



18 July 2016

Dry July is the ideal time to talk about alcohol use

16,500 people have signed up to participate in this year's Dry July, choosing to give up booze for a month to support cancer services, and while intentions are commendable, statistics show that a large component of those participating will find it difficult to remain 'dry' for the whole month. St Vincent's alcohol experts are today calling on those who are struggling to engage with their services to tackle their problem drinking.

"Alcohol has important cultural and social significance in Australia, and for some people it can be difficult to cut back without some form of help", said A/Prof Nadine Ezard, Clinical Director of St Vincent's Hospital Sydney's alcohol and drug service. "Indeed, the latest research shows that many Australians believe they are drinking too much and would like support in reducing their alcohol intake".

78 per cent of Australian adults consume alcohol, however, close to half of Australian respondents to the Global Drug Survey (42%) reported wanting to drink less. The findings also reveal that more than one in 10 respondents – 13.7% – believe they need help to drink less while only 4.2% said they would proactively seek support.

A/Prof Ezard said that it was encouraging that many of those who took part in the Global Drug Survey recognised they need help, but concerning that less than a third reported an intention to take steps to get it. "We need to get the message out there that it's okay to ask for help, help is there, and it works. Unfortunately there is a lot of stigma around needing support to tackle alcohol use – which is often seen as a big part of an 'Australian' way of life. Many people are hesitant to try out talking about their alcohol use with a health professional. An anonymous, confidential telephone call to the Alcohol and Drug Information Service can be a really great way to start".

St Vincent's Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) can help those looking for support in managing or cutting down their alcohol use. The free, confidential and anonymous telephone service offers counselling, support, advice, information, education and referrals for people who are struggling to abstain for the month of July, or who deal each day with alcohol or illicit drug use. ADIS also provide support to concerned family and friends – those whose lives are affected by someone else's alcohol intake.

Call ADIS on 9361 8000 (Sydney metro) or 1800 422 599 (rest of NSW).

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For more information please contact:

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