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## MEDIA RELEASE

Embargo: 9:00AM Thursday 1 December 2016

### Family violence, alcohol consumption and the likelihood of criminal offences

The Crime Statistics Agency (CSA) has today released its seventh 'in brief' research paper titled *Family violence, alcohol consumption and the likelihood of criminal offences*.

This is a new piece of research produced by the CSA's research team, continuing our program of work exploring family violence.

The research found that just over 1 in 5 alleged family violence incidents recorded by police during 2014 and 2015 involved definite alcohol use by a family violence perpetrator or both parties.

The CSA's Chief Statistician Fiona Dowsley said that the findings from this study were consistent with other research into this topic, particularly the association between perpetrator alcohol use and indications of increased family violence severity and frequency.

"Where perpetrator alcohol use was recorded, police were more likely to record that the perpetrator had choked the victim, made threats to kill the victim, or that there had been a recent escalation in the severity and/or frequency of violence".

"Overall, offences were most commonly recorded for incidents where only perpetrator alcohol use was recorded, with just under two-thirds of these incidents resulting in an offence. An offence was least likely to arise when only the victim had used alcohol, with less than half of these incidents leading to a recorded offence."

The final model predicting whether an offence would be recorded indicated that, when other factors are taken into account, perpetrator alcohol use is not statistically related to the likelihood an offence will be recorded. Factors related to the seriousness of the incident, such as the perpetrator choking the victim or a recent escalation in the frequency or severity of violence, were associated with large increases in the likelihood that an offence would be recorded, as was the perpetrator's history of family violence incidents.

The paper examined the involvement of alcohol in a family violence incident attended by Victoria Police, where an L17 form was completed. It considered the characteristics of family violence incidents that involved alcohol and whether or not there was a relationship between alcohol involvement and the likelihood of offences arising from the incident. The study examined incidents attended and recorded by Victoria Police during 2014 and 2015, allowing sufficient time for charges to be laid, but still reflecting current policy settings and the existing Code of Practice.

Further information can be found on the CSA website:

<https://crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/research-and-evaluation/publications/family-violence-alcohol-consumption-and-the-likelihood-of>

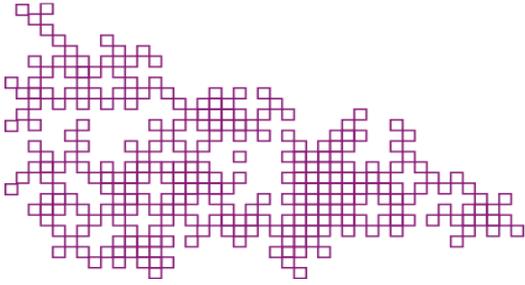
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## PREDICTORS OF AN OFFENCE BEING RECORDED AMONGST POLICE RECORDED FAMILY VIOLENCE PERPETRATORS

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The statistical model identified the following factors were relation to increased likelihood of an offence being recorded:

- Where victims or both parties used alcohol, incidents were less likely to have an arrest recorded compared to where neither party used alcohol.
- Incidents involving older perpetrators and male perpetrators are more likely to have an offence recorded.
- The numbers of prior family violence incidents recorded for the perpetrator was related to an offence being recorded. Those with one to two prior incidents were over three times more likely to have an offence recorded and those with three or more were eight times more likely to have an offence recorded.
- Incidents involving younger aged and/or female victims were associated with an increased likelihood of the perpetrator being recorded for an offence.
- Compared to incidents involving current partners, those involving former partner relationships and other family member relationships were more likely to result in an offence, and parent/child relationships were less likely to result in an offence.
- The recorded risk factors associated with the most notable increases in the likelihood of an offence being recorded included:
  - perpetrator threats to kill or harm the victim
  - perpetrator choking of the victim
  - perpetrator sexual assault of the victim.
- These risk factors were associated with a decreased likelihood of an offence being recorded:
  - perpetrator suicidal ideas or attempts
  - victim social isolation and prior victimisation
  - presence of a disability
  - recent separation
  - financial difficulties
  - the presence of children.
- Where police assessed the risk of future violence as 'likely', they were 3.3 times more likely to record an offence, compared to where they assessed the risk as 'unlikely'.