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MEDIA RELEASE

Winemakers deny link to drinking problems

The Winemakers' Federation of Australia says it is surprised and disappointed Victorian Premier John Brumby has linked wine to Melbourne's problems with excessive alcohol consumption and violence.

"In comments reported today Mr Brumby blames what he calls cheap alcohol for fuelling the problem and specifically refers to cheap wine, yet that comment flies in the face of the reality," said chief executive Stephen Strachan.

"All the evidence shows that wine is not the drink of choice for young, high-risk drinkers and is certainly not the cause of binge drinking.

"Cask wine has become an easy target because it is one of the more inexpensive forms of alcohol per standard drink, but that does not make it a problem if it is not fuelling abuse.

"The vast majority of cask wine consumers are older and poorer and enjoy cask wine responsibly. Most have less than two glasses per drinking occasion – well within the Federal Government's healthy drinking guidelines.

"We support calls for responsible drinking in Australia and sympathise with Mr Brumby's specific concerns, but we have to base our response on the facts."

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