

ANCD

Australian National Council on Drugs

PO Box 205
Civic Square ACT 2608




ancd@ancd.org.au
www.ancd.org.au

National Health and Medical Research Council
GPO Box 1421
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Sir or Madam

Re: Draft Australian alcohol guidelines for low-risk drinking

I am writing on behalf of the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) to respond to the draft Australian alcohol guidelines for low-risk drinking recently released by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NH&MRC).

The ANCD recognises the level of work undertaken by the NH&MRC to develop these guidelines and acknowledges their importance in informing the general public on alcohol consumption.

In reviewing the guidelines the ANCD considered many specific issues such as, but not limited to:

- relative and absolute risk and the need to differentiate between these risks;
- the effect of differing patterns and levels of drinking;
- the complexity of FASD, particularly the importance of having a scientifically grounded document that details the research evidence and the use of this evidence to develop messages for the general community.


Accordingly, the ANCD would recommend that there is a strong need to separate the process of reviewing the available scientific evidence from the task of translating this evidence into effective public communication messages.

Whilst the ANCD acknowledges the need for a principle of precaution when releasing guidelines to the public this must be balanced by the need to reflect the available scientific evidence. The complexity of this task is not underestimated by the ANCD but its achievement is necessary to maintain public confidence in guidelines of this nature.

The ANCD trusts that this information is useful and looks forward to your response.

Yours sincerely




Australian National Council on Drugs
7 December 2007

cc IGCD Chair