

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – THURSDAY 16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2023**

## **New report highlights urgent need for action on alcohol, as Australians agree the country faces a substantial problem**

A comprehensive national report, published today by Alcohol Change Australia, calls for urgent government action to address the lack of public awareness concerning the health risks associated with alcohol use in Australia.

The report, based on an online survey of 2,000 Australian adults conducted in September 2023, shows that 8 in 10 Australians are concerned about the harm caused by alcohol and 63% of Australians agree that Australia faces a substantial problem with alcohol.

The report reveals:

- Around half of Australians don't know the number of standard drinks they should not exceed to reduce their risk of alcohol-related accident/injury or disease.
- Less than half of Australians are aware that alcohol can cause cancer, with only 14% recognising that alcohol is a cause of breast cancer.

Alcohol causes at least seven types of cancer – including cancers of the mouth, throat, liver, breast and bowel,<sup>i</sup> and is responsible for more than 4,500 deaths and 80,000 hospitalisations in Australia, each year.<sup>ii</sup>

Hannah Pierce, Executive Officer of Alcohol Change Australia, said the lack of awareness about the health harms caused by alcohol is deeply concerning, but there were a range of evidence-based initiatives available to the Australian Government that would help build knowledge and reduce harms.

“The alcohol industry invests substantial resources into the promotion of its products, overshadowing the associated harms, which include injuries, diseases, and even deaths.”

“The lack of awareness surrounding alcohol's health risks is a worrying blind spot, but in some ways unsurprising given we are bombarded with enticing messages and imagery encouraging alcohol use.”

“With too many Australians in the dark about the health risks of alcohol, particularly the link between alcohol and cancer, it's crucial the Government implements measures that will empower our communities.”

“Stronger restrictions on alcohol marketing and action to address cheap alcohol, coupled with greater investment in public education campaigns and the introduction of a health warning label, would go a long way in improving the health and wellbeing of all Australians.”



Dr Erin Lalor, Chair of Alcohol Change Australia, said there is strong public backing for immediate and comprehensive policy reforms to tackle the growing issue of alcohol-caused harm.

“This report shows 7 in 10 Australians think that governments must take more significant steps to reduce alcohol-caused harms.”

“All this data points to the fact that alcohol reforms would not only benefit our national health but also enjoy broad support. It's a chance for the Australian Government to collaboratively make the changes people want and need.”

Ms Pierce said the findings reflect a nation that has grown tired of the consequences of excessive alcohol use and wants Government to take action.

“These concerns resonate across communities and underscore the pressing need for comprehensive solutions to prevent the far-reaching harms caused by alcohol.”

*Ends*

**\*\*\*The full report “*PUBLIC OPINION ON ALCOHOL IN AUSTRALIA: Knowledge, attitudes, and support for change*” [is available online now](#)\*\*\***

#### **About Alcohol Change Australia:**

Alcohol Change Australia is a collaborative alliance comprising diverse health and community organisations from across the nation. Our collective mission is to combat and diminish the impact of alcohol-related harm on individuals, families, and communities throughout Australia.

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<sup>i</sup> International Agency for Research on Cancer. IARC monographs on the evaluation of carcinogenic risks to humans: Volume 100E, Personal habits and indoor combustions. In: Lyon, France: International Agency for Research on Cancer; 2012; World Cancer Research Fund. Summary of global evidence on cancer prevention. In: London, UK: World Cancer Research Fund; 2017.

<sup>ii</sup> Gilmore, W., Lensvelt, E., Jones, P., Dorocicz, J., Sherk, A., Churchill, S., Stockwell, T., & Chikritzhs, T. (2023). Australian alcohol-attributable harm visualisation tool version 2.1. National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University and Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, University of Victoria. Retrieved from [www.alcoholharmtool.info](http://www.alcoholharmtool.info).