



ALCOHOL
& DRUGS

NATIONAL DROWNING PREVENTION SUMMIT 2014

Preventing Alcohol Related Harm

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Overview



- Alcohol related harms
- National Drug Strategy
 - Harm reduction
- Overview of strategies
 - Individual vs population approaches
- Case study: Alcohol and driving
 - Public education /campaigns

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Alcohol and harm

- Globally, alcohol attributes to
- ~3.8% of deaths
 - 3.3% in Australia
- 4% of the global burden of disease
- Chronic (e.g. cancers, coronary heart disease, gastrointestinal, neuropsychiatric)
- Acute (e.g. motor vehicle, drownings, falls, poisoning, violence)

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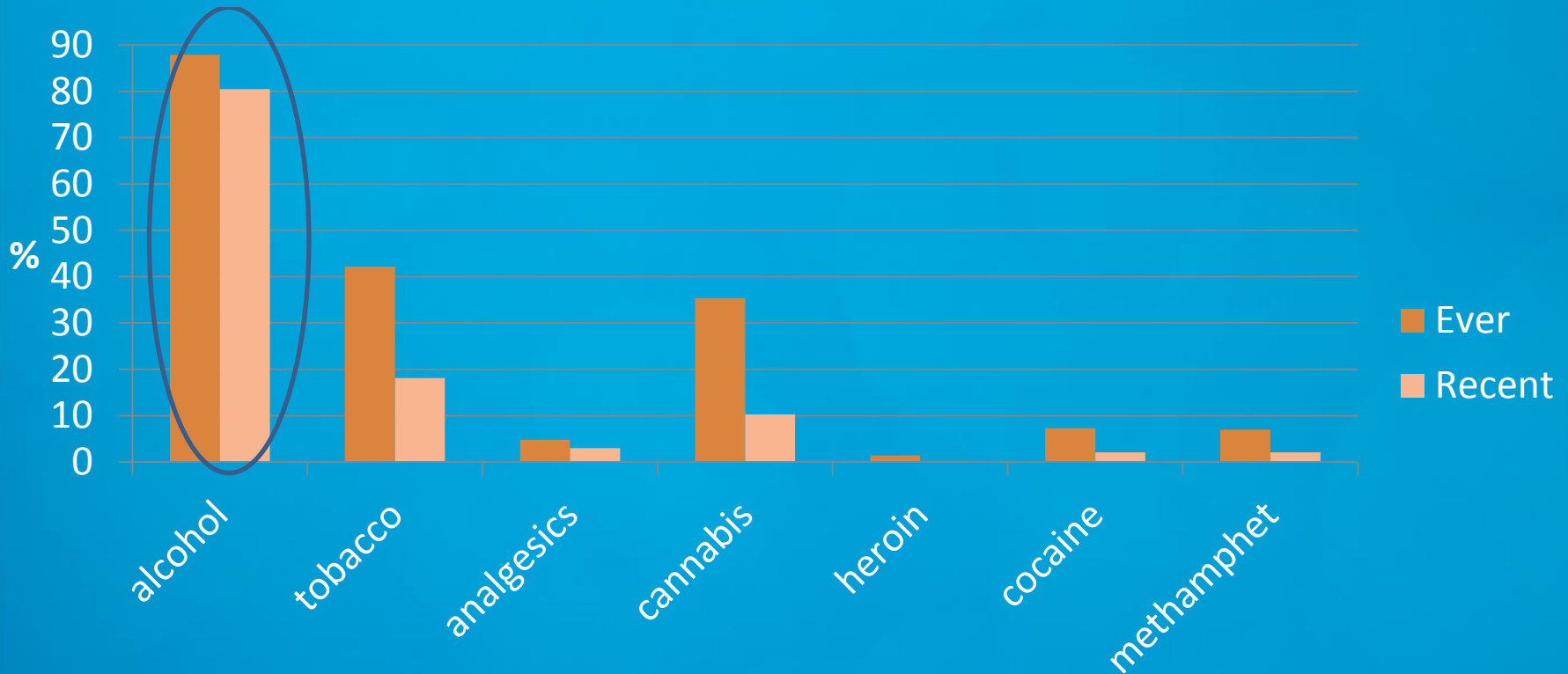


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Prevalence of alcohol use

National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2010



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NH&MRC Guidelines 2009

1. For reduced *lifetime risk* of harm from drinking:
 - ≤ 2 std drinks in any 1 day
2. For reduced *risk of injury* in a drinking occasion:
 - No more than 4 std drinks per occasion
 - *NB: Blood alcohol concentration for driving $<0.05\%$ (< 2 std drinks)*

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National Drug Strategy

Comprised of “three pillars”

1. Supply reduction

Interdiction, law enforcement and regulation

2. Demand reduction

Education, treatment and prevention

3. Harm reduction (minimisation)

Accepts drug use occurs and aims to reduce harms

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Strategies to reduce alcohol – related harms

- Education
 - NB no real evidence that they reduce alcohol consumption
- Brief intervention
- Treatment

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Population measures to reduce alcohol harms

- Regulation
 - Age restrictions
 - Advertising
 - Licensing (hours, outlet density, lockouts etc)
 - Price (via taxation)
 - **Reducing harms** – restricting /prohibiting alcohol use with certain activities (e.g. driving)



Reducing drink driving

- At least 17% reductions (Erke et al 2009 Accid Annal Prev)
- Australia a leader
- Randomised breath testing (RBT)
 - Introduced in 1970s and 80s
 - ~35% reduction in road fatalities (where BAC $\geq 0.05\%$)



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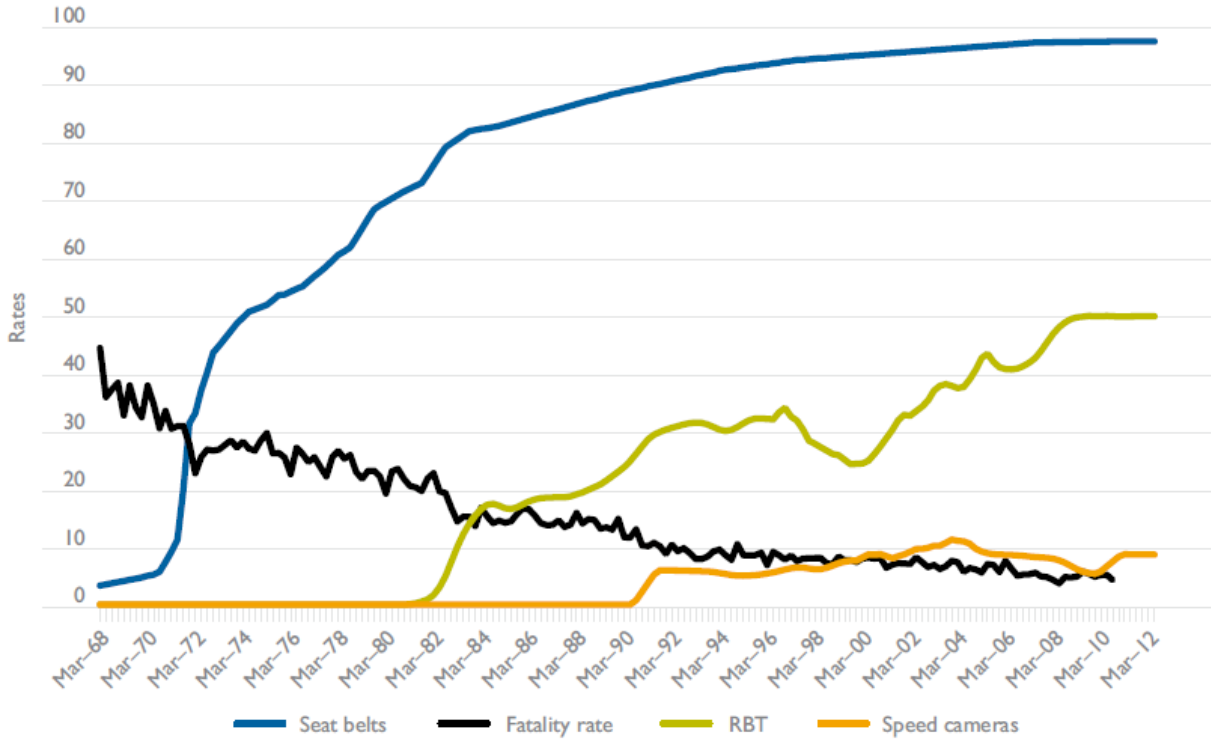


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Impact of RBT on fatalities

Seat belt wearing, RBT and speed cameras rates versus **NSW's** fatality rate



Source:
Australian
Department
Infrastructure
and Transport

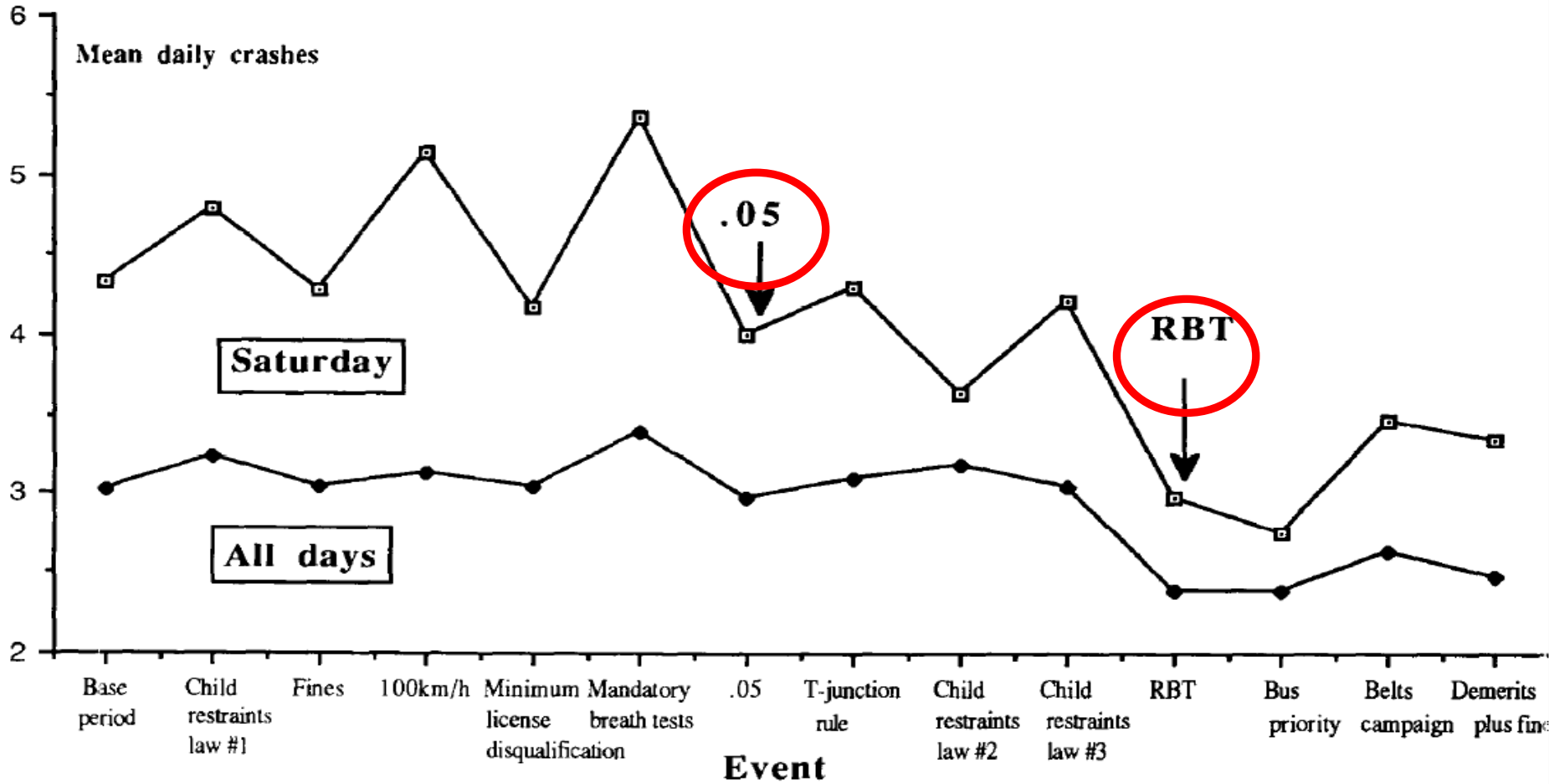
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Daily crashes in NSW



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Other factors

- Mixed evidence of role of media campaigns
 - Needs to be linked to enforcement
- Fear of detection important
- Clear culture shift
 - Driving under the influence is a stigmatised behaviour
 - Widespread public support: NSW 64% pre RBT → 85% post
 - Now almost universal support nationally (97%)
- Rural Australia may be an exception

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Alcohol and water safety

- Is it possible to change the culture around alcohol and water safety?
 - Enforcement...?
 - Probability of being caught is important
 - Costly
 - Public education...?
 - Giving people an option...
 - Designated driver
 - Mixed evidence (see Boots & Midford 1999 Health Promotion International)



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Conclusion



- Introduction of RBTs led to effective and swift reductions in drink driving and alcohol-related fatalities
- A cultural shift seems to have occurred, but enforcement remains important
- A harm reduction approach may be the best option

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