

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **ALCOHOL KILLS 15 AUSTRALIANS EVERY DAY: REPORT**

**31 July 2014:** Alcohol causes 15 deaths and hospitalises 430 Australians every day, a new VicHealth and Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) funded report reveals.

The *Alcohol's Burden of Disease in Australia* report, found 5,554 deaths and 157,132 hospitalisations were caused by alcohol in 2010, with the number of deaths increasing by 62 per cent since the study was last undertaken a decade ago.

The report, conducted by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre, found significant increases in injury, disease and death.

For men, injuries accounted for more than one in three (36%) alcohol-related deaths, while cancer and digestive diseases caused 25 and 16 per cent, respectively. For women, one in three alcohol-related deaths were due to heart disease (34%), followed by cancers (31%) and injuries (12%).

Northern Territory residents are three times more likely to die from alcohol use than other Australians.

Dr Belinda Lloyd, Head of Population Health Research at Turning Point, said the research was a 'timely reminder' of the dangers of alcohol.

"The reality is that the long term effects aren't just confined to one Saturday night, with serious health problems a genuine concern," Dr Lloyd said.

"It is clear that there are both short term and long term harms associated with risky consumption, and we are seeing increasing death, disability, health service burden and social impacts of alcohol across Australia."

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn said Australian governments can no longer ignore the urgent need for decisive and effective action to reduce the rising toll.

"A decade ago alcohol was responsible for 3,430 deaths per year. Now that figure stands at 5,554. Governments can't afford to wait another ten years to act. Only decisive, evidence-based action will stem Australia's worsening alcohol toll," Mr Thorn said.

Mr Thorn said population-wide measures that address the price, promotion and availability of alcohol would not only save lives but also deliver significant financial savings to cash-strapped Governments.

"Alcohol tax reforms, the introduction of earlier closing times and sensible restrictions on alcohol advertising and promotions will not just save lives and reduce the unacceptable level of alcohol harms, it will also reduce the \$36 billion dollar burden those harms represent, a burden carried by the entire Australian community."

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter added that this important study highlights the dangers of alcohol and a need to approach Australia's drinking problem from all angles.

“We live in a society where getting drunk at many social and sporting events is seen as a normal activity. It’s no wonder the harm is increasing,” Ms Rechter said. “VicHealth believes our culture of heavy drinking needs to be challenged. We want to work towards a society where excessive drinking isn’t seen as acceptable or normal activity.”

Download the [Alcohol’s Burden of Disease in Australia](#) full report and infographic [here](#).

#### Alcohol-attributable deaths and hospitalisations by state in Australia (2010)

States	Deaths (%*)			Hospitalisations (%*)		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
NSW	1,157 (4.8%)	680 (2.9%)	1,837 (3.8%)	31,464 (2.6%)	16,688 (1.2%)	48,152 (1.9%)
VIC	706 (3.9%)	509 (2.9%)	1,214 (3.4%)	23,718 (2.1%)	15,663 (1.3%)	39,381 (1.7%)
QLD	728 (5.1%)	415 (3.2%)	1,143 (4.2%)	22,207 (2.6%)	11,767 (1.2%)	33,974 (1.9%)
SA	268 (4.2%)	157 (2.4%)	426 (3.3%)	7,222 (2.3%)	3,338 (1.0%)	10,560 (1.6%)
WA	384 (5.7%)	208 (3.5%)	592 (4.7%)	11,699 (2.6%)	5,749 (1.2%)	17,448 (1.9%)
TAS	92 (4.3%)	62 (2.9%)	155 (3.6%)	1,695 (3.5%)	941 (1.8%)	2,636 (2.6%)
NT	84 (13.4%)	32 (8.9%)	116 (11.8%)	1,864 (4.1%)	843 (1.5%)	2,708 (2.7%)
ACT	48 (5.4%)	25 (3.1%)	73 (4.3%)	1,556 (3.3%)	718 (1.6%)	2,273 (2.5%)
<b>Total (AUS)</b>	<b>3,467 (4.7%)</b>	<b>2,087 (3.0%)</b>	<b>5,555 (3.9%)</b>	<b>101,425 (2.5%)</b>	<b>55,707 (1.2%)</b>	<b>157,132 (1.8%)</b>

\* Percentage of all deaths or hospitalisations.

#### Available for interview

**Michael Thorn**, Chief Executive, FARE (Jeremy Henderson, 0425 559 710)

**Jerril Rechter**, CEO VicHealth (Jane Gardner, 0435 761 732)

**Doctor Belinda Lloyd**, lead researcher, Turning Point (Winston Tan, 0407 785 706)

#### Media event

This research will be discussed at a forum in Melbourne on Thursday, 31 July.  
Experts will be available for interview at midday at VicHealth, 15-31 Pelham Street, Carlton North