

**MEDIA RELEASE**

Immediate release

**ALCOHOL AND DRUG FOUNDATION URGES AUSTRALIANS TO KEEP CONNECTED AS ISOLATION CONTINUES**

As strict social distancing rules continue in many states and territories, the [Alcohol and Drug Foundation](#) is urging Australians to keep [connected](#) with loved ones, to help boost mood, alleviate stress or boredom and reduce the risk of [problematic alcohol consumption](#).

Chief Executive Officer, Dr Erin Lalor AM said, whilst she acknowledges the need for prolonged social distancing measures, some people may experience heightened feelings of isolation, anxiousness or boredom, which are all risk factors for increased alcohol use.

“It’s really tough at the moment and we know that in [times of crisis, alcohol consumption increases](#). This is concerning, as it can lead to short and long-term negative health outcomes such as dependence, accidents, injuries and illnesses such as cancer,” Dr Lalor explained.

“Since the outbreak of Covid-19, people have been using [alcohol as a coping mechanism](#). If you are feeling sad, lonely, stressed or anxious, it’s best to avoid drinking alcohol, as it can make these feelings worse.

“The Alcohol and Drug Foundation really encourages people to maintain or strengthen their connections with loved ones in times of hardship, as it means they can vent, share experiences, receive or give support, take their mind off the situation, or have a few laughs,” Dr Lalor added.

[The Alcohol and Drug Foundation’s website lists simple and innovative ways](#) people can connect with friends and family, even if it can’t be in person. They include:

**\*Make your catch-ups virtual:** schedule a virtual dinner date, have a distance movie night, enjoy after work mocktails

**\*Try a new activity together:** take up a new hobby or skill with a loved one and attempt an online tutorial together, sign up to an online fitness class with a friend, do your ‘meaning to get to it’ thing and share progress pictures with mates

**\*Get competitive (or co-operative):** Challenge a friend or family member to a classic game like Chess, Dominoes or Scrabble (online versions are available), or try some of the latest videogames together

**\*Without internet access?** Set regular times to talk with loved ones, try playing games over the phone (such as 20 questions or 6 degrees of separation) or try asking new questions, as it can be surprising the things we may never usually get the chance to learn about our friends and family

“Staying connected with others and using healthy coping mechanisms is critical to maintaining good health and wellbeing, which is particularly important at this time,” Dr Lalor remarked.

“Whilst some interactions might seem a little strange at first, they should help people relax or take their mind off Covid-19, at least for a little while.

“We also encourage people who are feeling stressed, anxious or down, to try tactics such as listening to music, exercising or reading. If you still aren’t feeling yourself, connect with a health professional. Don’t wait for the pandemic to pass to reach out for support. There is lots of help available,” Dr Lalor added.

For free and confidential drug information or support visit [www.adf.org.au](http://www.adf.org.au) or call the Alcohol and Drug Foundation’s DrugInfo line on 1300 85 85 84. The non-judgmental service provides the facts about alcohol

and other drugs, advice on how to support loved ones, and connects people with relevant health and support services in their state and territory.

For further information about alcohol use and ways to prevent or reduce related harms during Covid-19 visit <https://adf.org.au/covid-19/>

**ENDS**

For interview requests or more information, please call the Alcohol and Drug Foundation's media team on 0430 948 380 or email [media@adf.org.au](mailto:media@adf.org.au)

**About the Alcohol and Drug Foundation:** Celebrating 60 years of service to the community, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation is one of Australia's leading bodies committed to preventing and minimising alcohol and other drug harms in communities around the nation. The Foundation reaches millions of Australians in local communities through sporting clubs, workplaces, health care settings and schools, offering educational information, drug and alcohol prevention programs and advocating for strong and healthy communities.

**The Power of Words:** There's power in the language we use to talk about alcohol and other drugs, and people who use alcohol and other drugs. Stigmatising language can negatively impact on a person's health, wellbeing and relationships. Using person-centric language, instead of focusing on an individual's substance use, has the power to reduce stigma and improve health and social outcomes. For a guide to using non-stigmatising language, please see [the Power of Words](#) or the [Mindframe Guidelines](#).