

## MEDIA RELEASE

### NEW RESEARCH ABOUT HIGH RISK BEHAVIOUR DURING SCHOOLIES

New research into the intentions of young people during Schoolies week has provided further insights into the factors that contribute to risky behaviours such as excessive alcohol use, sex and reckless behaviours.

The research, by the Centre for Health Initiatives at the University of Wollongong, was commissioned by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) and will be presented at a major alcohol and drug conference in Hobart on Monday (November 14).

Researchers spoke to a large number of young people on the Gold Coast during NSW Schoolies Week in 2010 and conducted follow-up interviews to ascertain whether expectations had been realised.

The research found that the vast majority (86.7%) of the young people expected to drink more than five alcoholic beverages a night, with a large number also expecting to drink too quickly and consume more than 10 alcoholic drinks a night (73.3%). Young men were more likely (43.2%) than young women (12%) to have an expectation of having sex with multiple partners.

Young people interviewed later in the week reported activities most commonly engaged in as being consuming more than 10 alcoholic drinks a night (63.9%) and "hooking up" (59.4%).

Only 2.2% of young men and 2.4% of young women thought it was not acceptable for someone their age to get drunk.

Michael Thorn, the CEO of FARE, said "The report shows that if young people go to schoolies expecting to drink more and engage in other risky behaviours - then chances are they will,"

"If we make alcohol readily available, market it heavily and design celebrations around its excessive consumption then people are going to drink to excess and there will be harms.

"Schoolies is just one example of the way that Australians use alcohol to celebrate. From a young age kids learn that you work hard and then you celebrate your successes by drinking to excess. Unfortunately what they don't learn is that drinking to excess can cause hardship, pain and suffering."

Mr Thorn said that FARE urged young people to look out for one another at Schoolies weeks. This can be as simple as making sure they stay together in groups, meet in safe places, and use safe transport options.

Schoolies should carefully watch their alcohol consumption, alternating an alcoholic drink with a non-alcoholic drink, eat regularly and drink plenty of water.

The research will be presented at the annual conference of the Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs (APSAD) in Hobart.

Michael Thorn and researcher Professor Sandra Jones are available for interview.

**Media Contacts: Peta Lange 0488 550 514**  
**Sam North 0407 941 447**

**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)