

New National Alliance formed to reduce harm from alcohol - 14 March 2010

A new national coalition of health and community organisations from across Australia was announced today to reduce alcohol-related harm.



Comprising an initial 26 major organisations with a focus on public health and alcohol, the **National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA)** will focus on reducing alcohol problems in the community.

One in five Australians aged 14+ years drink at short-term risky/high-risk levels at least once a month. This equates to more than 42 million occasions of risky or high-risk drinking in Australia each year.

The cost to the Australian community from alcohol-related harm in 2004/05 was estimated to be more than \$15 billion, including \$3.5 billion in lost productivity in the workplace.

An estimated 70 per cent of all police actions on the streets involve alcohol abuse, whether dealing with victims, perpetrators or witnesses to alcohol crime.

On average, one in four hospitalisations of young people aged 15 – 24 occur because of alcohol. Alcohol consumption at a young age can also adversely affect brain development and is linked to alcohol-related problems later in life.

A recent survey of Australians revealed that 84 per cent of people are concerned about the impact of alcohol on the community.

“The majority of Australians say we have a national drinking problem and want to see more action to prevent alcohol-related illness, injury and death,” said Professor Mike Daube, Chair of the NAAA and President of the Public Health Association of Australia.

Todd Harper, CEO of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) and NAAA co-convenor said: “This is the first time such a broad group of health organisations has come together to pool their collective expertise around what needs to be done to address Australia’s drinking problems.”

David Templeman, CEO of the Australian Alcohol and Other Drugs Council (ADCA) said: “We all want to see a much stronger emphasis on action. We will now be inviting all organisations genuinely concerned to reduce alcohol problems in Australia to join the Alliance so we can ensure real action.”

John Rogerson, CEO of the Australian Drug Foundation said: “The adverse effects of alcohol impact on everybody in the community. We’ll be sending a clear message to Government and all politicians that there is a pressing need for action, and we’ll be putting forward evidence- based solutions around these issues.”

Initial priorities for the NAAA will be:

- reforming alcohol taxation
- buying-out by government of alcohol sponsorship in sports and the arts
- increasing investment in prevention
- strengthening the regulating of alcohol advertising

- introducing health information labelling on alcohol products and including point-of-sale promotions
- tightening controls on the sale and supply of alcohol.