

# **MANLY DRINKCHECK PROJECT**

**Final Report**

**2008**

**Funded by**

**Manly Council**

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## Introduction

In Australia, almost half of all alcohol is sold and approximately 30% consumed on licensed premises (Department of Gaming and Racing, 1997, cited Wiggers, 2006), with the average Australian consuming 7.8 litres of alcohol every year (World Advertising Research Centre, 2002).

Within Australia, over the past decade there has been a steady increase in the proportion of the Australian population who drink, reaching 83% in 2004 (AIHW 2005, cited Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy, 2006). One in five (20.6%) Australians drink at levels that are risky or high risk of harm in the short term at least once a month and this is particularly evident amongst young adults (AIHW 2005, cited Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy, 2006).

Local statistics show between the years 2003-2007 the age group most represented in drink driving statistics are drivers between 19-35 years (Manly Police Intel Statistics, 2003-2007). Statistics reveal that levels of drink driving within the Manly local area command (LAC) have remained relatively consistent over this period of time (Manly Police Intel Statistics, 2003-2007).

Early and brief interventions can be highly effective for the general population who are consuming alcohol at hazardous/harmful levels and those who frequently binge drink. A brief intervention strategy such as the Drink Check program is an appropriate tool in addressing the issue of alcohol related harm within the community (Volkov, 2003). This program is funded by Manly Council, with the aim of educating those who are engaged in unhealthy drinking behaviour on a regular basis, challenging the cultural norms of binge drinking, and targeting potential drink drivers.

## **Project Description**

The Drink Check project screens individuals for drinking patterns that may cause adverse health effects and provides participants with health promotion information related to drinking alcohol. Participants are given an assessment, developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO), in regards to the likelihood of adverse health effects that may result from their current drinking habits.

In 2007, a successful Drink Check project was conducted over a period of 4 weeks in a variety of licensed premises within the Manly CBD. A recommendation as a result of this was for the Drink Check project to continue at least annually, and to trial the project at a local community festival such as the Manly Food and Wine festival.

Through conducting Drink Check in a highly visible area of the Manly Food and Wine festival, festival goers have the opportunity to be well informed to make decisions regarding alcohol and their health.

## **Rationale**

Results from the 2007 Drink Check project indicated that of participants surveyed, 72% and 68% of the 20-29 and 30-39 age groups drank in a binge pattern at least weekly. Conducting Drink Check in accordance with the Manly Food and Wine festival highlights the adverse health affects of alcohol to be taken into consideration. Running the two concurrently, reinforces the message that while alcohol can be enjoyed, moderation is necessary in order to prevent these adverse health affects. This would be a proactive health strategy, which would challenge the Australian drinking culture, whilst also acknowledging the cultural significance of alcohol in our society.

## **Project Objectives**

- To provide brief alcohol intervention with drinkers in a drinking environment
- To educate participants about low risk drinking
- To educate participants about standard drinks
- To generate increased knowledge of the range of strategies available to avoid drink driving
- To decrease the likelihood of drink driving offences detected in the Manly LGA

## **Project Strategy**

- Conduct Drink Check at Manly Food and Wine Festival during peak times of the festival weekend
- Set up an information stall in which to conduct the project with relevant health and related information, in a highly visible area of the festival
- Utilise “safer drinking” promotional give-aways to encourage participation in the project such as standard drink glasses
- Coordinate with proactive local media releases targeting health promotion messages prior to the festival weekend

## **Program Design and Model**

The Drink Check program screens individuals for drinking patterns that may cause adverse health effects and provides patrons with health promotion information related to drinking alcohol. Patrons are given an assessment in regards to the likelihood of ill health that may result from their current drinking habits.

The project was conducted at the entrance to the Manly Food and Wine Festival in the Manly CBD. Project times were negotiated by Manly Council Social Planning and Implementation Committee and MDECC. The MDECC staff and local police set up the Drink Check stand in an easily accessible area. A highly visual “Alcohol and Your

Health” display was set up allowing those not interested in completing the survey opportunity to gain alcohol related information. MDECC staff conducted the World Health Organisation (WHO) survey (see appendix 1) with festival participants providing individual feedback.

A range of “Alcohol and Your Health” resources were available, and standard drink wine glasses were utilised as incentives for participants to complete the Drink Check survey.

### **Police Support**

The project involved partnership between Manly Police, Manly Council, and MDECC. Manly Police were available onsite to engage with participants and answer questions related to drink driving. This gives participants an opportunity to engage with police around the subject of drink driving, many of whom may not have otherwise sought out this information.

### **MDECC Support**

Four MDECC staff were available throughout the Sunday of the Manly Food and Wine Festival, a known peak day of the festival.

MDECC staff were responsible for gathering together willing participants to partake in the Drink Check intervention. The survey was then administered to participants, followed by the calculation of their score and relevant feedback provided around health issues related to drinking. Pamphlets and resources were provided, and when necessary, participants were referred to relevant agencies for further support and information. On completing the survey participants received a standard drink glass. MDECC staff also provided extra education surrounding alcohol, health and standard drinks with many more festival goers other than those who completed the survey.

## Recruitment of Participants

All festival goers over 18 years were welcome to take part in the project regardless of age or gender. MDECC staff recruited participants by approaching individuals and groups, explaining the project and inviting them to participate. The highly visible Drink Check display and standard drink glasses give-aways encouraged festival goers to approach Drink Check workers.

## Results

Drink Check was conducted on Sunday 1 May, 11am-4pm.

N= 62

## Demographics of Survey Participants

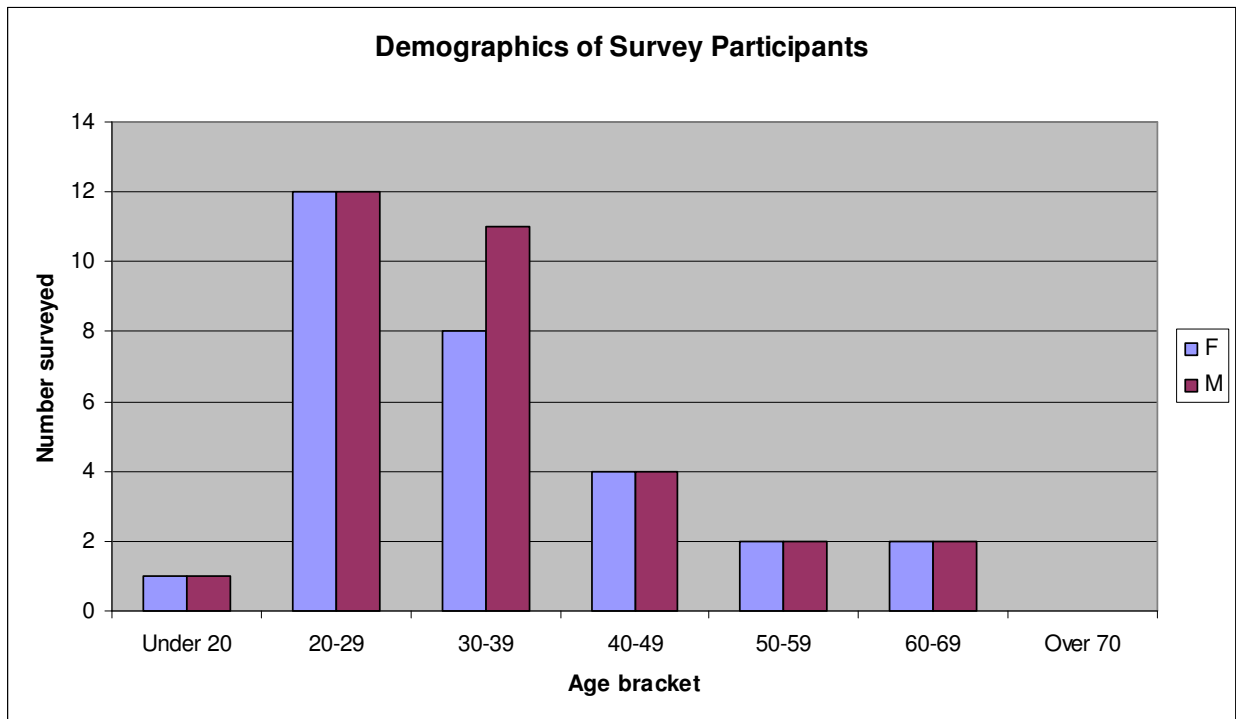


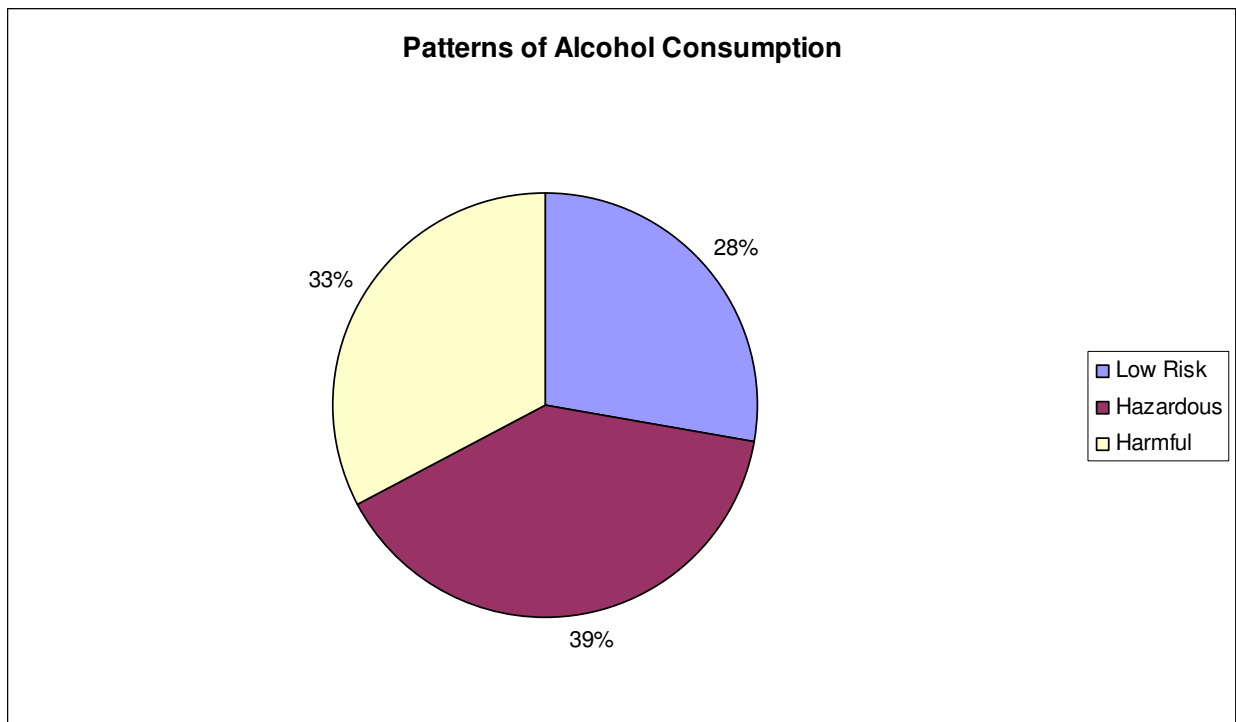
Figure 1.1

Total Females surveyed= 30

Total Males surveyed= 32

The 2008 Drink Check reveals a very different result in regards to gender of those surveyed during 2007, with males and females virtually being identical. The 2007 Drink Check project conducted 91 surveys over a five night period, with 78% of those surveyed being male. This result reflects a difference in demographic of alcohol consumer being educated at the Manly Food and Wine Festival as it appeared to attract more females than the licensed venues targeted in the previous project. However, similar results are reflected in terms of age majority, i.e. primarily those aged 20-39 years.

### Patterns of Alcohol Consumption

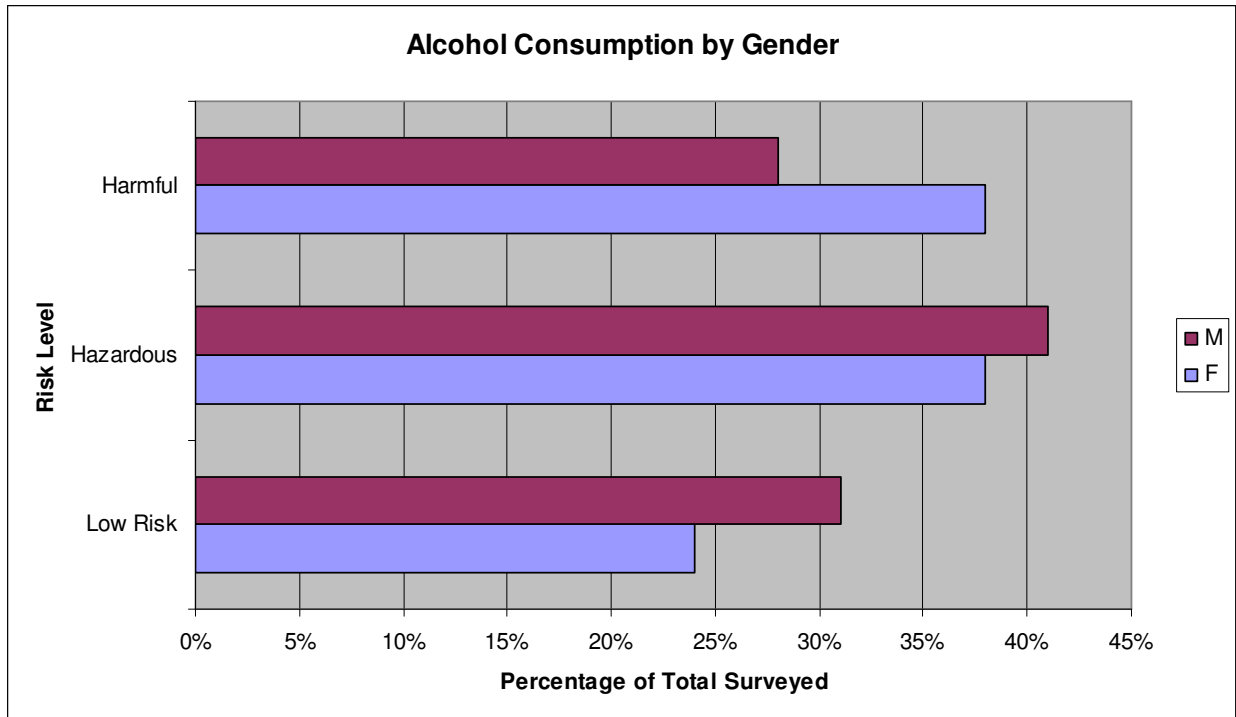


**Figure 2.1**

Figure 2.1 illustrates the manner in which people surveyed consumed alcohol. Approximately 72% of those surveyed consumed alcohol in a manner either hazardous (indicating they “may” be in danger of harming their health) or harmful to health (indicating they are drinking at a level likely to cause social, psychological, and physical damage to their health), with 28% drinking in a manner following low risk guidelines.

Again this result is vastly different to the 2007 Drink Check whereby only 3% of those surveyed indicated they were drinking in a manner following low risk guidelines. This may reflect the difference in settings.

### Alcohol Consumption by Gender

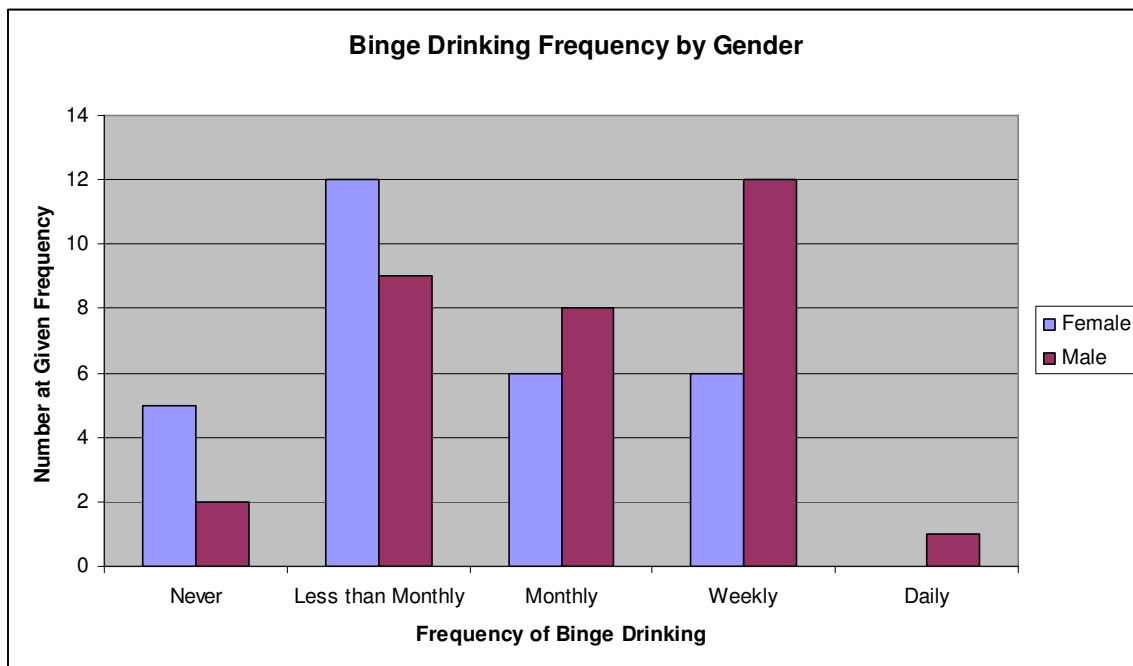


**Figure 3.1**

Figure 3.1 identifies there are minimal differences in pattern of alcohol consumption between males and females. This outcome reflects current research into the changing patterns of women's alcohol consumption within Australia. Research has identified that of approximately 15 000 women aged 18-23 years, 70% reported binge drinking with one-quarter of the binge drinkers doing so at least weekly. Non-drinkers were more likely than drinkers to be married, pregnant, non-smokers, born in non-English speaking countries, to live in the Northern Territory, and to have lower levels of education, employment, and private health insurance (Jonas, HA, Dobson, AJ and Brown, WJ, 2000). Manly GLA is an area of higher socio economic status, with many other socio-

economic indicators that are opposite to those indicated as being likely for females who are non-drinkers. This is reflected in the Drink Check results which show women in the Northern Beaches are more likely to be partaking in hazardous/harmful drinking patterns and therefore may benefit from further targeted information/intervention strategies.

### Binge Drinking Frequency by Gender



**Figure 4.1**

55% (20% female and 35% male) of those surveyed binge drank monthly or more. This is reflective of the drinking culture within Australia. “Drinking alcohol is intrinsic to Australian culture and the activity is seen as both normal, sociable and expected. Alcohol is perceived to be liberating and empowering. Getting drunk is a badge of being an adult and drinking is one of the significant ‘rites of passage’ into adulthood”. (*A Study of Attitudes and Behaviours of Drinkers at Risk*, National Alcohol Strategy 2001 to 2003/04, Occasional Paper, Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, September 2002).

## Discussion

Overall, Drink Check was successful in conducting brief interventions regarding alcohol and health at a community festival. Of additional value to the project was the visual display set up at the entrance to the festival. Accordingly, festival goers could gain alcohol information before entering the festival via three different levels of engagement; the visual display and collection of written resources (low level of engagement with workers and resources disseminated), conversations with MDECC staff (high level of engagement and resources disseminated), and the Drink Check survey (brief intervention, high level of engagement and resources disseminated). Estimates of the total number of festival goers better informed due to Drink Check is difficult to assess, however, it can be approximated that further to the 62 people who completed in the brief intervention, a further 200 people had alcohol and health related conversations with MDECC staff, with hundreds more seeing the visual display and collecting resources. Examples of conversations with MDECC staff include,

*“People came up to me to talk about standard drinks and if they have had x amount of wine could they still drive?”*

*“Most people thought that one glass of wine being served at the festival was 1 standard drink”*

Consequently, many drink driving incidents were potentially prevented, as festival goers who had thought they were able to drive realised that they were in fact far over the legal limit. This reinforces the crucial need to have a project such as Drink Check at all community events where alcohol is served.

Having a range of levels of engagement for education allowed more people to be educated as it gave festival goers options. Utilising standard drinks glasses as give-aways provided a further incentive for participants to participate in the more intensive brief intervention.

Festival goers were generally willing to participate. MDECC workers inviting people to participate were respectful of being in a social environment and therefore did not pressure people to be involved if not interested. Following the implementation of the survey, conversations with participants tended to be on average around 10-15 minutes in length, with the quality of the following conversations being in depth.

Further education around what constitutes a standard drink is still imperative. The message that a glass of wine and a schooner of beer is not a standard drink is critical to get across as throughout the interventions this point needed to be highlighted. Further emphasis on the social, physical and psychological implications of drinking in this manner also needs to be further addressed. Participants assuming that their behaviour was and will not impact on them, were clearly surprised at receiving feedback that they were drinking in a manner likely to cause ill health.

Participating in Drink Check at the Manly Food and Wine Festival meant those festival goers were attending the festival with credible knowledge about alcohol, enabling them to make informed decisions about alcohol consumption. This proactive health initiative reinforced the message that while alcohol can be enjoyed, consumption needs to be done consciously.

## Recommendations

- Implement Drink Check as a standard feature of future Manly Food and Wine Festivals.
- Further enhance the current visual display, making it a key feature of the Drink Check project, with specific attention given to information regarding standard drinks.
- Keep current position (i.e. the entrance to the festival near the Ivanhoe Hotel) as the location of Drink Check so as to educate festival goers prior to entering the festival.
- Increase the number of staff at Drink Check keeping a minimum of four staff at the stall and having a number of “roving” workers walking around the event.
- Continue with standard drink glass give-aways as incentives to participate in Drink Check. Have all glasses for the Food and Wine Festival marked with a standard drink measure, with glass holders designed to incorporate the marked line.
- Utilise simulated intoxication goggles exercises at the Drink Check stall for a further creative way to engage with festival goers around the risks and harms associated with alcohol.
- Create an information pack and/or session to inform wine makers of what Drink Check is and how it can enhance the Manly Food and Wine Festival experience.
- Create associated identification t-shirts or similar so as to easily identify Drink Check workers.
- Continue with Police support and attendance during the project.
- Include further drink driving education to support the project.

## References

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## Appendix 1- Drink Check Survey

**DRINKCHECK**

Male  
 Female

Under 20     20-29     30-39     40-49     50-59     60-69     70+

**1 How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?**

Never     Monthly or less     once a week or less     2 to 4 times a week     5 or more times a week

**2 How many 'standard' drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?**

1     2     3 or 4     5 or 6     7 or more

**3 How often do you have 6 or more drinks on one occasion?**

Never     Less than monthly     Monthly     Weekly     Daily or almost daily

**4 How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?**

Never     Less than monthly     Monthly     Weekly     Daily or almost daily

**5 How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected of you because of drinking?**

Never     Less than monthly     Monthly     Weekly     Daily or almost daily

**6 How often during the last year have you needed a drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?**

Never     Less than monthly     Monthly     Weekly     Daily or almost daily

**7 How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?**

Never     Less than monthly     Monthly     Weekly     Daily or almost daily

**8 How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?**

Never     Less than monthly     Monthly     Weekly     Daily or almost daily

9 Have you or someone else ever been injured as a result of **YOUR** drinking?

- No       Yes, but not in the last year       Yes, during the last year

10 Has a relative, a friend, a doctor or other health worker ever been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down?

- No       Yes, but not in the last year       Yes, during the last year

11 Do you think you presently have a problem with drinking?

- No       Probably not       Unsure       Possibly       Definitely

12 In the next 3 months, how difficult would you find it to cut down or stop drinking?

- Very easy       Fairly easy       Neither difficult nor easy       Fairly difficult       Very difficult

13 In your opinion, how many standard drinks per day, on average do you think a **MAN** could have before it becomes a health risk?

14 In opinion, how many standard drinks per day, on average, do you think a **WOMAN** could have before it becomes a health risk?

15 Have you participated in a Drinkcheck Questionnaire before?

- Yes       No

Light Beer 425ml 2.9% Alcohol	Full Strength Beer 285ml 4.9% Alcohol	Wine 140ml 12% Alcohol	Fortified Wine 60ml 20% Alcohol	Spirits 30ml 40% Alcohol
				

## Appendix 2



- Manly Drug Education and Counselling Centre (MDECC) Media Release -

**For Release Thursday 29 May 2008**

## **While enjoying a wine this weekend, why not check up on your health?**

Most Australians enjoy a good glass of wine, but when does that nice glass of Shiraz start to impact on your health?

This Sunday as part of the Manly Food and Wine Festival, the Manly Drug Education and Counselling Centre will be conducting free World Health Organisation “Alcohol and Your Health Checks”.

The project is not about telling people not to drink, rather highlighting that while you can enjoy a glass it’s important to keep all parts of your health in mind too, both mental and physical.

“Alcohol and Your Health Checks” will be conducted outside the Manly Ivanhoe Hotel from 12-4pm on Sunday 1st June.

***“Most people are very unclear of what a standard drink is. The project is an opportunity to dispel myths and really look at what people are consuming”.***



“ONE STANDARD DRINK is approximately 1 middy of full strength beer, or 1 small glass of wine, or 1 small glass of sherry or port, or 1 nip of spirits. You can also check the label on your bottle or can for the exact number of standard drinks it contains.”

Police will also be available at the stand to have a chat and answer any questions around drink driving. “Alcohol and Your Health Checks” has been funded by Manly Council in order to promote healthy lifestyles.

For further information about the “Alcohol and Your Health Checks”, or for printed information on standard drinks and low risk drinking levels, contact MDECC on 9977 0711.

Light Beer 425ml 2.9% Alcohol	Full Strength Beer 285ml 4.9% Alcohol	Wine 100ml 12% Alcohol	Fortified Wine 60ml 20% Alcohol	Spirits 30ml 40% Alcohol
				

- Ends -

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