Media Release

DRINK ANYONE?
New research highlights alcohol harms and trends

(Sydney, Tuesday, 1 November 2016:) As the nation raises its glasses for the annual Melbourne Cup Race Day, new research being presented at the APSAD Scientific Alcohol and Drugs Conference reveals the impact of drinking on the nation:

- **Trends in Estimated Alcohol-Attributable Assault Hospitalisations in Australia**
  More than 10,000 Australians were hospitalised in a single year due to alcohol-attributable assault (2012/13) – an average of 200 per week across the country.

- Four states – Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory – recorded rates above the national average.

- Across all jurisdictions, apart from the Northern Territory, **young males (15-29 years)** appeared to be at highest risk of alcohol-attributable assault. More state specific data is available here.

- Men accounted for almost three-quarters (71%) of hospitalisations due to assault attributed to alcohol

- Males aged 15-29 comprised about half (47%) of all male alcohol-attributable assault hospitalisations

- Alcohol-attributable assault rates among 15-19 and 20-29 year old males were at least 2 times higher than for the general population (everybody aged 15+ years).

- **Not just the young:** In Victoria (2012-2015), **20-29 year olds in metro areas** had the highest number of alcohol-related ambulance call outs but in **regional areas** was most common amongst those aged **40-49 year and 50-60 years**.

- **Female binge drinking:** Globally, increasing gender equality is seeing a rise in female binge drinking however biological differences mean the consequences are more severe for women than men.

- Alcohol is one of the leading contributors to the burden of disease in young people.

- The three "best buys" to reduce alcohol-harms are considered to be: availability reduction; price increases via taxation and ban of marketing and advertisement.

- **Beer Tax:** A study looking at the impact of Australian alcohol tax changes on beer consumption since 1989 found higher tax rates for off-trade beer to be effective in reducing consumption, but they were undermined by discounted tax rates for on-trade beer. In addition, the tax rates have not been efficient in maintaining alcohol total revenue levels for government.

- **Social media campaigns hit underage drinkers:** A new study on alcohol marketing on social media is reaching large numbers of Australian teens and is being linked to early
alcohol initiation and riskier drinking. “There is a need to evaluate strategies used by social media moderators and alcohol regulation bodies to reduce the exposure to and potential impact of alcohol marketing pages on adolescents and young adults, and ensure these pages are not accessible to or targeting underage social media users.”

- **Why Parents Supply a Sip of Alcohol in Early Adolescence**
  Parents who believe their child is engaged with substance-using peers are more likely to supply their child with sips of alcohol, possibly in the belief it will protect their child from unsupervised alcohol use with their peers.

- **Teen Binge Drinking:** A study on adolescent alcohol initiation and progression to binge drinking found early initiation was common: half of the sample were drinking by year 11, and of these, 30 per cent had started drinking by age 14. Regular and binge drinking by Year 11 was also common, with more than half (51 per cent) reporting current alcohol use and over a third (36 per cent) engaged in some form of binge drinking.

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**About**
The APSAD 2016 Scientific Alcohol and Drugs Conference is the southern hemisphere’s largest summit on alcohol and other drugs attracting leading researchers, clinicians, policy makers and community representatives from across the region. The Conference is run by the Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs (APSAD), Asia Pacific’s leading multidisciplinary organisation for professionals involved in the alcohol and other drug field.

- **View the APSAD Sydney 2016 Conference Program**
- **Read more about the Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs (APSAD)**
- **Contact Petrana Lorenz to arrange an interview or find out about other key topics.**