

## Media Release 21 November 2005

### ‘Alcohol Policy – thinking globally, acting locally’

A leading World Health Organisation expert will call for an international public health convention on alcohol at Turning Point Alcohol & Drug Centre’s Annual Oration today.

Alcohol is a major drug problem in society today. While it generates substantial employment, export income and tax revenue and is often used for relaxation, socialisation and celebration, alcohol is also associated with a wide range of health and social harms.

Turning Point is working to curb the damage that alcohol causes to personal and family lives, and to our community. To highlight the need for further and sustained action against the damage of alcohol, Turning Point has invited **Professor Robin Room**, the founder and head of SoRAD, the Centre for Social Research on Alcohol and Drugs at Stockholm University to speak on the subject of ‘*Alcohol Policy – thinking globally, acting locally*’.

*“Alcohol is no ordinary commodity, it imposes a huge burden of social and health harm, to others as well as the drinker. Among the most effective in terms of reducing harm and cost are controls on the availability of alcohol”,* said Professor Room

*“In a global market, international trade agreements and common markets often undercut alcohol controls. At the international level, a public health convention on alcohol is needed to enable effective policies. At the state and local level, we need to move toward evidence-based strategies”,* he said.

Robin Room has been a member of the World Health Organisation Expert Advisory Panel on Drug Dependence and Alcohol Problems since 1997, and is an authority on ways to deal with and limit the damage from alcohol in our society. His latest award was the Annual Drug Research Award of the Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs.

*“We are delighted to have Professor Room speaking at this event. This oration foreshadows a range of new strategies and projects that Turning Point is currently developing in relation to alcohol,”* said Turning Point Director, Professor Nick Crofts.

Turning Point’s Annual Oration provides an opportunity to highlight drug and alcohol issues and to stimulate discussion and ideas. At this year’s Annual Oration, **Professor David Penington AC** will be officially welcomed as Turning Point’s new Patron, and the **Minister for Health, the Hon Bronwyn Pike**, will receive Turning Point’s Annual Report for 2004–05.

**The Annual Oration will be held on Monday 21 November, 5.30 pm at The Age Theatre, Melbourne Museum, Carlton.**

**Photo opportunities can also be organised in the afternoon prior to the event.**

**For more information contact:**

|                       |             |                 |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Professor Nick Crofts | T: 84138400 | M: 0417 363 449 |
| OR                    |             |                 |
| Anthony Denham        | T: 84138730 | M: 0425 777 940 |