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**PEDESTRIANS WITH ‘WOBBLY BOOTS’ OFTEN END UP IN THE  
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT**

As Australians commence a season of parties and family get-togethers over the Christmas-New Year period, the AMA is highlighting the need for extra care with alcohol consumption and travel – not just for drivers, but also for pedestrians.

AMA President, Dr Andrew Pesce, said today that intoxicated pedestrians have an injury pattern that is two to five times more serious than the injury rate for sober accident victims.

“There are many education and awareness programs around the risks of drink driving, but people tend to forget or ignore the very real dangers of walking when heavily intoxicated,” Dr Pesce said.

“The wobbly boots can lead a person straight to the emergency department or to an unexpected untimely death.

“Too much alcohol impairs the ability to judge speed and distance, which can have tragic consequences when a drunk person is walking along busy roads or across intersections.

“There are around 100 alcohol-affected pedestrian deaths in Australia each year, and many more injured intoxicated pedestrians end up in emergency departments from traffic accidents or heavy falls.

“The victims are predominantly male and the accidents occur most often at night.

“It is of great concern that approximately 22 per cent of cases are a result of the victim lying down or sitting on the road in a drunken state.

“While it is commendable that people are choosing to walk instead of driving, they should be very alert to the health risks of walking when heavily under the weather.

“Friends and family should keep a watchful eye on each other over Christmas at events where alcohol is being consumed.

“Alcohol and driving do not mix, but alcohol and walking can also be a lethal combination.

“If hosting a party, arrange for transport to get your family and friends home safely or make plans for them to stay overnight.

“Waking up in hospital after an alcohol-related accident is no way to spend Christmas,” Dr Pesce said.

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