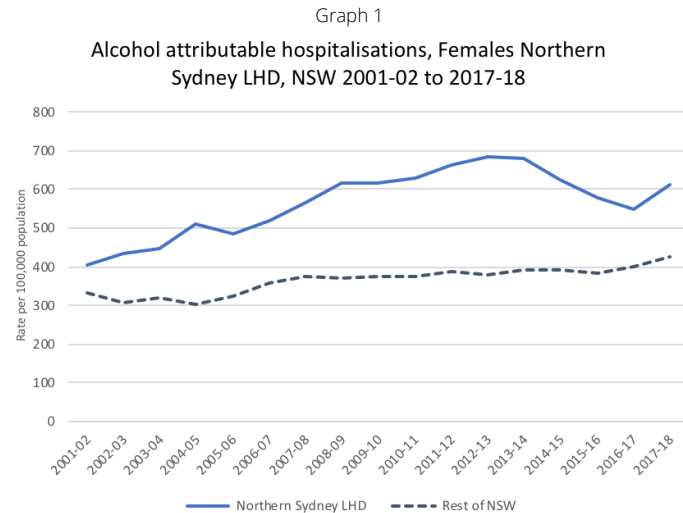


# Women & Alcohol Project: Phase I

## BACKGROUND & NEEDS ANALYSIS

### BACKGROUND

- Since 2001 there has been a **steady upward trend in the rate of alcohol-attributable hospitalisations** for women in Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD). The most recent 2017-18 data showing **NSLHD having the highest rate of alcohol-attributable hospitalisations** for women in NSW, **35% higher the NSW average**, see Graph 1.<sup>1</sup>
- This data is supported by NSLHD Drug and Alcohol Emergency Department data 2014/15 which showed two groups of women experienced **higher levels of alcohol-related harm**; the 15-19 age group & the **35-54 age group**.<sup>1</sup>
- The Northern Beaches of NSLHD also stood out within the data, with an **alcohol-attributable hospitalisation rate 40% higher than the NSW average** in 2016-18.<sup>1</sup>



### NSLHD HEALTH PROMOTION SERVICE

Anecdotal feedback from stakeholders on the Northern Beaches Community Drug Action Team indicated midlife women were drinking at greater quantities and presenting to Drug and Alcohol services. The reduction of alcohol-related harms is a key priority area for the NSLHD Health Promotion Service, and as such, further investigation was deemed necessary.

### LITERATURE KEY FINDINGS

A literature review was conducted in 2018 to investigate the relationship between alcohol and midlife women. Key findings included:

- In 2016, females aged 50-59 years were most likely to exceed the lifetime risk guidelines (two or more standard drinks per day) compared to all other female groups. Women in their 50s had overtaken young people as the highest risk group for long term risky drinking.<sup>2</sup>
- Whilst women are more likely than men to believe more needs to be done to address alcohol harm, those aged 35-49 years were the least likely cohort to hold this belief.<sup>3</sup>
- National statistics on alcohol consumption are heavily dominated by males and young people, due to this, most interventions primarily target these populations.
- Interventions published on alcohol and women are brief setting-based interventions, rather than population-based interventions.

### CONCLUSION

There are concerning local health statistics among the cohort, yet limited research and evidence on why women aged 35-59 drink alcohol at quantities that increase the risk of harm. As a result, there is an absence of interventions that address this issue. This gap in literature therefore needed to be investigated.

### RESULTING PROJECT AIM

To undertake a comprehensive population health needs analysis to identify the reasons women aged 35-59 years who reside on the Northern Beaches are drinking alcohol, explore drinking behaviour which increase the risk of harm and implement a pilot project to address these.

### WHERE TO NEXT?

Qualitative and quantitative research (focus groups & survey) will be conducted to better understand the issue and inform strategies.



NSLHD Health Promotion Service, May 2020

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This project is approved by the NSLHD Human Research Ethics Committee: 2019/ETH11953.



Health  
Northern Sydney  
Local Health District

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1. Health Stats NSW (<http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au>). [Accessed 25 April 2020.]
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