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## Media Release

### LGBTI Health Alliance Calls for National Response to Drug Use in LGBTI Community

Research released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows that gay, lesbian & bisexual people\* smoke tobacco more, drink alcohol more and use illicit drugs more than heterosexual people and people in most other social categories.

“These findings reinforce the need for an effective national response to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs use in LGBTI communities” said Paul Martin, Chair of the Alliance. “Increased use is likely a result of “minority stress” caused by stigma, discrimination and social exclusion.”

“While there are pockets of good work happening at a local level in LGBTI organisations, there is no national approach, limited sharing of strategies or collaboration between states and territories and little funding.”

“The Alliance calls on the Department of Health and Ageing to support a national LGBTI alcohol, tobacco and other drug use strategic project, in partnership with LGBTI communities and the Alliance.”

#### **Research findings:**

The 2010 National Drug Strategy Household Survey report (<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=32212254712&tab=2>) found the following (age standardised rates):

#### Smoking

- 32.9% of homosexual/bisexual people smoked compared to 17.6% of heterosexuals
  - (3<sup>rd</sup> highest of social characteristics following Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders (A&TSI) and singles with dependent children)

#### Risky Alcohol Consumption

- 28.6% of homosexual/bisexual people drank at risky levels over their lifetime compared to 20.3% of heterosexuals
  - (3<sup>rd</sup> highest of social characteristic following A&TSI and remote/very remote)
- 24.5% of homosexual/bisexual people has drunk at risky levels on single occasions (at least weekly) compared to 15.9% of heterosexuals
  - (2<sup>nd</sup> highest of social characteristics following remote/very remote)

## Illicit Drug Use

- 33.8% of homosexual/bisexual people recently used illicit drugs compared to 14.1% of heterosexuals
  - (highest of any social characteristics)
- Specific recent use of illicit drugs  
Homosexual/Bisexual v. Heterosexual (non aged-standardised)
  - Cannabis 26% v 10%
  - Ecstasy 10.8% v. 2.8%
  - Meth/amphetamines 7.1% v 1.9%
  - Cocaine 4.4% v 2.1%

\* Transgender and intersex people were not identified in the survey.

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