



ABN 46 112 783 114

DrinkWise Australia Ltd

Level 1, 24 Bougainville Street

Manuka ACT 2603

Tel: 61 2 6162 4132

Fax: 61 2 61624133

www.drinkwise.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 5, August, 2010

COMMUNICATION IS KEY TO CHANGING DRINKING CULTURE

A study that surveyed 16 to 17 year olds found that 20 percent of them engaged in weekly risky single occasion drinking; and, that those who accessed alcohol from sources in addition to their parents were more than twice as likely to be involved in risky single occasion drinking.¹

This study published in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health yesterday has lead to media reports suggesting that, 'parents who allow their underage teens to have a tipples at home are doing them a favour.'

DrinkWise Australia Chief Executive Officer, Cath Peachey, said such reports are dangerous and fail to take into consideration the damage alcohol can cause to the developing brain.

'Research tells us that the teenage brain is growing and forming all the critical parts it needs for learning, memory, planning, emotional stability, and thinking, and alcohol disrupts this growth,' she said.

Ms Peachey said that Quantum Market Research suggests that the majority of Australian parents (73 percent) believe that it is unacceptable for kids less than 18 years to drink at parties and disagree that the best way to teach young people to drink responsibly is for their parents to teach them at home.

'These beliefs are not necessarily translating into action though, with research also indicating that parents are a common source of alcohol supply,' she said.

'Confusing and incomplete advice, like that reported today, impacts on our ability to affect cultural change by suggesting to parents that there is less harm associated with early, controlled introduction of alcohol,' Ms Peachey said.

DrinkWise Australia is focused on empowering parents to influence their children's future drinking behaviour. Ms Peachey said her team promotes strategies that parents might use to delay the supply of alcohol to their kids.

'We have the potential to affect change. If parents support one another, work collectively with family; friends; their children's friends, parents; and other adult influencers we will have the greatest potential of delaying young people's access to alcohol,' she said.

¹ Dietze, P. 2010, 'The relationship between alcohol supply source and young people's risky drinking and alcohol-related problem behaviours in Victoria, Australia', Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health.

'It is important that parents communicate how they feel about introduction of alcohol with other key influencers in their child's life. This simple action of having a conversation could have an impact on the potential of their child sourcing alcohol from others,' Ms Peachey said

For the best ways to talk about alcohol with your kids visit the parents section of www.drinkwise.org.au

Available for interview:

- The Hon. Trish Worth, Chair of DrinkWise
- Cath Peachey, CEO DrinkWise

For further information or to request an interview please contact Lisa Smallacombe, DrinkWise Communications Manager on (02) 6162 4132.