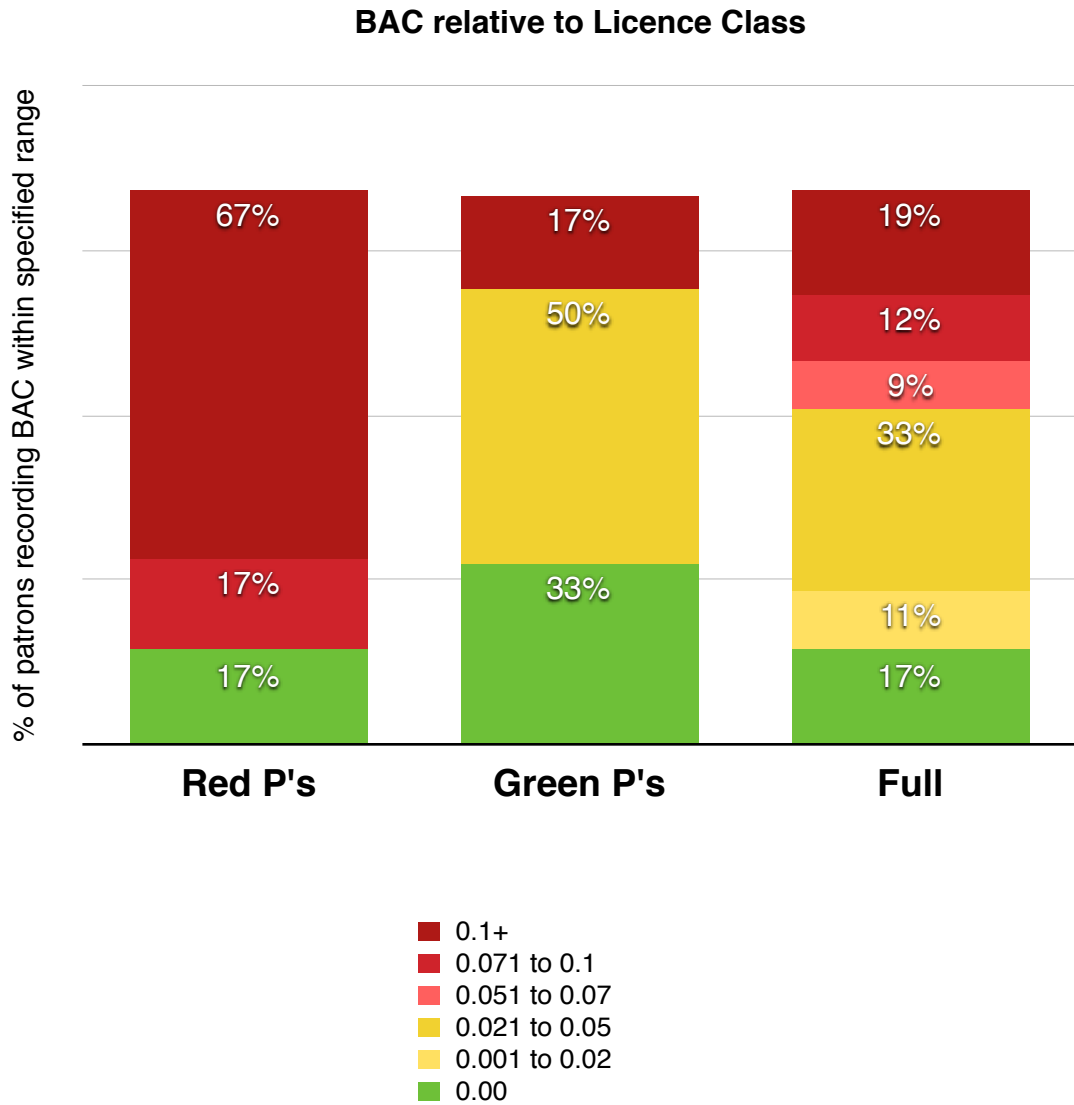
What we discovered...

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) relative to Gender



The incidence of 0.0 BAC was significantly higher for males.

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) relative to Licence Class

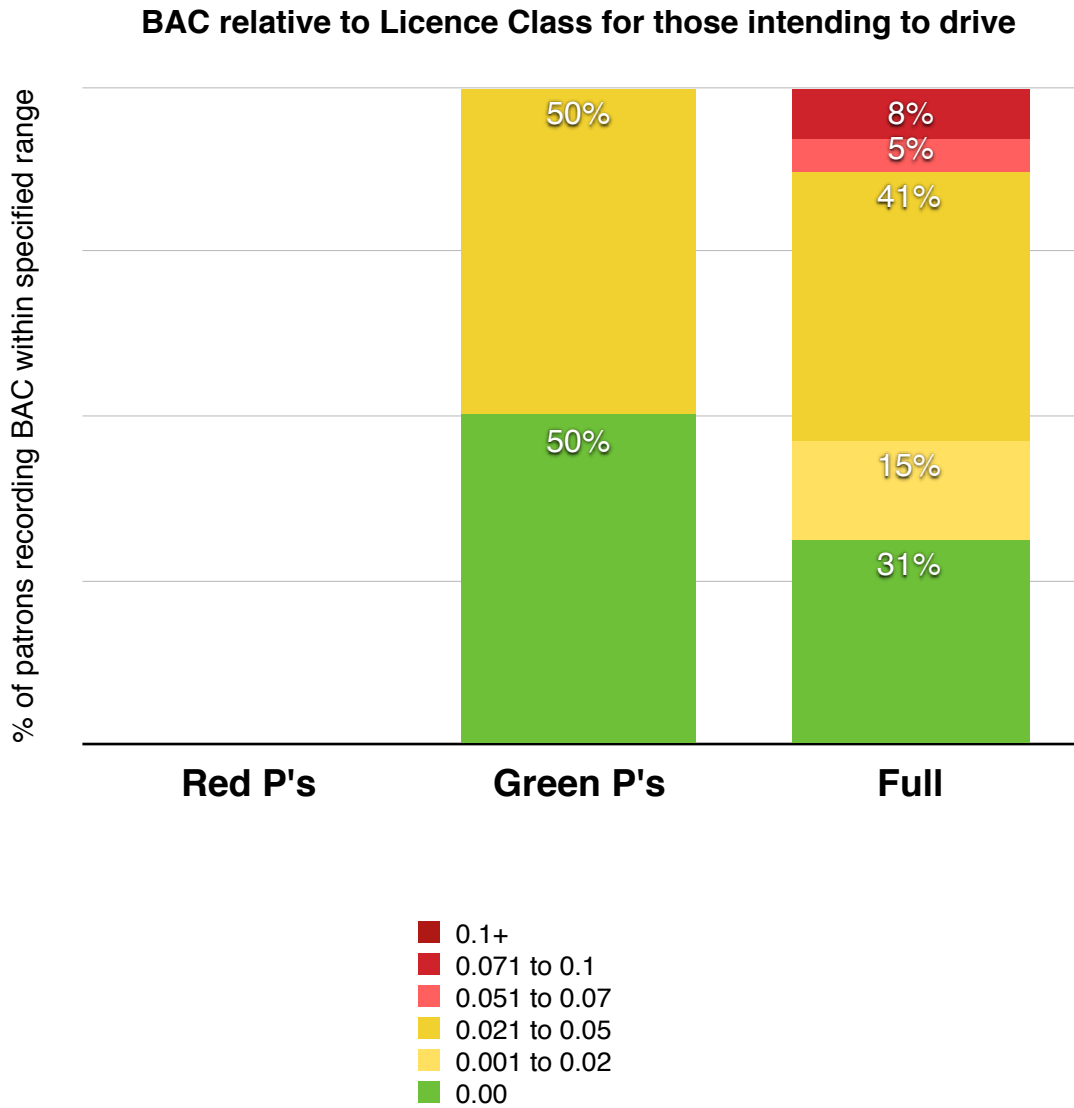


NOTE: results for Red and Green P's are skewed due to low sample size.

Over half of full licence holders surveyed had a BAC under 0.05.

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) relative to Licence Class for those intending to drive

The BAC's for those intending to drive was generally lower than for all those surveyed.



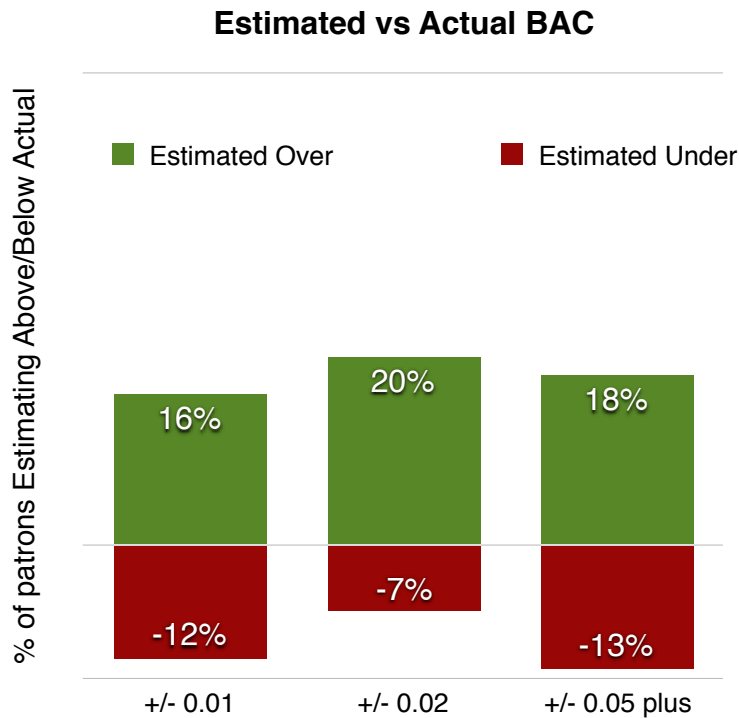
No Red P platers surveyed were intending to drive. 86% of full licence holders intending to drive had a BAC under 0.05.

Estimated vs Actual Blood Alcohol Concentration

Patrons were asked to estimate their BAC prior to a breath-test. 28% of patrons estimated within +/- 0.01 of their actual reading indicating reasonable self awareness of BAC. As an example... if such a patron had an actual BAC of 0.04 they may estimate a BAC between 0.03 and 0.05.

At the other end of the scale, 31% of patrons estimated within +/- 0.05 of their reading indicating little self awareness of their BAC. As an example... if such a patron had an actual BAC of 0.04 they may estimate a BAC between 0.0 and 0.09.

In general, a patron estimating over their actual BAC is more likely to drive within their legal limit.



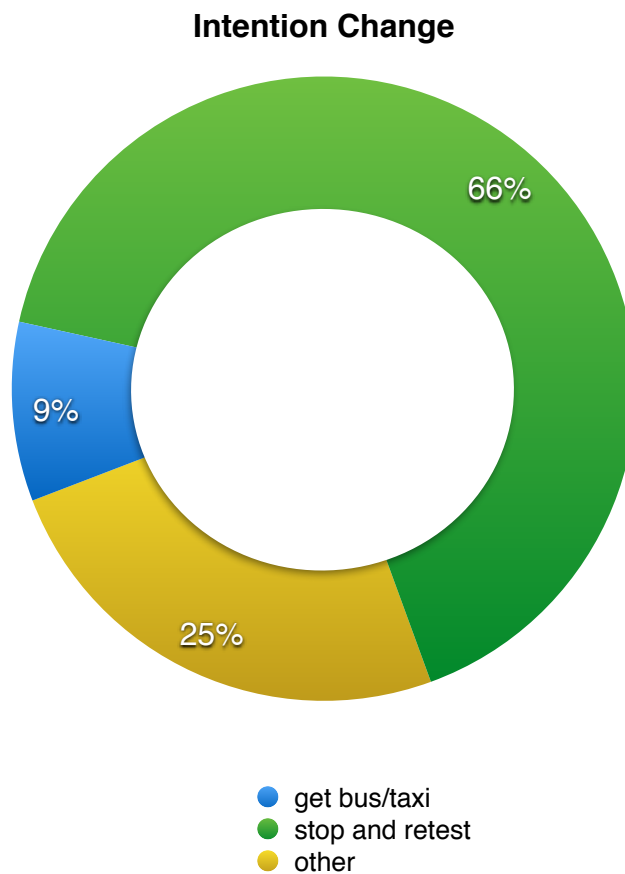
31% of patrons estimated their BAC within +/- 0.05 of actual reading indicating little self awareness of BAC. 28% of patrons estimated their BAC within +/- 0.01 of actual reading indicating reasonable self awareness of BAC.

Change of Intention

Prior to a voluntary breath-test patrons were asked if they intended driving home:

Those intending to drive home -	33%
Those maybe driving home -	14%
Those not driving home -	53%

Subsequent to a breath-test, those intending to drive home changed their intentions according to the following:



100% of patrons intended to change their behaviour after a breath-test indicated they were over their legal limit.

Destination of those Driving



Improvements

As much as the STEER breath-testing presence at BluesFest was very successful, there is always scope for improvement. Additional measures for BluesFest 2017 might include:

- handing out flyers w/ information about safe celebrating/driving and STEER breath testing in car park as cars arrive. Ideally incorporate an offer/voucher to increase level of engagement e.g. offer a free water/soft drink;
- activate awareness of STEER breath-testing at Festival bars;
- offer “morning after” testing in campground prior to cars leaving site;
- activate awareness of “morning after” breath-testing within Festival site and campground;

Thank You

STEER Breath-testing is a community initiative and relies on widespread community support to develop, evolve and succeed. We would like to acknowledge and thank:

- all patrons who participated in STEER breath-testing;
- our STEER Breath-testing volunteers;
- Byron Youth Service;
- BluesFest;
- Diageo;
- Alcohoot;
- NSW State Library;
- Jeff Dawson for the cover photograph

We would also like to thank community members for expressing their support of STEER breath-testing:

... I'm not going to risk driving. Thank you so much"

20-29 year old female full licence driver who wanted to get back to Tweed Heads... she didn't know about the 0.05 limit and had a breathtest of 0.082... she elected to catch a bus

"... this is being responsible"

40-49 year old male full licence driver who came in with his young son and made this comment to his son as he was about to blow into the breathalyser

"... this is a great service"

under 20 year old male green P plater... came in to check and blew 0.015... said he would stop drinking and come back and retest

"Well done to Philip Preston and his STEER team- 100% of patrons intended to change their behaviour after a breath-test indicated they were over their legal limit. Punters... are safer because of you guys as are other drivers sharing the road. With a vision to "positively change drink driving behaviour at festivals, community events & private activities likely to involve consumption of alcohol and driving", you guys are a crucial component of the festival fabric. Thanks to you all..."

Byron Shire Mayor, Simon Richardson

Contact

We appreciate questions, comments and suggestions regarding STEER breath-testing.

We welcome the opportunity to work with government, organisations and businesses who...

- support our vision to “***to positively change drink driving behaviour at festivals, community events & private activities likely to involve consumption of alcohol and driving***”;
- want to engage w/ 100,000 patrons at BluesFest,
- want trusted person-to-person interaction with over 1000 individuals

Please contact...

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Email
Website

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phil@steerproject.org.au
www.steerproject.org.au



Appendix

Easter Roadtrips Email

STEER
youth transport project

View this email in your browser

<<First Name>> ,
thinking drinking and driving over Easter...



drink water
plan to drink juice, soft drink and plenty of water to keep hydrated.



know your standards
alcohol is alcohol. know how many standard drinks you are consuming.



test yourself
every body is different. personal breath-testers indicate your BAC.



eat and rest
take time out to eat, refuel, relax and maybe have a nanna nap



get a lift
organise lifts with responsible friends and/or use public transport



get home safely

... the choices are yours <<First Name>>

steer
GETTING YOUTH GREAT PLACES

www.steerproject.org.au

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thinking drinking and driving at BluesFest...

drink water
plan to drink juice, soft drink and plenty of water to keep hydrated whilst at the Festival

know your standards
alcohol is alcohol. know how many standard drinks you are consuming. visit STEER breath-testing stall for standard drink info.

know-b4-you-go
visit us regularly at the STEER breath-testing stall during the Festival and before you leave

personal breath-tester
every body is different. personal breath-testers indicate BAC. available for purchase at STEER breath-testing stall

eat and rest
take time out to eat, refuel, relax and maybe have a nanna-nap

get a lift and use Festival transport
organise lifts with responsible friends and/or use Festival transport. more info at STEER breath-testing stall

get home safely

visit the STEER breath-testing stall at BluesFest near the north gate



...the choices are yours

Survey Sheet



Breath Testing Survey

Day/Date:

Time:

1. Male Female
2. L Plate Green P Plate Red P Plate Full Licence
3. Under 20 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70+
4. Are you currently intending to drive home? **NO** **MAYBE** **YES**
5. How much alcohol have you drunk and over what period of time?

READ TO EVERY PARTICIPANT:

Please be aware BAC can increase for up to 2 hours after your last drink. This BAC reading is indicative only. If you are in any doubt regarding your ability to drive safely we suggest you choose an alternative transport option.

EST
BAC

ACTUAL
BAC

6. After breath testing what is your intention?
 I will drive home safely
 I will stop drinking and retest;
 I will get a friend to drive my car;
 other...
 I will get a lift with a friend;
 I will get a bus/taxi;
 I will stay onsite/nearby;
7. If you are driving... what is your destination postcode? ... and how many people in the car?

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS FOR A CHANCE TO WIN AN ALCOHOOT ALCOHOL TRACKER

* What is one word you would use to describe an Alcohoot?

* On what occasions are you likely to use an Alcohoot?

- at festivals, parties & gigs
- at work
- at home
- for testing friends & family

* How much do you think an Alcohoot is worth? \$10 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$150 \$200 \$300

Name:

Mobile:

Email:

Your contact details will remain confidential and only be used by STEER and Alcohoot to contact you occasionally.

