

# Study finds 60 per cent of Australia's bottle shops sell alcohol to teens without checking ID

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More than half of Australia's bottle shops are selling alcohol to teenagers without checking their age, a Deakin University study has found.

Researchers with Deakin's Centre for Social and Early Emotional Development (SEED) monitored 350 bottle shops throughout the

country to check sales to customers who looked underage. They found 60 per cent of staff sold alcohol without checking age identification, with stores in rural areas more likely to sell alcohol without checking IDs than urban stores.

The results of the study, published in the journal Health Promotion International, point to bottle shops as a prime target for reducing the supply of alcohol to underage youth.

"Underage drinking continues to be a major public health issue in Australia despite national guidelines stating that [young people](#) should not use alcohol before they are 18 years old," said Deakin senior research fellow, Dr Bosco Rowland.

"We know that the earlier a young person starts using alcohol the more likely they are to experience injuries and harms, impaired brain development and [alcohol problems](#) later in their life, so it is essential that we put in place a range of strategies to reduce the opportunities for young people to access alcohol.

"Rather than continuing to be part of the problem, the results of this study suggest that bottle shops could be part of the solution to limiting the supply of alcohol to underage youth."

The study involved a legal-aged person of underage appearance attempting to buy alcohol, with an independent monitor present, at bottle shops in 28 urban and rural communities across three states: Western Australian, Queensland and Victoria.

As well as finding that 60 per cent of the bottle shops sold alcohol to potentially underage youth without checking ID, the researchers found that staff in rural stores were 61 per cent more likely to sell alcohol compared with staff in urban stores. Purchases without an ID check were

greatest in Western Australia and lowest in Queensland.

On the back of these results the researchers are now working with local community groups to implement strategies to address the problem of [underage drinking](#).

"We have sent letters to the bottle shop managers alerting them to the sales practices of their staff as a way of helping the managers to reduce underage sales," Dr Rowland said.

"Our goal is to assist the managers to reduce underage sales before they get fined or before underage youth are sold [alcohol](#) that could cause them to be injured or killed."

Provided by Deakin University

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