

Less beer available despite growth for craft beer

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The total volume of alcoholic beverage available for consumption in New Zealand fell 9.4 million litres (2.0 percent) to 457 million litres in 2014, Statistics New Zealand said today. This follows an 8.9 million litre rise in 2013.

The decrease was due to falls in the volume of beer (down 6.5 million litres) and spirit-based drinks available (down 4.3 million litres).

“Although beer fell in 2014, this was due to mid-strength beers, with both low-strength and high-strength beers up on 2013,” international statistics manager Jason Attewell said. “The volume of high-strength beer has almost doubled since 2009, reflecting the growing demand for craft beers.”

“In 2014, the volume of low-strength beer available for consumption was two-thirds higher than in 2013. This rise may well have been due to the industry gearing up for the new blood-alcohol limits introduced at the end of 2014,” Mr Attewell said.

The volume of pure alcohol available fell 94,000 litres (0.3 percent) in 2014. Beer, spirits, and spirit-based drinks all decreased, but were partly offset by the volume of pure alcohol available from wine, which was up 620,000 litres (5.7 percent). Beer made up just over one-third of the total alcohol volume available.

The volume of pure alcohol available per person aged 18 years and over (18+) was 9.6 litres in 2014 – down from 9.7 litres in 2013. This is equivalent to an average of 2.1 standard drinks per person (aged 18+) per day, unchanged from 2013.

Alcohol statistics are compiled from figures on alcoholic beverages produced for local consumption, on which duty is paid, and imports less re-exports. Alcohol statistics provide information on the volume of alcoholic beverages released to the market, and therefore available for consumption, rather than actual consumption.

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For media enquiries contact: Jason Attewell, Wellington 04 931 4600, info@stats.govt.nz
Authorised by Liz MacPherson, Government Statistician, 25 February 2015