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MEDIA RELEASE

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Police unite to raise awareness of alcohol misuse

Police throughout Australia and New Zealand have joined together over the Easter period in Operation Unite, an initiative designed to target alcohol misuse and alcohol related criminal behaviour, violence and anti-social behaviour.

Operation Unite aims to raise awareness of the widespread impact of these issues, especially on various sectors including the criminal justice and healthcare systems as well as society as a whole.

A recent report by the Australian Institute of Criminology estimated the total cost of alcohol related problems in 2010 was over \$14,000 billion. Further, the report identified the following areas as most affected.

- Australian productivity – over 42% of the total
- Traffic accidents – over 25% of the total
- Criminal justice system – over 20% of the total
- Health system – over 11% of the total

Dr Dennis Young, Executive Director, Drug ARM Australasia, said that initiatives such as Operation Unite are crucial in reducing alcohol related crime and ensuring safety within the wider community.

Drug ARM provides a range of programs and services in prevention, treatment, diversion and outreach that are aimed at minimising the harms associated with alcohol and other drug use in the community.

A specialist, non-government alcohol and other drug agency, Drug ARM is one of the merged entities alongside the Mental Health Association Australia and the Australian College of Community Services, which operate under one foundation, Healthy Options Australia.

For further information on Drug ARM programs please phone 1300 656 800 or visit www.drugarm.com.au.

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