



MEDIA RELEASE

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AIHW's alcohol findings support DrinkWise imperatives

Findings released today from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)'s 2013 National Drug Strategy Household Survey¹ are in step with broad indicators surrounding the changing drinking culture, according to DrinkWise, an evidence-based social change organisation focused on promoting a healthier and safer drinking culture in Australia.

The AIHW survey found younger Australians are continuing to delay their first alcoholic drink. The age young people first tried alcohol has risen from 14.4 to 15.7 years of age between 1998 and 2013. Fewer 12 to 17-year-olds were drinking alcohol, with the proportion abstaining from alcohol increasing significantly between 2010 and 2013 (from 64% to 72%).

Chief Executive Officer John Scott said independent research, commissioned by DrinkWise via Quantum Market Research's AustraliaSCAN² social monitor, indicates comparable signs of a cultural change in people's attitudes and behaviours towards drinking.

"Our research suggests that in the last three years, more Australians believe having a few drinks with friends can remain a great tradition, so long as we don't overdo it," Mr Scott said.

"The AIHW data reflects this sentiment, with fewer Australians drinking at risky levels in 2013 compared to 2010, which is a great step in the right direction.

"More Australians are also looking to parents to play a role in educating their children about alcohol. For example, there is stronger sentiment that teenagers under 18 years shouldn't be allowed to drink at parties.

"For DrinkWise, today's AIHW findings reinforce the importance of empowering parents with the right information and tools to allow them to have a positive influence on their children, and delaying the introduction of alcohol to adolescents for as long as possible.

"This is coupled with helping all Australians to understand the importance of drinking responsibly and in moderation."

¹ The National Drug Strategy Household Survey is conducted every 2-3 years. The 2013 survey collected data from nearly 24,000 people across Australia from 31 July to 1 December 2013.

² AustraliaSCAN is an annual longitudinal research study tracking the social values of Australians across a broad range of topics and subjects for more than 15 years. DrinkWise has been a subscriber since 2007, allowing it to place a number of questions within the monitor as a means of tracking broad sentiment Australians have towards the culture of alcohol in society.

DrinkWise launched its 'Kids and Alcohol Don't Mix' campaign nationally in 2009, which highlighted the impact of alcohol on the developing teenage brain and encouraged parents to delay the introduction of alcohol to their children.

A new campaign aimed at parents and families will be launched by DrinkWise in late 2014.

"DrinkWise's education activities are not the whole solution - but they are an important element in changing Australia's drinking culture," Mr Scott said.

"We strongly believe a whole-of-community approach, drawing on partnerships between government, industry and the community, will have the greatest impact in changing Australia's drinking culture."

DrinkWise Australia is an evidence-based social change organisation dedicated to changing the Australian drinking culture to one that is safer and healthier. We do this through national information and education campaigns, partnerships with community leaders and organisations, and the development of practical strategies and resources that better support the community in relation to the responsible use of alcohol. DrinkWise Australia is funded through voluntary industry contributions across the alcohol sector, and has previously been in receipt of funding from both Coalition and Labor governments.

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