



ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

MEDIA RELEASE

Surgeons call for common sense on our streets

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The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons has again endorsed the trans-Tasman policing initiative, *Operation Unite*, calling on young people to exercise common sense while out enjoying themselves this weekend.

Operation Unite is a twice yearly blitz on anti-social behaviour caused by the excessive consumption of alcohol. It aims to minimise the incidence of alcohol fuelled violence on the streets of Australian and New Zealand cities and towns.

It will see hundreds of additional police officers deployed across Australian and New Zealand streets on Friday and Saturday nights.

Deputy Chair of the College's Trauma Committee, Dr John Crozier, commended police forces across both nations for their efforts to remind young drinkers of the potentially fatal effects of excessive alcohol consumption.

"*Operation Unite* is both an educational and enforcement exercise," Dr Crozier said.

"Before police take to the streets to enforce the law, they remind people of the dangers associated with excessive drinking. This week New South Wales Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione stood alongside a victim of alcohol fuelled violence and reminded us that more than five million Australians have been affected by such violence, including 2.6 million direct victims."

"Economically, alcohol related crime costs Australia an estimated \$1.7 billion annually, with \$750 million spent on policing the problem".

"And Australian and New Zealand surgeons are well placed to comment on the human dimension of this problem. It is surgeons who have to treat the injured and then inform victims' families of the exact nature and extent of injuries sustained, injuries which are often horrific and always entirely preventable," he said.

Dr Crozier strongly endorsed comments made this week by Commissioner Scipione. "The Commissioner was absolutely right when he said 'we can't arrest our way out of this problem'.

"Policing can only achieve so much. This is a cultural problem that can only be solved by people deciding that they respect themselves and their loved ones too much to behave in a dangerous and socially irresponsible manner."

"Surgeons working in the emergency departments of our hospitals are hoping for a quiet time not just this weekend but every weekend."

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