

National alcohol campaign—3 December 2008

The Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) today welcomed the launch of the Federal Government's nationwide media [campaign](#) to reduce alcohol misuse by young people.



As part of its role as the principal advisory body to government on drug and alcohol issues the ANCD has provided technical advice on the content accuracy of the campaign component of the National Binge Drinking Strategy.

Referring to the campaign, Chairman of the ANCD, Dr John Herron said: "The damaging health, social and economic impact of alcohol misuse on our communities is so pervasive at times that people are genuinely fearful about the long term harm this is causing, especially for young people. Governments needed to act and this nationwide campaign to reduce binge drinking amongst young people is an important part of a wider strategy to reduce alcohol misuse across the community. We all need to support this campaign and we need to take responsibility for our own behaviour and use of alcohol. Alcohol is enjoyed by many people but as aptly described by the World Health Organization it is no ordinary commodity, and demands special attention."

The members of the ANCD involved in providing advice to the government on the campaign were pleased to be involved in a process of development; in particular the ANCD has been reassured by the strong foundation of evidence based research and focus testing with target audiences that is seen as maximising its likely effectiveness.

The ANCD Campaign Reference Group Chair, Professor Margaret Hamilton reiterated this point when she stated: "It is important to understand that this campaign is one element of a broad community effort aimed at helping young people understand the potential harm that binge drinking can cause themselves and others. As with any campaign of this nature there will be criticism from some; but it is important that we give young people clear and credible information. Target testing with young people was necessary to develop this campaign. Although it may not seem sound to some of us we need to remember that we are looking through eyes that are not those of the target group."

In supporting the campaign as one component of an overall commitment to address risky and harmful drinking, the ANCD drew attention to the importance of sustained effort; highlighting the effectiveness of anti-smoking public education campaigns that have been based on a long and persistent effort to developing and running campaigns together with other measures. To achieve similar results with reducing harmful alcohol use will take a comparable long term outlook and require a number of complementary measures since there is no one-shot-solution to these issues. The importance of also tackling some of the more difficult issues that contribute to alcohol misuse, such as inappropriate marketing and promotion, ready availability through extended licensing hours, taxation anomalies and cultural norms that accept risky drinking, was highlighted by the ANCD."

For further information, please contact:

Mr Gino Vumbaca (ANCD Executive Director)
0408 244 552

