

# *Mental Health & Falls Prevention*

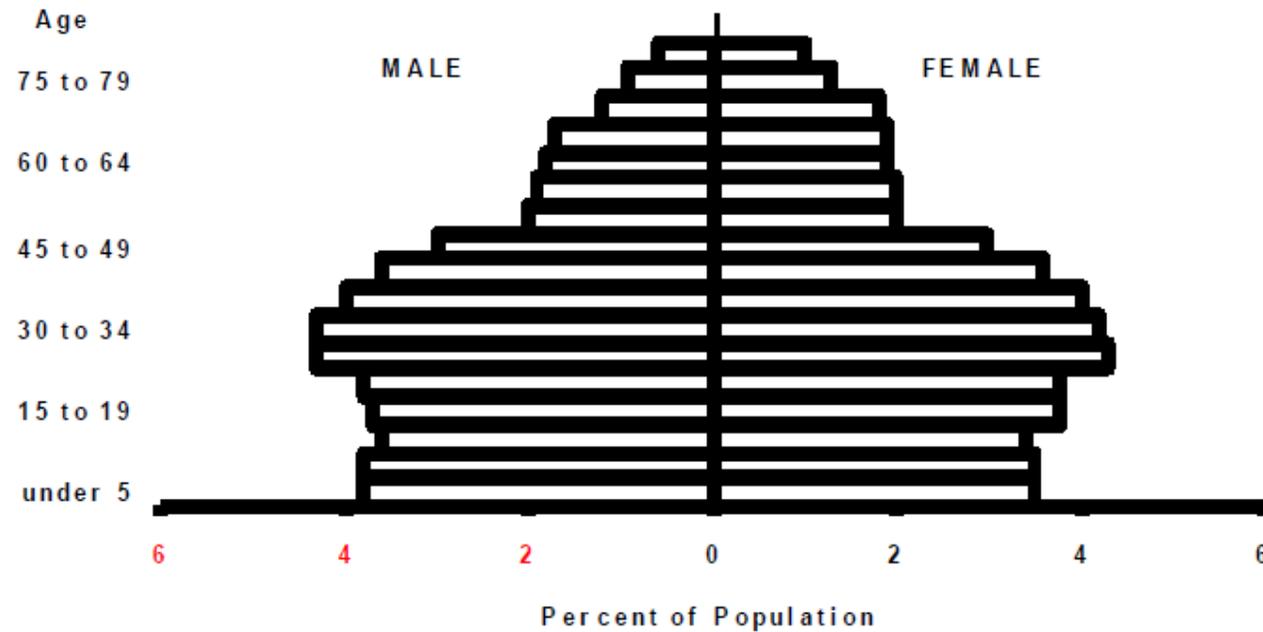
# **Alcohol & Older People**

24<sup>th</sup> August 2017

Ellen Panaretos  
Senior Community Development Officer

# Population Profiles - Constrictive

CONSTRUCTIVE - Slow growth, small numbers of young people (eg, USA, Australia)



# Where are they living in NSW

- The population of Greater Sydney was 4.8 million people, 64% of the total population.
- Almost half (47%) of the 2.7 million people living in the rest of the population resided in the coastal areas of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, Illawarra, Richmond - Tweed, Mid North Coast and Coffs Harbour - Grafton.

# Where do older people prefer to live

- Where there's fishing, surfing, less congestion and a relaxed lifestyle.
- Only 56% of those aged 65 years and over resided in the Greater Sydney.

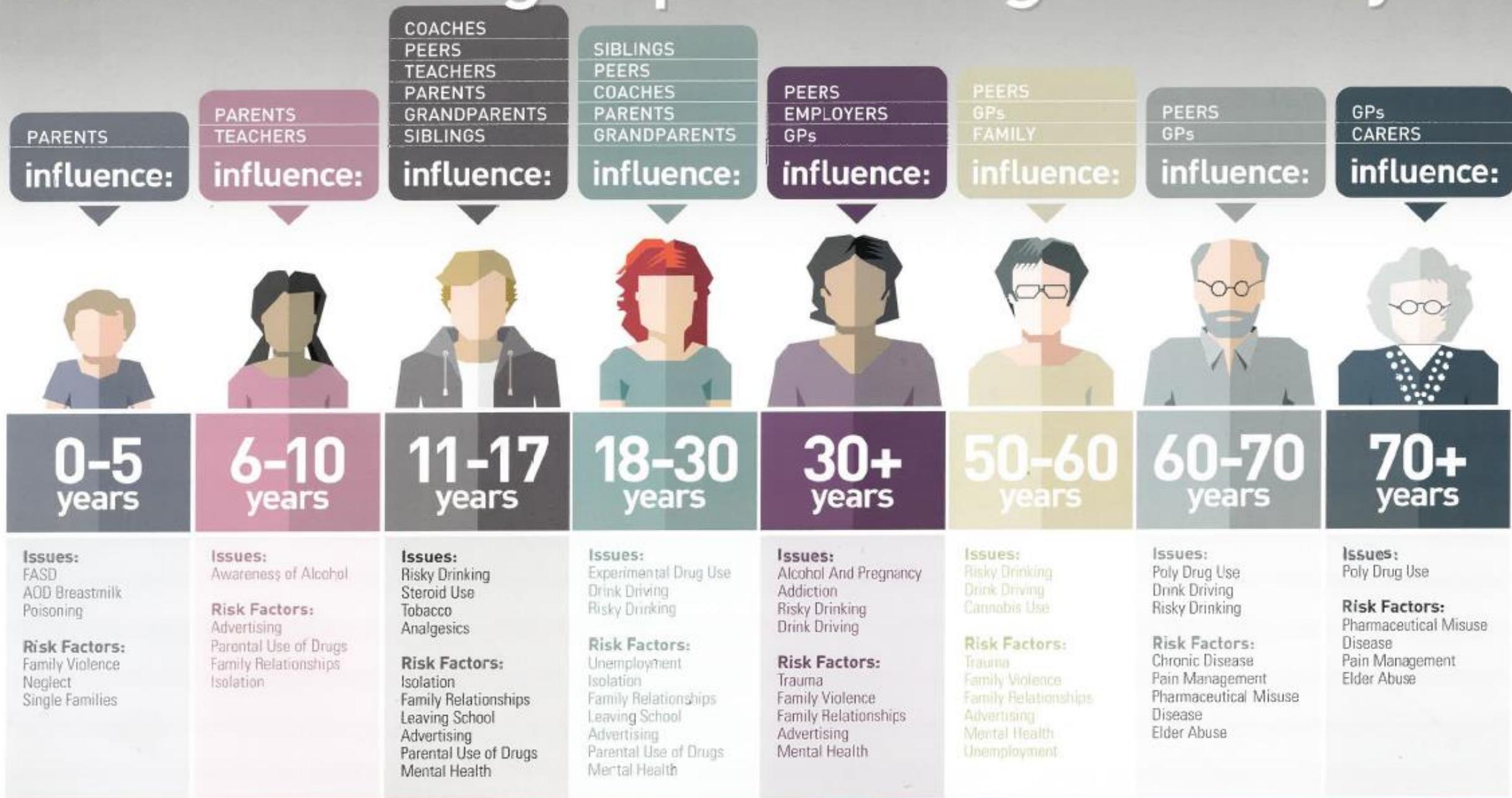
# The United Kingdom, Institute of Alcohol Studies

- There is evidence that today's population of older people may be relatively heavier drinkers than previous generations.
- In regard to the number and proportion of problem drinkers, another factor is simply that due to longer life expectancy and the ageing of the population there are more elderly People .

# **Alcohol is one of the most commonly used drugs in Australia**

**COTA**

# Alcohol & Drug Impacts along the LifeCycle



# Good practices

- There is a lack of specific research to indicate more precise levels for low-risk drinking among older people.
- Older adults are at increased risk of experiencing alcohol-related harms for three main reasons: lower metabolism, medication intake, and other health conditions.

# Low risk alcohol drinking advice for older adults (composite)

- People over 65 should have no more than seven drinks per week<sup>(1)</sup>
- No more than two drinks on any one day<sup>(2)</sup> &
- At least two alcohol-free days per week<sup>(3)</sup>

1. National Institutes of Health (US)
2. Australian Government
3. Health Promotion - NZ

## Standard Drinks



**1**

30ml

High Strength Spirit Nip  
40% Alc. Vol



**1.5**

375ml

Full Strength Pre-mix Spirits  
5% Alc. Vol



**1.4**

375ml

Full Strength  
4.8% Alc. Vol



**0.8**

375ml

Low Strength  
2.7% Alc. Vol



**1**

375ml

Mid Strength  
3.5% Alc. Vol



**1.1**

285ml

Full Strength  
4.8% Alc. Vol



**1.6**

425ml

Full Strength  
4.8% Alc. Vol



**1.5**

150ml

Average Restaurant Serving of Red Wine  
13% Alc. Vol



**1.4**

150ml

Average Restaurant Serving of White Wine  
11.5% Alc. Vol



**1.4**

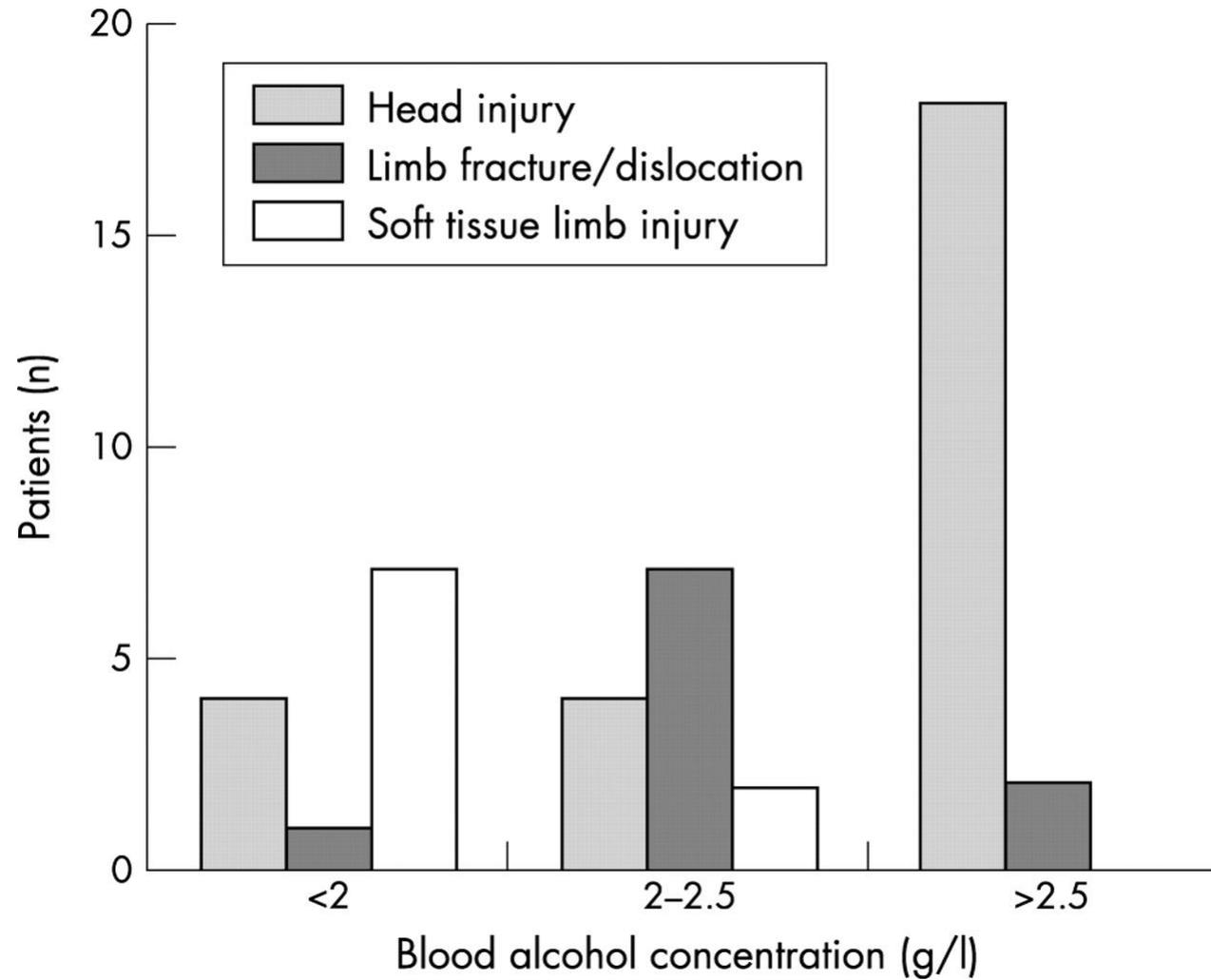
150ml

Average Restaurant Serve of Champagne  
12% Alc. Vol

## **Drinking is not recommended if you:**

- Have a condition made worse by drinking (e.g. high blood pressure)
- Are about to engage in activities requiring a degree of skill or risk (e.g. driving)
- Are on any medication, in which case it is recommended that you speak with your doctor or pharmacist before drinking alcohol.

### Injury type and blood alcohol concentration.



J J E Johnston, and S J McGovern *Emerg Med J*  
2004;21:185-188

# Problems associated with alcohol misuse in older people with mental health issues

- Chronic heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and stroke
- Pancreatitis and liver damage
- Nutritional malabsorption and osteoporosis
- Incontinence and gastrointestinal problems
- Self neglect, such as poor nutrition and hygiene
- Sleep problems or chronic pain

AFP 2010

# Problems (cont.)

- Acquired brain injury
- Memory loss and the development of dementia
- Delirium tremens
- Psychiatric problems such as depression, phobias and anxiety
- Risk of suicide
- **Falls and accidents**

AFP 2010

This is not a complete list – always check!

Common types of medicines that can be affected by alcohol\* include:

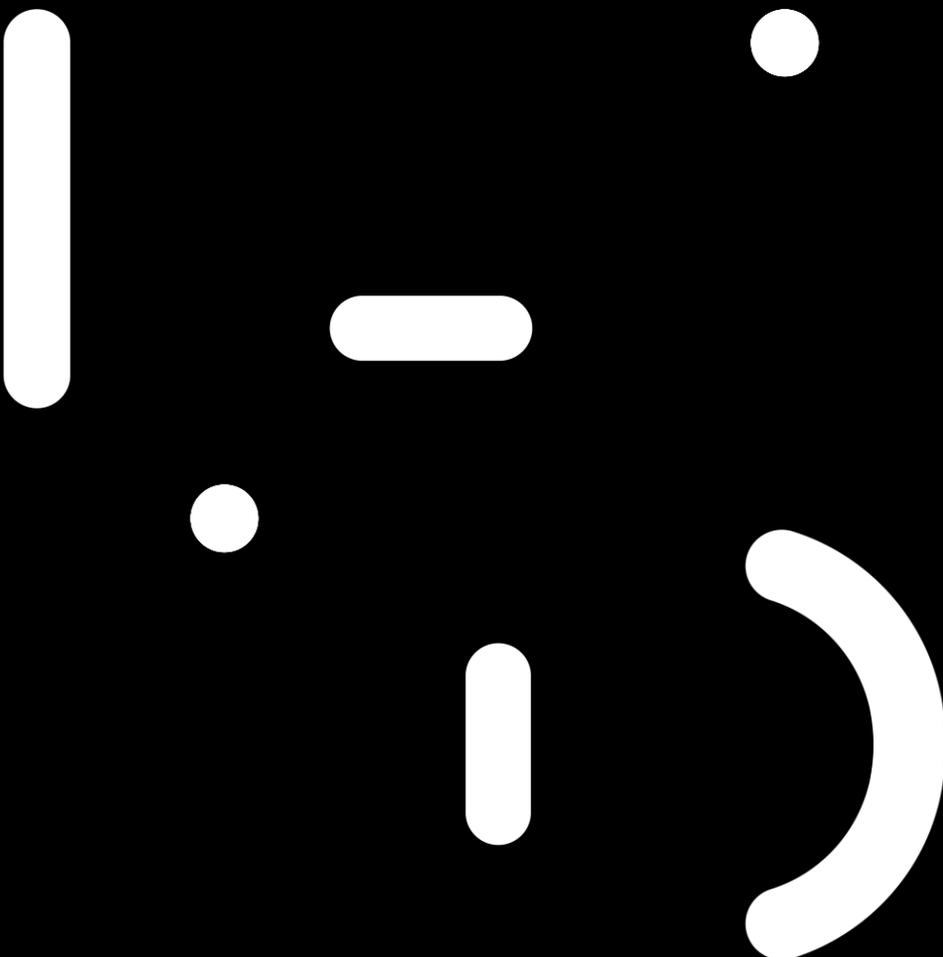
- > **antidepressants** (for depression)
- > **tranquillisers** (for anxiety)
- > **sedatives** (for sleeping)
- > **mood stabilisers** (eg, lithium for bipolar disorder)
- > **antihistamines** (for allergies or colds)
- > **anti-inflammatories** (for pain and inflammation)
- > **paracetamol** (for pain or fever)
- > **stronger, opiate-based painkillers** (eg, codeine)
- > **antibiotics** (for infections)
- > **anti-hypertensives** (for high blood pressure)
- > **heart medicines** (for angina or heart failure)

- > **cholesterol-lowering medicines**
- > **indigestion medicines**
- > **diabetes medicines**
- > **blood thinners** (for preventing blood clots)
- > **chemotherapy medicines** (for cancer or severe arthritis)
- > **epilepsy medicines**
- > **medicines that help urine flow** (for men with enlarged prostates)
- > **some medicinal herbs**, such as chamomile, valerian, lavender, St John's wort and kava
- > **some cough syrups** that contain high amounts of alcohol and can affect other medicines.

Health Promotion Agency - NZ

# When to ask about alcohol or drug use

- At a first consultation
- After a fall
- When starting a new medication
- At a regular (6 month~~y~~) medication review
- When presenting with:
  - depression, anxiety or insomnia
  - heart, liver or kidney complaints
  - gastrointestinal problems
  - memory difficulties
  - nutritional deficiencies



Alcohol and Drug Foundation  
is about...

preventing the harm caused by  
alcohol and other drugs in  
Australia by working in  
partnership with communities  
to create sustainable social  
change that supports health  
and well-being for all.

..

# Background

- 50 years' worth of work with Alcohol and Drug problems.
- A non-government, not-for-profit organization
- Focuses on primary prevention

# Local Drug Action Teams & Community Drug Action Teams

Programs that give communities a framework to prevent and reduce the harmful effects of alcohol and other drugs (AOD).



Alcohol  
and Drug  
Foundation

PREVENTING HARM IN AUSTRALIA

[DRUG FACTS](#)

An aerial photograph of a large, curved stone staircase. Several people are sitting on the steps, scattered across the width of the staircase. The people are wearing various colored clothing, including a bright yellow-green jacket, a red bag, and a blue shirt. The stone tiles are light grey and arranged in a grid pattern.

# Preventing alcohol and other drug harms in Australia

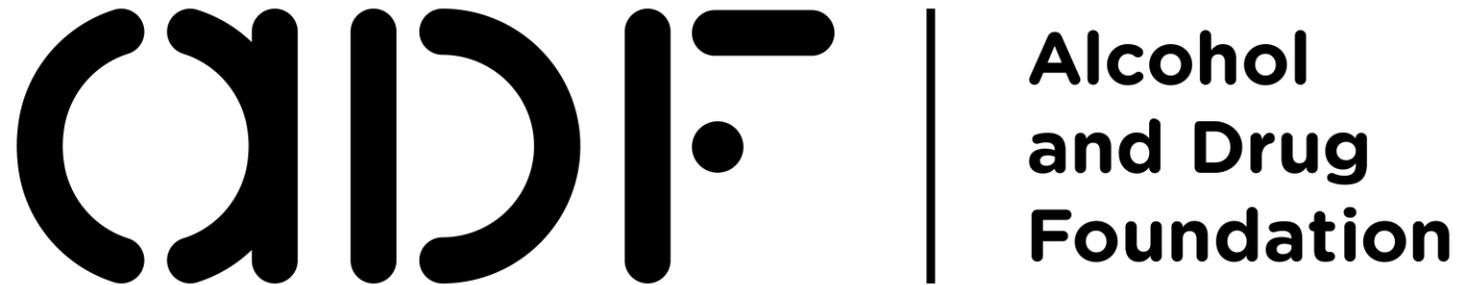
We believe that an Australia free from Alcohol and other drug harms will be an Australia that is safer for us all.



Drugs The Facts

# Resources

- Substance Misuse – Australian Family Physician  
<http://www.racgp.org.au/afp/2010/october/substance-misuse/>
- Alcohol & Older People – Health Promotion Agency NZ  
[http://www.alcohol.org.nz/sites/default/files/field/file\\_attachment/AL548-Alcohol-and-Older-People-bookletMar%202016\\_LR.pdf](http://www.alcohol.org.nz/sites/default/files/field/file_attachment/AL548-Alcohol-and-Older-People-bookletMar%202016_LR.pdf)
- Drug Facts - Alcohol & Drug Foundation <http://adf.org.au/drug-facts/>
- Standard Drink – Australian Government  
<http://www.alcohol.gov.au/internet/alcohol/publishing.nsf/Content/standard>
- Alcohol & Older Australians – COTA, WA <http://www.cotawa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Alcohol-and-older-Australians.pdf>



Peter Whitecross . Senior Community Development Officer . 02 8923 0006  
Ellen Panaretos . Senior Community Development Officer . 02 8923 0013

<https://adf.org.au/>