

## **Telethon Institute for Child Health Research**

### **ALCOHOL HEALTH WARNINGS PROTECT MUMS AND BABIES**

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Researchers at Perth's Telethon Institute for Child Health Research support calls for mandatory health warning labels on alcohol products.

The proposed labels were unveiled today by the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation (AERF) following consultation with health experts around Australia, including the Institute.

The head of the Institute's Alcohol and Pregnancy research group, Professor Carol Bower, said it was crucial that women were alerted that consuming alcohol could cause lifelong damage to an unborn child.

"There is overwhelming evidence that alcohol consumption during pregnancy can cause a spectrum of disorders ranging from birth defects to intellectual disability and behavioural problems," Professor Bower said.

"As researchers we know that frequency, timing and quantity of alcohol are all factors in how much the unborn child is affected. There is currently no way to determine a safe level of alcohol consumption."

Professor Bower said some women are still unclear that the national recommendation is to avoid alcohol in pregnancy. "It is important that they know there is no safe limit," she said. "These labels will provide a very clear message about the potential harms and could protect a child from a lifetime of disability.

"It is unacceptable that health warnings are placed on some Australian products exported overseas, while Australians miss out.

"These warnings could help empower women to say no to alcohol and provide an answer to the people who maintain that a little bit won't hurt. Women should be informed that no alcohol in pregnancy is the safest choice."