

**INQUIRY INTO STRATEGIES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL
ABUSE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN NSW**

Organisation: Byron Bay High School Captains and Vice Captains
Date received: 1/03/2013

01-03-13; 07:50

To Legislative Council,

Byron Bay High School's Submission regarding:

Strategies to reduce alcohol abuse among young people

- a) The effect of alcohol advertisements and promotions on young people, including consideration of the need to further restrict alcohol advertising and promotion.

We believe that the emphasis should be put on the parents and adults who supply or sell alcohol to young people. As teenagers do not get 'hooked' or tempted by alcohol advertisements, the promotions or advertisements, we think, do not need to be restricted to help reduce alcohol abuse among young people. However, the reduction or banning of alcohol advertisements would help prevent alcohol abuse amongst adult, yet that is another issue. More awareness should be made through advertising on the effects and dangers on giving alcohol to young people as this is what adults need to be educated on. Advertisements on radio, television and newspapers should be showing the effects of alcohol on brain and liver not to scare people into not purchasing and using alcohol but to educate individual's, this is prevention rather than cure.

- b) The effectiveness of alcohol harm minimisation strategies targeted at young people.

This is a strong way to reduce the alcohol abuse among young people. Youth programs in schools such as RRISK, are a great way to communicate to people at a younger age, using scenarios they are familiar with and can connect to. Having school based programs can ensure all children are being taught that same information at a suitable age where this knowledge will remain with them for the rest of their lives. RISKK is aimed at students in year 11, but why not have children taught in year 7 or even year 6. Their brains are developing and they can retain this information easier than trying to explain to a 17 year old that social drinking with their friends is a bad idea. If kids are young enough to learn about sex, they are old enough to learn about the terrible effects of drug and alcohol use.

- c) Measures to minimise the impact of alcohol in the workplace.

Simply, put into effect the rule; no alcohol allowed in the workplace. Although this isn't always the case and the issue is turning up to work already affected by alcohol and drugs, solutions can be to emplace workplace courses on the impact of alcohol to educate adults and/or compulsory lectures every 6 months to reiterate the effects of alcohol. Using or being under the effect of alcohol in the workplace could have little impact or major impact such as disorientation during job or even loss of job due to working at an unsatisfactory level. Extreme measures to reduce this impact could even result in having a breath test every day before starting work.

d) The effectiveness of measures to reduce drink driving.

Punishment for drink driving should be more severe to reduce the alcohol related accidents and crashes on the roads. More RBT's should be put in place in high risk areas (such as Byron Bay, Western Sydney suburbs and Gold Coast) at certain times (such as early night time to prevent people who are already under the effect of alcohol, going out and drinking more). Harsher curfews placed on P Platers, not the time but a limit to carrying passengers who are under the effect of alcohol as they can influence the driver even if they aren't drinking.

e) Measures to reduce alcohol related violence, including in and around licensed venues.

Tighter security put into action when selling alcohol in licensed venues and shops and too many underage kids are purchasing alcohol and getting away with it using fake I.D's and shop keepers or bars selling alcohol and not even checking I.D. This is a major issue in pubs and clubs and once you enter, the barman assumes that everyone in the club is over 18, so they sell drinks without looking twice as they are busy and happy to make money. The issue now turns to the bouncers and security outside the venue doors that check I.D; they need to be stricter. Also, the production of "Safe Zones" (A building or tent in high populated areas where drinking and alcohol use is high), would help lower the risk of violence as anyone who feels sick or unsafe may enter these areas as they would be staffed by doctors and youth workers.

f) Measure to address the impact of alcohol abuse on the health system.

The advertisement of the affects of alcohol on the body can be expressed through regular ads on TV, radio, newspapers and even printed on the alcohol and drug substances. Another way of addressing these issues could be to have universal labelling of all alcohol related products sold to individuals and companies. Workshops could be run right from the ages of 12 – adult on the health risks of alcohol abuse. Brochures could also be produced to educate adults and children on how hospitals are being used widely to accommodate the alcohol abused people and less room is being available for other medical issues such as cancer patients.

g) Any other related matter.

Alcohol abuse issues can fall back upon the upbringing of a child. If children are open to availability of alcohol and their parents use it regularly to either solve emotional problems at work or within the home, the children learn from this and their sponge like minds take in this practise and may begin to try to use alcohol and a subsidizer to solve their teen issues. On the contrary, in a stable household with open discussion about the impact of alcohol and drug use and the high availability of information from the parents on the topic, kids will understand the impacts and not be affected by alcohol abuse.

This is using prevention rather than cure which would save government money, families' money, time in the workplace, but most of all, lives.

Thankyou for this chance to express our ideas on this issue,

Byron Bay High School Captains and Vice-Captains,

Taylor Kempnich, Brodie Snow, Danika Saul and James Dennett