



Media Release

29th November 2011

National Alliance supports Police in the effort to reduce alcohol-related violence, drunken behaviour and other related crime

The National Alliance for Action on Alcohol (NAAA) is supporting the fifth Operation Unite on the weekend of Friday 2 and Saturday 3 December 2011.

Operation Unite is a joint initiative of Police Commissioners across Australia and New Zealand. It demonstrates the united determination of police to challenge alcohol misuse, crime, violence and anti-social behaviour and achieve significant change in Australia and New Zealand.

Professor Mike Daube, Co-Chair of the Alliance and Director, McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol, said the NAAA welcomes Operation Unite as a wake-up call and reminder to the community of the problems associated with alcohol misuse.

"There is an urgent need for action to address Australia's drinking problems. The adverse effects of alcohol impact on everybody. A recent survey of Australians revealed 84 per cent of people are concerned about the impact of alcohol on the community¹," he said.

"Police are at the frontline of dealing with this issue, with an estimated 70 per cent of all police actions on the street involving alcohol abuse, whether dealing with victims, perpetrators or witnesses to alcohol crime."

"We are particularly pleased to see that this year Operation Unite will focus on young people. We know that one in five Australians aged 14+ years drink at short-term risky/high-risk levels at least once a month and on average, one in four hospitalisations of young people aged 15-24 years occurs because of alcohol."

"We also know that alcohol consumption at a young age can also adversely affect brain development and is linked to alcohol-related problems later in life."

"We hope Operation Unite will highlight the risk of injury, assault and violence associated with excessive alcohol consumption, especially to young drinkers, and that the message will be clear that police will not put up with alcohol-related violence, drunken behaviour and other related crime"

"Everyone in the community can all play a part in creating change. The time is now for a cultural shift in the way we drink and our attitude towards alcohol consumption. We all need to work together to shape our drinking culture to be a safer more responsible one"

The NAAA represents more than 55 health and community organisations from across Australia.

For further information/comment:

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¹ Tinworth, J. 'Alcohol: What people think' in *Of substance*. Vol 6, No 2, April 2008. Canberra: Australian National Council on Drugs, pp. 1-13.