



MEDIA RELEASE

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SPORTING HEROES GIVE PARENTS A HAND

DrinkWise Australia has joined with The Sport Australia Hall of Fame to develop the **Under Your Influence** (www.underyourinfluence.org.au) campaign that picks up on the crucial role parents and other influential adults play as role models.

The campaign, launched today at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, encourages parents to embrace the opportunity they have to model responsible drinking behaviours and to engage with their children on the issues associated with alcohol.

Videos featuring the Ambassadors of The Sport Australia Hall of Fame and experts like Professor Ian Hickie of the Brain and Mind Research Institute and Accident and Emergency physician Dr Andrew Rochford, will be used to foster a national conversation about the role of parents in influencing their children's attitudes and behaviours toward drinking.

Central to this strategy is video content featuring the Ambassadors and their views on being role models and the influence they have as parents.

Ambassadors include Olympic and World Champion swimmers, Susie O'Neill and Kieren Perkins, America's Cup Yachting hero John Bertrand, rowing Oarsome Foursome's Mike McKay, former Australian netball captain Liz Ellis, aerobic champion Sue Stanley and World Champion marathon runner Robert de Castella.

Chair of the DrinkWise Australia Board, The Hon Trish Worth, said 'These are some of the most successful people ever in Australia in their chosen fields. The strategies they used to become successful sports people can also be used to face the challenges of everyday life.

'The Ambassadors explain how their families successfully handled issues around alcohol and now deal with these issues as parents and mentors. Families are like teams and the strategies that make teams successful, like effective communication, also make for effective parenting.

'No less important is the conversation that we will be encouraging between the parents, relatives, friends, teenagers and engaged community members who will use the social platform we are building to share their experiences as role models and parents. They are the ones with the stories to tell, the questions to ask, and the ideas to influence a more informed and positive drinking culture in Australia', Ms Worth said.

The Chairman of The Sport Australia Hall of Fame, John Bertrand, said 'The Sport Australia Hall of Fame was proud to partner with DrinkWise Australia in this important initiative that we believe can have a positive effect on young Australians.

'As part of the partnership, our Hall of Fame Members will give their time as Ambassadors to DrinkWise Australia to assist in communicating the message to parents around the country.

'Our mission is to preserve the history of Australian sport and to excite the next generation of Australians to realise their potential in sport and life. Through working with DrinkWise to inform parents of the dangerous effects of alcohol on the adolescent brain, we will give young Australians the best opportunity to develop their potential', Mr Bertrand said

Interviews

DrinkWise – contact Steve Jiggins 0408 480 779

The Sport Australia Hall of Fame – contact Anna Eagle 0417 105 877

Background

DrinkWise Australia is a not-for-profit organisation focused on effecting generational change in the way Australians drink. Our vision is to improve the drinking culture so that consuming alcohol too young and to excess is considered undesirable.

The average age at which kids start drinking is now 15.5 years and more than a quarter of our 14-19 year olds are putting themselves at risk of alcohol-related harm at least once a month.

The campaign aims to turn these statistics around. Research shows that a quarter of Australian parents with kids between 7 and 13 years are yet to talk about what they will do when their child asks about drinking alcohol and, despite new brain science that says alcohol can harm the developing brain, parents remain the major source of alcohol supply for teenage drinkers.