



**Media Release**

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2012**

**“From Harm to Harmony” – A two day symposium on in Auckland from tomorrow asks how alcohol-related harm can be more effectively addressed in New Zealand.**

Over 150 participants from across the country will discuss findings from investigations into the impact of alcohol on women’s health, and the impact of alcohol on injuries and violence in New Zealand.

Two international guest speakers, Dr Evelyn Gillan, Chief Executive Alcohol Focus Scotland and Caterina Giorgi, Manager of Policy and Research at the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, will join local experts to provide insights into how New Zealand could step up its efforts to better respond to alcohol-related harm.

Alcohol Healthwatch Director Rebecca Williams says the investigations have found deep cause for concern with astonishingly high levels of poor health outcomes, violence and injury related to alcohol consumption in New Zealand. This is affecting not only the drinker but those around them, particularly women and children.

“We have found indications that the patterns of drinking among some women have become more harmful. This significantly increases their risk of problems from alcohol,” Williams says.

“We have high prevalence of heavy drinking across society in New Zealand, which in term results in unacceptable levels of premature death and disability. Women are more likely to experience alcohol-related violence as a result of someone else’s drinking. This is compounded when women drink in an effort to cope with the impact of this violence, creating a vicious cycle of harm.”

Williams says, “Children and young people, those in poorer neighbourhoods, Māori and Pacific populations, and marginalised communities are most seriously affected by our liberal approach to alcohol. We must do more to protect these groups from this harm.” She hopes that symposium participants will identify priorities and actions that will achieve this.

The national Symposium has been organised by Alcohol Healthwatch, in partnership with Women’s Health Action and Hapai Te Hauora Tapui Ltd. It will be held at Waipuna Conference Centre, Mt Wellington, Auckland on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

For further comment;

Rebecca Williams, Alcohol Healthwatch (09) 520 7035 or 021 862 250

Julie Radford-Poupard, Women's Health Action (09) 520 5295 or 021 989 745

Te Pora Thompson- Evans, Hapai Te Hauora Tapui Ltd (09) 520 4796 or 021 02708805

Dr Evelyn Gillan – Alcohol Focus Scotland +44141 5726700

Caterina Giorgi – Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education +61402272 6002

Attached:

- Symposium programme and speaker profile
- Draft Policy Briefing Paper – Alcohol and Women's Health
- Draft Policy Briefing Paper – Alcohol Injuries and Violence