

## MEDIA RELEASE

# NEW RESEARCH SHOWS THAT YOUNG WOMEN WANT A SAFER NIGHT OUT

**2 December 2011:** As Australian and New Zealand police gear up for Operation Unite, an initiative to raise awareness about alcohol related violence, new research shows that young women drinking in public venues are worried about potential hostility, aggression, physical and sexual violence from intoxicated strangers.

Led by Dr Kerry Ann Armstrong at the Queensland University of Technology, the research explored young women's drinking experiences, vulnerabilities, and the strategies they used to mitigate risks when intoxicated.

The research found that young women felt that it was more socially acceptable for them to drink to intoxication during celebratory occasions like birthdays, hen's nights and Saint Patrick's Day.

In response to the research, the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) Chief Executive, Michael Thorn said, "It's no surprise that young women, like other Australians are drinking to excess on particular occasions, as alcohol has long played a central role in our celebrations, commiserations, and rites of passage."

While young women endorsed risky drinking behaviours, they also recognised that when they were intoxicated they were more vulnerable to a range of potential harms, including falls, injuries and being less able to identify and ward off potentially aggressive attacks or sexual assaults from strangers.

Young women also felt less safe in environments where drinking to excess was highly tolerated, including venues with poor lighting, that were crowded, unclean, and had a lack of security personnel and police.

Mr Thorn said, "This worrying drinking behaviour is largely responsible for police services around Australia and New Zealand having to conduct security blitzes like Operation Unite."

"Each weekend frontline police and emergency services have to deal with the all too often tragic consequences that result from excessive alcohol consumption. These resources could be better used for other important community purposes."

### **About Operation Unite**

Operation Unite, a joint initiative of Police Commissioners across Australia and New Zealand, will be conducted for the fifth time on the weekend of 2-3 December to send a strong and clear message that police will not put up with alcohol-related violence, drunken behaviour and other related crime.

It will see hundreds of additional police officers deployed across Australian and New Zealand streets on Friday and Saturday night.

### **About the Young Women's Drinking Experiences in Public Drinking Venues Report**

The *Young Women's Drinking Experiences in Public Drinking Venues* research project was completed by the Centre for Accident Research & Road Safety – Queensland and aimed to explore the culture and norms associated with drink in young women aged 18-25 years through focus groups and interviews.



Foundation for Alcohol  
Research & Education

The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) commissioned the research, which can be accessed at: <http://www.fare.org.au/media-news/>

Michael Thorn is available for interview.

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**Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education (FARE):** FARE – formerly the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation - is an independent, charitable organisation working to prevent the harmful use of alcohol in Australia. Since 2001, FARE has invested over \$115 million in research and community projects to minimise the impact of alcohol misuse on Australians. Through our national grants program and commissioned research, the FARE has established itself as a leading voice on alcohol and other drugs issues. We work with community groups, all levels of government, police, emergency workers, research institutions and the private sector to address alcohol-related problems. For further information visit our website: [www.fare.org.au](http://www.fare.org.au)