



## Media Release

# ALCOHOL: VICTORIA'S MOST HARMFUL DRUG

**10 October 2014:** New Victorian harms data has again highlighted that alcohol is Victoria's most harmful drug.

The latest available data (2012/13) examines harms indicators including hospital admissions, ambulance attendances and emergency department presentations.

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education Chief Executive, Michael Thorn says the latest data has again confirmed that the harms from alcohol continue to be of a far greater magnitude than all illicit drugs combined, and called on all political parties to demonstrate their commitment to meaningful measures to address the toll ahead of the up-coming Victorian election.

"The latest data is further evidence of the extent of alcohol harms in Victoria. Emergency department presentations for alcohol are more than six times greater than those for illicit drugs, and we see ten times more alcohol related deaths than deaths from other drugs. As the Victorian election fast approaches, I again call on the Government and Opposition to acknowledge the problem and to stand up and tell the people of Victoria what they intend to do, if elected, to address it", Mr Thorn said.

In 2012/13 alcohol related emergency department presentations (7,744) were over 6 times greater than illicit drug related presentations (1,206).

During the same reporting period, alcohol-related admissions (26,444) outnumbered illicit drug related admissions (8,083) 3 to 1.

In 2012/13 there were 3 times as many alcohol-related ambulance attendances (18,078) as there were for illicit drugs (6,293).

In 2011, there were ten times as many deaths from alcohol (781) as there were from illicit drugs (77).

Harm Indicator	Alcohol	Illicit drugs	Comparison between alcohol and illicit drugs
ED Presentations (2012/13)	7,744	1,206	Emergency department presentations for alcohol are more than 6 times (6.42) greater than those for illicit drugs.
Hospitalisations (2012/13)	26,444	8,083	Hospitalisations for alcohol are more than 3 times (3.27) greater than those for illicit drugs.
Ambulance Attendances (2012/13)	18,078	6,293	Ambulance attendances for alcohol are almost 3 times (2.87) greater than those for illicit drugs.
Deaths (2011)	781	77	Deaths from alcohol are more than 10 times (10.155) greater the deaths as those from illicit drugs.

Source: [AODstats](#), the Victorian alcohol and drug interactive statistics and mapping webpage. **Turning Point, Eastern Health**

AODstats provides information on the harms related to alcohol, illicit and pharmaceutical drug use in Victoria. The data were obtained from numerous sources, ranging from government departments to drug and alcohol treatment agencies. This information provides a convenient statistical and epidemiological resource for policy planners, drug service providers, health professionals and other key stakeholders. The data and maps builds on and updates information previously provided in text format; delivers the most recent data available; and provides a monitoring tool for alcohol and drug trend

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The **Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE)** is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to stop the harm caused by alcohol. Alcohol harm in Australia is significant. Over 5,500 lives are lost every year and more than 157,000 people are hospitalised making alcohol one of our nation's greatest preventative health challenges.

For over a decade, FARE has been working with communities, governments, health professionals and police across the country to stop alcohol harms by supporting world-leading research, raising public awareness and advocating for changes to alcohol policy. In that time FARE has helped more than 750 communities and organisations, and backed over 1,400 projects around Australia.

For further information visit FARE's website: [www.fare.org.au](http://www.fare.org.au).