



# Hard yakka out as stubbies make way for semillon

**Jessica Irvine**

Australians are swapping stubbies for semillons as a new image-conscious consumer lays the traditional Aussie beer-swiggung stereotype to rest.

While we're still more likely to reach for a beer than any other beverage, the average Australian has cut their annual beer consumption by 41 stubbies over the past decade, figures released from the Bureau of Statistics show.

We are now quaffing an extra five bottles of wine a year, or roughly half a glass more a week.

Despite some "white-collar pretenders", younger and more multicultural Australians are deliberately distancing themselves from the traditional beer image, the director of strategy at advertising agency EuroRSCG, Bram Williams, said.

"For years, beer has signified 'I do manual labour', and hard labour used to be an honourable thing to aspire to," he said. "Less so today. People are saying I'd rather work smarter than harder."

But beer companies are not giving up without a fight. Lion Nathan, the owners of Tooheys New, said last week it would launch its own campaign in response to the successful Carlton Draught TV ads.

A spokesman for Lion Nathan, which is also the Australian licence holder for premium brands Heineken and Beck's, said consumers were increasingly "trading up" to premium beers.

But similar urbane pretensions are also driving more drinkers to the bottled stuff. A changing diet, heavy on seafood and salads, and studies extolling the health virtues of wine have helped the shift, the managing

director of McGuigan Wines, Brian McGuigan, said.

The bureau's figures also show ready-mixed spirits are starting to take hold, with the average Australian now consuming three bottles a year, alongside one litre of pure spirits.

## THIRST FOR CHANGE

Annual consumption

