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MEDIA RELEASE

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PARENTS PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CHANGING THE DRINKING CULTURE

The majority of Australian mothers (about 60%) interviewed in a recent study into adolescent alcohol use believe that they have a role to play in educating their children about alcohol use and that this role extends beyond when their children reach the legal drinking age of 18-years.

They are also concerned that their efforts to teach their children about responsible alcohol consumption might be overridden by Australian Cultural expectations (39%).

The study, published in the latest Australia and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, sought to obtain input from mothers and fathers on their intentions to introduce their adolescents to alcohol use, and to capture data on how parent's alcohol use affects those intentions.

CEO DrinkWise Australia, Cath Peachey said that the findings reported in the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health are positive on two fronts.

"Firstly, they show that mothers realise that they have a role to play in influencing their children's consumption of alcohol; and secondly, they recognise the need for cultural change," Ms Peachey said

'Australia has a strongly ingrained drinking culture. Alcohol is often used to celebrate achievement in so many areas of life whether it be sport or a pivotal event.

'At DrinkWise we aim to effect generational change in the way that Australian's consume alcohol. We also aim to increase the age that young Australian's are first introduced to alcohol, as evidence emerges of the impact of introducing alcohol on a developing adolescent brain,' Ms Peachey said.

DrinkWise has launched two multi-faceted social marketing campaigns - *Kids Absorb Your Drinking* and *Kids and Alcohol Don't Mix*. Both campaigns empower parents to positively influence their children's future drinking behaviour.

The Journal of Public Health report found that most mothers felt that they had adequate information to ensure that they could positively shape their children's drinking habits.

At the time the study was conducted 49 percent of mothers felt that it was ok to give their child alcohol to drink at home before they turn 18.

Ms Peachey said that our knowledge of the impact of alcohol on a developing adolescent's brain had improved since then and that the new information was likely to change mother's perspectives on supplying alcohol in the home.

'We are continually sourcing new information about the impact of alcohol on a developing brain. We now know that from the age of 12/13 years through to the early twenties the brain is in a state of intense development, new science tells us that alcohol disrupts this development. Teenagers who drink alcohol risk their brains not reaching full capacity,' Ms Peachey said.

She offered the following advice to parents, 'At some point all parents will have to face the curly questions their children ask about trying some beer or wine either at home or at a social function. It is important to plan ahead and work out a response before the question is raised,' she said.

'The DrinkWise website provides practical solutions and facts on alcohol consumption to prepare parents to talk about alcohol consumption, visit 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.