



OPERATION UNITE: POLICE UNITED STAND ON DRUNKEN VIOLENCE

12.30pm, Wednesday 8 September, 2010

Australia and New Zealand police forces have joined forces again for a highly visible campaign of action against alcohol misuse, violence and anti-social behaviour this weekend.

Following the success of last year's Operation Unite, a strong and focussed police presence will flood the streets of every Australian state and territory, and across New Zealand, targeting drunks, criminals and anti-social behaviour.

Operation Unite demonstrates the joint resolve of police commissioners to change Australia and New Zealand's culture of binge drinking in public places and challenge the drinking public to take greater responsibility for its behaviour.

Spokesperson for Operation Unite, Commissioner Andrew Scipione of the NSW Police Force, said police are committed to tackling the effects of alcohol misuse, but can't do it alone.

"This large-scale, Australia and New Zealand-wide operation aims to send a strong and clear message – police will not put up with alcohol-related violence, drunken behaviour and other related crime," Mr Scipione said.

"Alcohol misuse and related violence, and anti-social behaviour, is an Australia and New Zealand wide problem.

"That is why police jurisdictions across both countries have come together to make a stand with Operation Unite.

"But, tackling this issue is not something that police can do on their own.

"Police are looking for the community to also make a stand and to push for a change in culture and acceptable standards of behaviour.

“To truly address this issue, we must all say no to excessive drinking and drunken, violent and anti-social behaviour.

“What police want, and what I believe we all want, is safe communities for everyone to enjoy at all times of the day and night.

“According to a report released last month by the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation, the total cost of alcohol misuse to communities across Australia is estimated to be \$36 billion each year.

“All we are asking is that you take responsibility for your own actions as well as those of your friends, family and workmates.

“Officers too often have to take intoxicated people back to police cells because they are too drunk to remember where they live,” Mr Scipione said.

“This operation is not about restricting choices and freedoms of the law abiding majority but about instilling in everyone a sense of personal responsibility.

“There is no fun in ending the night in a police cell or a hospital bed...poor decision-making fuelled with alcohol can result in a life changing experience – usually for the worse.”

The police action will involve overt and covert licensing operations, random breath testing, mounted police, the dog squad and other specialist commands.

The two-day trans-Tasman operation starts on Friday 10 September 2010.

For more information:

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For alcohol misuse statistics please go to www.anzpaa.org.au