

Queensland Government submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth Inquiry into the Impact of Violence on Young Australians

The Queensland Government supports the intention of this Inquiry to better understand the impact of violence on young people. The Queensland Government provides a diverse range of responses to this serious issue and these are detailed in this submission.

The Queensland Government acknowledges there is a growing concern in the broader community regarding alcohol-related violence. A recent public opinion survey¹ reported that alcohol is considered a major threat to community wellbeing. Four out of five people expressed a concern about alcohol in relation to public safety (85%), property damage (84%) and the increased workload of police and emergency services staff because of alcohol related matters (82%).

In October 2006, the Queensland Government announced the formation of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Youth Violence (then the Youth Violence Taskforce) to examine ways to reduce incidence of violent behaviour among young Queenslanders. This Advisory Council receives information from both government and the community sector about initiatives provided nationally and internationally that seek to address the issue of youth violence. The Advisory Council is jointly chaired by the Minister for Community Services and Housing with the Minister for Police and comprises government and community stakeholders. In 2007, this group developed a report with 16 recommendations to reduce youth violence in Queensland. The Queensland Government's responses to these recommendations are referred to in this submission.

The Law, Justice and Safety Committee of the Queensland Parliament is currently conducting an inquiry into alcohol-related violence in Queensland. Many of the issues covered in the Queensland inquiry will be relevant to the Commonwealth Inquiry into the Impact of Violence on Young Australians (the Inquiry). The findings from the Queensland inquiry will be available in March 2010.

The Queensland inquiry will consider:

- best practice harm minimisation measures in other Australian and international jurisdictions, including specific measures such as restrictions on the use of glass
- the impact of late opening hours on incidences of alcohol-related violence
- the flow-on issues for emergency service workers, police and frontline health workers of alcohol-related violence
- education campaigns and their role in cultivating effective social change in terms of community attitudes to alcohol consumption
- the role of parents in influencing the attitudes of young Queenslanders towards alcohol consumption
- the economic cost of alcohol related violence.

A summary of Queensland Government actions and policies are provided below as they relate to the terms of reference.

¹ Timworth J, 'Alcohol: What people think', 2008, Of Substance: The national magazine on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, vol 6, no. 2, pp. 8-13

1. Perceptions of violence and community safety among young Australians

View of young people

The Queensland Government provides Youth Engagement Grant funding to facilitate youth forums across Queensland. These give young people an opportunity to have a say about issues of relevance to them and to implement local responses to the issues they have identified. In 2008-09, approximately 850 young people participated in Youth Forums in Queensland.

The issue of youth violence was discussed at the Youth Forums. The discussions explored the participants' perceptions of violence and community safety among young Australians, links between illicit drug use, alcohol abuse and violence among young Australians, and the relationship between bullying and violence on the wellbeing of young Australians. Many young people referred to youth violence as 'fighting'.

Young people identified a number of causes of youth violence including drug and alcohol misuse, anger management issues and people wanting to 'look big and show-off'. Their suggested responses to youth violence included forming advisory groups to examine and respond to violence issues in depth, teaching anger management skills, and making fighting 'uncool'. They also said that young people should be consulted directly.

Youth Forums also provided young people with the opportunity to have a say about issues of relevance to them and to get involved in government and community decision-making processes. The forums have explored drug and alcohol misuse, boredom, unemployment, sex and family relationships. They also provided the participants with skill development opportunities in group dynamics, conflict resolution, event management and creative expression.

Young people are now implementing projects that address issues raised in the first round of forums. A second round of forums is due for late 2009 or early 2010.

Initiatives related to perceptions of violence and community safety

There are clear linkages between alcohol and violence. Alcohol is, however, an integral part of Australia's history, reputation, and image. It has infiltrated pop culture, featuring in books, music videos, movies, anecdotes, jokes, normal conversation and even advertising for non-related products. For many, it is a key component of their social and cultural life. Furthermore, research for the National Alcohol Campaign² found that respondents tended to see harmful use of alcohol as a problem for others and not as an issue for themselves. Drinkers generally perceive that the benefits of alcohol far outweigh the disadvantages. These benefits include the enjoyment experienced through its use, its use as a social lubricant to ease awkwardness of social occasions and its relaxant qualities³. A study in the United Kingdom⁴ found that young people accept that in order to achieve the positive outcomes of going out socialising, drinking, partying and clubbing that there is an inherent risk that some nights go wrong.

From a social identity perspective, attitude change is most likely to occur under certain conditions of social influence, such as where our current attitudes are found to be inconsistent with valued in-group norms, or uncomfortably consistent with the views of an undesirable out-group⁵. For example, the concept of social exclusion or 'social erosion' is very important to a young person and

² Shanahan, Hewitt, Elliot & Shanahan Research, *Summary Report Developmental Research for a National Alcohol Campaign*, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, 1999, Canberra.

³ Ibid 1

⁴ Parker, Williams, *Intoxicated Weekends: Young Adults' Work Hard-Play Hard Lifestyles*, Public Health and Public Disorder, Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy, 2004, 14(4), p345-367

⁵ Hennessy, Eggers 2003, *Social Influence Processes and Drinking Behaviour*, Australian Journal of Psychology

social marketing can take advantage of this by showing risky drinking behaviour as not being socially acceptable.

Research indicates that careful consideration is needed in using fear campaigns. Das et al⁶ found that fear appeals generated favourable cognitive responses and consequent attitude change only if participants felt vulnerable to the threat. Furthermore, in order for fear messages to be effective, recipients must be provided with a clear, feasible means for reducing their fears⁷.

- The *Every Drink Counts* campaign targeted young people aged between 18-25 regarding their ability to choose to drink responsibly, as well as educating them on the dangerous consequences of binge drinking. The campaign featured graphic imagery and used a range of media including washroom posters in venues, along with cinema, online and press advertisements for both male and female target audiences. The first phase evaluative results indicate that the campaign and its message of 'drink responsibly' reached 52% of Queenslanders aged 18 to 25. Compilation of final evaluation results is currently underway.
- The *Strong Community Life* campaign targets Queenslanders living in remote Indigenous communities. It aims to educate people about responsible alcohol consumption through the locally staged community events, workshops and radio shows. The *Strong Community Life* campaign has been delivered in 21 remote Indigenous communities in Queensland. Evaluation of the *Strong Community Life* campaign is currently underway.
- As part of a suite of campaigns in the *Safer Drinking Cultures* program the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation undertakes and contributes to a number of initiatives designed to educate teenagers on alcohol consumption, especially in preparation for turning 18 (the legal drinking age), and in the lead up to 'schoolies week'.
- The Queensland Police Service *Protective Behaviours Program* is an early intervention program which aims to maximise the safety and enhance the wellbeing of children and young people by providing them with essential knowledge and skills to deal with unsafe situations. The program includes provision of strategies to help children:
 - recognise preventative safety measures
 - encourage self respect and respect for others
 - provide practical strategies if they don't feel safe
 - seek assistance when help is required.
- The *School Based Police Officer Program* aims to:
 - reduce crime
 - develop better relationships between youth and police in the community
 - help young people understand the role of police
 - introduce personal safety strategies to equip young people with skills to avoid dangerous and threatening situations.

The role of the school based police officer is to attend to police related matters within school communities; promote positive relationships between the school communities and police; and contribute to an understanding of the law/legal process and procedures, particularly in relation to young people. Delivery of the program is by trained police officers who are appointed to dedicated full-time special positions following the successful completion of a training course.

⁶ Das, de Wit, Stroebe 2003 as cited in Crano, Prislin 2006, *Attitudes and Persuasion*, Annual Review of Psychology

⁷ Soames 1988, *Effective and Ineffective use of fear in public health promotion campaigns*, American Journal of Public Health, 78(2), p 163-167

- The *Adopt-a-Cop Program* was implemented in 1985 as a means of building a better relationship between the police and children in the school community. The program is designed to permit the volunteer police officer to work with his/her local school in fostering a better relationship between the police service and students. The program provides training and resources to enable the Officer in Charge of a police division to be aware of the involvement of police officers in the education of students who attend schools within their police division. The program seeks to encourage and develop improved behaviour and more responsible attitudes of children towards the community in which they live.
- The *Safety House Program* is a community-based and -funded program with a network of easily identifiable houses and businesses for use by children whenever they feel unsafe whilst in the community. A Safety House can be a house, a shop or a business. The program also aims to play a proactive role in community safety, by providing safer neighbourhoods for our children and personal safety education programs within participating schools.
- The Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) now has provided over 60 years of service to the Queensland community. The PCYC stands as one of the states leading youth organisations. The Queensland Police Service works in partnership with the PCYC to provide opportunities for the youth of Queensland. Currently, there are more than 60 Queensland Police Service officers working with the PCYC to manage and coordinate the operations of the Association across the state. Police officers work with support from the community to deliver a wide range of targeted and diversified programs which cater for the individual needs of their local communities.
- The *Safe, Supportive and Disciplined School Environment* policy outlines the Department of Education and Training's commitment to promoting supportive learning environments through the Code of School Behaviour and development of school Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students. Procedures for facilitating a supportive school environment and for when considering suspending a student, a recommendation to exclude a student or considering cancelling a student's enrolment.
- The *Student Protection* policy outlines the responsibilities and commitment of the Department of Education and Training to providing a safe and supportive learning environment, and preventing and responding to harm or risk of harm for all students. Four categories of harm are addressed:
 - harm caused by a school employee
 - harm caused by another student
 - harm caused by someone outside the state education institution environment
 - student self-harm.

2. Links between illicit drug use, alcohol abuse and violence among young Australians

There are strong links between the harmful use of alcohol and both being a victim of, and perpetrating, youth violence. The National Health and Medical Research Council has noted that:

"The effects of alcohol consumption go beyond diseases, accidents and injuries to a range of adverse social consequences, both for the drinker and for others in the community. These consequences include harm to family members (including children) and to friends and workmates, as well as to bystanders and strangers.

Alcohol is significantly associated with crime, with studies suggesting that alcohol is involved in up to half of all violent crimes (including domestic violence) and a lesser but substantial proportion of other crimes.

It has been estimated that alcohol cost the Australian community about \$15.3 billion in 2004–05, when factors such as crime and violence, treatment costs, loss of productivity and premature death were taken into account⁸.”

Over the past decade, the number of 12 to 17 year olds drinking alcohol at harmful levels has increased significantly and alcohol remains one of the leading causes of disease and injury among 16 to 24 year olds⁹. In Queensland, over 30% of 15 to 24 year olds who attend a hospital emergency department for an injury have consumed alcohol in the six hours preceding the injury¹⁰. Alcohol misuse has been linked to violence amongst young people¹¹.

Alcohol use directly affects cognitive and physical function while harmful alcohol use can reduce self-control, the ability to process information, assess risks and recognise early warning signs. Harmful alcohol use can increase emotions and impulsivity and make some young people more likely to resort to violence in confrontation. Finally, individual and social beliefs about the effects of alcohol (eg. increased confidence, increased aggression) means that alcohol may be consumed as preparation for involvement in violence.

The Queensland Government acknowledges the serious impact that violence on young people has on the community, families, individuals and the health and legal systems and that intoxication from drugs and alcohol can play a significant role.

Initiatives related to address violence and its antecedents

- The *One Punch Can Kill* campaign is aimed at preventing senseless violence among young people, and about stopping them from making split-second decisions that could ruin their lives or the lives of others. It targets ‘Generation Y’ using modern media and technology, and informs today’s youth that acts of violence can have very serious and damaging consequences. *One Punch Can Kill* is the result of recommendations from the Queensland Government’s Youth Violence Task Force, which called for a targeted media strategy to send home the message of anti-violence. The slogan *One Punch Can Kill* is a reminder of the shocking reality that simple acts of violence can have tragic consequences. *One Punch Can Kill* focuses on a positive message of choosing options, and empowers young people to consider the consequences of their decisions, such as whether to fight or walk away.
- The *Party Safe Program* aims to reduce the risk of people, particular young people as party hosts or guests, and their families becoming victims of alcohol related violence or anti-social behaviour. The program provides advice on how to conduct a safe and enjoyable party and enables the party host to register the party with police.
- The *Police Drug Diversion Program* provides an alternative to the use of criminal justice sanctions to modify behaviour and involves interventions appropriate to the seriousness and circumstances of the offence and personal circumstances of the offender. It is available to adults and juveniles charged with low level drug use, no prior convictions for violence, and no related indictable offences

⁸ National Health and Medical Research Council http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/your_health/healthy/alcohol/burden.htm Accessed 12 October 2009

⁹ DrugInfo Clearinghouse 2008, The facts about binge drinking. www.druginfo.adf.org.au

¹⁰ Roche, A.M., Watt K., McClure R., Purdie, D.M., Green, D. 2001. Injury and alcohol: A hospital emergency department study. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 20 157-168.

¹¹ Hawkins, J, Herrenkohl, T, Farrington, D, Brewer, D, Catalano, R, Harachi, T, and Cothorn, L. Predictors of Youth Violence, *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, April 2000.

- The *Queensland Drug Strategy 2006-2010* provides a policy framework for all Queensland Government activities to prevent and respond to alcohol, tobacco and other drug use and harm (including violence and its impact). The Strategy is based on the underlying principle of harm minimisation involving a balance between supply reduction, demand reduction and harm reduction strategies. The Strategy aims to prevent or reduce uptake and use of illicit drugs and alcohol by young people, reduce levels of harmful use, as well as support people's recovery from problematic use and dependence.

The *Queensland Drug Strategy* is delivered in line with the *National Drug Strategy 2006-2009* and national alcohol and illicit drug strategies.

- The Queensland Government implements a range of strategies including prevention, early intervention and clinical responses to support and increase the resilience of young people to prevent the uptake of illicit drugs and alcohol use and misuse, and minimise drug-related harms. Across government, these strategies include:
 - statewide education campaigns to encourage young people to delay the uptake of drinking, to drink within low-risk guidelines, and increase awareness and understanding of the impacts of intoxication
 - statewide education campaigns to raise awareness of the range of possible consequences of use or misuse of illicit substances
 - legislation and regulation reforms to improve community safety and amenity
 - harm reduction programs to address intoxication and the negative impacts on individuals and the community
 - early intervention programs to reach people at high risk of harm from illicit drug and alcohol misuse
 - community-based programs to strengthen community action and resiliency.
- Queensland Health supports a range of dedicated alcohol, tobacco and other drug treatment services and programs delivered by government, non-government and community-based organisations. Alcohol and other drug services provide a range of interventions including screening, assessment, brief intervention, individual treatment planning, case management, counselling and referral for detoxification, residential rehabilitation or other appropriate services.
- The *Drug and Alcohol Brief Intervention Team (DABIT)* program is being piloted in Cairns, Gold Coast, and the Royal Brisbane Hospital Emergency Departments (EDs). This initiative was established in recognition of the high number of patients presenting to EDs that would benefit from a brief intervention and/or referral for alcohol and other drug related problems but were not currently receiving an intervention. Recent statistics indicate that each month more than 450 patients are seen by the staff of this program with alcohol involved in approximately 75% of these cases. Additionally, staff feedback suggests that DABIT has had a positive impact on EDs functioning, that violence has been considerably reduced, and clients are being managed for illicit drug alcohol related complications in their treatment better, therefore reducing risk to the patient and the hospital.
- The *Queensland Indigenous Alcohol Diversion Program (QIADP)* aims to break the alcohol-crime cycle by involving eligible Indigenous people in treatment and case management programs. It is being implemented in three pilot communities - Rockhampton/Woorabinda, Townsville/Palm Island (50 treatment places) and Cairns/Yarrabah (40 treatment places). The program is for Indigenous people charged with an offence where alcohol has been a contributing factor, and parents whose alcohol use makes them unable to adequately protect their children.

- The Queensland Government has also recently allocated funding over three years to non-government organisations and Health Service Districts to enhance their drug and alcohol treatment services to young people under 25 years of age, with a focus on outreach. In addition, a consortium of youth and drug and alcohol specialists have been funded to provide support to service providers working with young people who use illicit drugs and alcohol.
- Between 2004 and 2008, Queensland Health implemented four phases of the Young Women and Alcohol campaign. Evaluation of the campaign across this period has found that the campaign messages and advertising permeated the target market and contributed to significant reductions in harmful drinking amongst young Queensland women (aged 18 to 22). The evaluation showed there was a significant reduction in high-risk drinking levels (long-term) amongst the target market with a reduction from 60% (pre-campaign, November 2004) to 34% (post-Phase Four, July 2008). Conversely, there was a significant increase in the proportion of the target market drinking at low-risk levels from 17% (November 2004) to 37% (July 2008).
- From November 2007 to June 2008, the Queensland Government also implemented the Ice Education Campaign targeting young people aged 18 to 29 years at risk of using crystal methamphetamine, or ice. The key messages of the campaign centred on the 'hidden' consequences of using ice, including the potential for aggressive and violent behaviour. Evaluation of the campaign found strong recall of the messages amongst the key 'at risk' target segment and prompted more of this group to think about the dangers of use, decide not to use ice, or to say no if offered ice.
- Queensland Health also implements a range of local community prevention and capacity building programs including:
 - *Safer Venues* program which aims to create environments that support positive drinking choices and reduce the negative outcomes associated with excessive alcohol consumption.
 - Programs to reduce the demand for alcohol in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in North Queensland, for example, the development of the North Queensland *Which Way Our Way* campaign which delivers culturally appropriate 'strong community' messages to Indigenous people from the 17 Meeting Challenges Making Choices (MCMC) communities in North Queensland.
 - *Good Sports Program*, a community-based program delivered in partnership with the Australian Drug Foundation (ADF) which encourages local sporting clubs to implement responsible alcohol management practices.
 - Contributing to, or establishing, *Liquor Industry Action Groups (LIAGs)* otherwise know as 'Liquor Accords' whereby Queensland Health works with representatives from other government agencies, industry, local government, and the community to implement local alcohol harm minimisation strategies.
- In response to high levels of violence in 19 discrete Indigenous communities, the Queensland Government, in consultation with the Indigenous communities implemented alcohol restrictions progressively from 2002.

The Queensland Government's alcohol reform policy and program regulates alcohol supply and provides a range of support services to 19 discrete Indigenous communities across the state. Over \$100 million in Australian and Queensland Government funding has been committed over four years from July 2008 in services to reduce alcohol related harm in these communities.

The package of services includes alcohol assessment, treatment, detoxification, sport and recreation services and other support programs such as Men's and Women's Groups.

3. The relationship between bullying and violence on the wellbeing of young Australians

A 2001 survey indicated that 51% of young people had experienced bullying and that 35% had experienced fighting at school¹².

The Department of Education and Training (DET) has policies in place to guide schools responses to bullying and violence: Safe, Supportive and Disciplined School Environment, and Student Protection. DET has recently engaged Dr Ken Rigby, a leading academic in school-based bullying, to provide expert advice on strategies DET can adopt to further improve responses and support to students.

Additionally, the Dispute Resolution Branch within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General provides the Workplace Conflict Resolution training program, which examines the connections between bullying and the wellbeing of all who encounter it in the workplace.

4. Social and economic factors that contribute to violence by young Australians

Dangerous new trends are becoming apparent with an increase in the number of young people who are binge drinking. Binge drinking greatly increases the risk and incidence of injury, assault, public disorder, social, health and other problems. Extreme discounts, free drink promotions and other drink promotions targeting young people perpetuate a culture of binge drinking.

Research indicates that young people exposed to violence as children may be more predisposed towards engaging in violence as adults¹³. Violence in the family is a significant contributor to violence by young people. Witnessing domestic violence has been found to be the strongest predictor of subsequent perpetration by young people and evidence indicates that 1 in 3 young people have witnessed incidents involving physical violence (including yelling and threats) involving their carers¹⁴.

To reduce the high levels of family violence and alcohol abuse, the *Cape York Welfare Reform* (CYWR) program was established, featuring the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC), a locally-constituted body working with Indigenous people to restore social norms in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. Commissioners, local respected community members joined by a former magistrate, meet with people who have been referred to the Commission on matters related to child safety, housing tenancy, school attendance or criminal convictions. The Commission encourages people to come to an agreement about appropriate responses to the issue/s that led to their referral. If the person is unwilling to agree to a course of action, the Commission may order a certain course of action or order that the person's income be managed by Centrelink for a period of between three and 12 months. The CYWR initiative provides enhanced parenting supports to assist parents in working through the challenges they face in raising their children.

¹² National Crime Prevention 2001, *Young People and Domestic Violence: National Research on Young People's Attitudes and Experiences of Domestic Violence: Fact Sheet*, Commonwealth Attorney General's Department, Canberra.
[http://www.crimeprevention.gov.au/aqd/www/rwpattach.nsf/viewasattachmentPersonal/\(E24C1D4325451B61DE7F4F2B1E155715\)~no10_factsheet.pdf/\\$file/no10_factsheet.pdf](http://www.crimeprevention.gov.au/aqd/www/rwpattach.nsf/viewasattachmentPersonal/(E24C1D4325451B61DE7F4F2B1E155715)~no10_factsheet.pdf/$file/no10_factsheet.pdf)

¹³ Widom, C.S. 1995. The cycle of violence. In Chappell, D. and Egger, S. *Australian Violence: contemporary perspectives II*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

¹⁴ National Crime Prevention 2001, *ibid*.

5. Strategies to reduce violence and its impact among young Australians

The Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation (OLGR) and the Office of Regulatory Policy (ORP) in the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) implement the liquor licensing regulatory model which is a key component of the Queensland Government's strategic response to preventing and reducing alcohol-related violence. The Government has implemented a number of legislative and regulatory reforms aimed at minimising harm from the abuse and misuse of alcohol. The reforms to the *Liquor Act 1992* (Liquor Act), which were passed by Parliament on 10 September 2008, with the balance of reforms commencing on 1 January 2009, are consistent with the *Towards Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland Government*¹⁵ healthy ambition of cutting heavy drinking by one third in 2020 and the *Queensland Drug Strategy 2006-2010*¹⁶. The reforms to the Liquor Act are the most significant reforms in over 15 years for Queensland's liquor industry and are an important component of a whole-of-government approach to changing social attitudes to alcohol consumption.

The physical availability of alcohol refers to the accessibility or convenience of obtaining and consuming alcoholic products. Babor et al¹⁷ found that limiting alcohol availability through reducing trading hours, numbers of alcohol outlets and restricting access to alcohol was associated with reductions in both alcohol use and alcohol-related problems.

Restricting trading hours is another key regulatory measure to reduce the availability of alcohol. The Commonwealth draft *Commonwealth draft National Preventative Health Strategy*¹⁸ has identified outlet opening times as an area for states and territories to work towards developing a best practice nationally consistent approach.

The movement of patrons between different late-night venues is sometimes referred to as club-hopping or pub-hopping and is usually perceived by police as problematic¹⁹. Lockout policy has been used in Queensland for a number of years as a means of improving public and patron safety in and around late night trading premises, and is now mandatory under the recent reforms of the Liquor Act. Lockouts are also utilised as a licensing intervention in Western Australia (Perth) and Victoria (Warrnambool, Ballarat, Bendigo and Melbourne CBD) as one method of reducing late-night migration between venues and associated anti-social behaviours.²⁰ The Commonwealth draft *National Preventative Health Strategy*²¹ has identified late-night high risk venues as an area for states and territories to work towards developing best practice nationally consistent approaches. Queensland is well positioned to contribute to any discussions on use of lockouts as one strategy to deal with alcohol-related violence in late-night venues.

Research indicates that some factors in the physical environment in licensed premises have been linked to increased levels of aggression²². Factors that have been identified as contributing to increased aggressive patron behaviour include a capacity for a high number of patrons, dilapidated décor, seating in rows, and poor lighting²³. The 1997 Surfers Paradise Action project identified the relationship between traffic flow and patrons' aggressive behaviour. Venues which have well designed floor plans, as opposed to venues where patrons bump into one another, were found to

¹⁵ *Towards Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland Government*, Queensland Government (Department of the Premier and Cabinet) 2008, Brisbane,

<http://www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/tomorrow/index.aspx>

¹⁶ Queensland Drug Strategy 2006-2010, 2006, Queensland Government, Brisbane

¹⁷ Summary of Babor et al. 2003, *Alcohol: No ordinary commodity*, Research and public policy, viewed on 22 September, www.ias.org.uk/resources/publications

¹⁸ National Preventative Health Taskforce, *Australia: the healthiest country by 2020, National Preventative Health Strategy*, 2009 p 268.

¹⁹ National Drug Research Institute, 2007, *Restrictions on the sale and supply of alcohol: evidence and outcomes*, National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, p.53.

²⁰ National Preventative Health Taskforce, *Australia: the healthiest country by 2020, National Preventative Health Strategy*, 2009 , p 244.

²¹ National Preventative Health Taskforce, *Australia: the healthiest country by 2020, National Preventative Health Strategy*, 2009, p 268.

²² G McIlwain & R Homel, 2009 *Sustaining a reduction of alcohol-related harms in the licensed environment* , Australia

²³ Graham & Homel 2008 *Raising the bar: preventing aggression in and around bars, clubs and pubs*, Willan Publishing, United Kingdom

have lower numbers of incidents occurring.²⁴ In Queensland, environmental factors are taken into consideration through a risk assessment process. Licensees are required to develop a Risk Assessed Management Plan (RAMP) as a prerequisite to the licensing process. This plan replaced house policies and allows for the licensee to identify local conditions and risks, and demonstrate how their business is meeting the Liquor Act's first objective of harm minimisation.

The Queensland Government, in response to glassing incidents, will introduce amendments to the Liquor Act to ban the use of regular glass in high risk venues. In addition, the Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry into alcohol related violence has been given a specific reference in relation to transitioning other pubs and clubs to tempered glass or plastic, possible over the next two years, in close consultation with the industry.

The Queensland Government also funds a diverse range of youth support, youth development and leadership programs that provide young people, particularly vulnerable young people, with a range of opportunities for engagement and integration with peers, families, schools and communities, thereby reducing the risk of anti-social and offending behaviour. Some specific initiatives are included below:

- *Safe Youth Safe Communities* is a funding program that commenced in March 2008. This involves three-year funding which is provided to the Pacifika Lipi Service in the Inala/Logan/Ipswich area that assesses and responds to young people involved in violent behaviour and the Early Intervention Collaborative Case Management Service at Woorabinda in the Central Queensland Region to provide a medium and longer-term response in Woorabinda to young people who are offending and their families.

The target group is young people who have offended or are likely to offend, their families and social networks. Services that are part of the initiative are required to:

- provide early identification of young people who are committing/at risk of committing offences, particularly violent offences
 - actively engage the target group, their families and key social systems in decision-making
 - coordinate and facilitate existing government networks to develop of integrated intervention plans to the target group and their families
 - provide voluntary case management to coordinate and monitor holistic interventions
 - use brokerage funds to access specialist cultural or intervention services that cannot be provided by existing services within available resources.
- *Aggression Replacement Training (ART)* is an evidence-based cognitive behavioural program developed specifically to reduce aggression among young people. ART is a 10-week intensive cognitively-based program which provides young people with anger problems alternative ways of reacting to situations. ART has three modules:
 - *Skillstreaming* - this is designed to teach young people effective social skills aimed at replacing aggressive behaviour
 - *Anger Control Training* - this is designed to reduce the frequency of anger arousal and teach techniques of self control when anger is aroused
 - *Moral Reasoning Training* - this is designed to teach the ability to take the perspective of another person and use moral decision-making as research has demonstrated that this is delayed in anti-social and chronically aggressive youth.
 - The Queensland Government delivers the *Safer Schoolies Initiative* in response to the risks associated with the annual influx of young people celebrating the completion of Year 12 at regional locations across Queensland. The Queensland Government does not promote participation in 'schoolies' but seeks to minimise disruption to communities and to enhance the safety and responsible behaviour of school leavers who attend 'schoolies' events. Program responses are based on the following principles:

²⁴ McIntyre & Homel 1997 'Danger on the dance floor: A study of interior design, crowding and aggression in nightclubs. In Homel ED 'Policing for prevention: Reducing crime, intoxication and injury' (Vol 7) New York: Criminal Justice Press

- increased awareness of rights and responsibilities
- better coordination through partnerships
- increased safety.

The Department of Communities' role involves the provision of harm minimisation and risk mitigation strategies which include:

- the delivery of a statewide communication strategy with an educative and awareness focus on safety, individual rights and responsibilities for school leavers and their parents
 - the coordination of supervised environments with a highly visible police and liquor licensing presence, and effective volunteer support services
 - the provision of seed grants for planned diversionary activities to encourage a reduction in excessive alcohol consumption and associated high-risk behaviours.
- The *Pre-Schoolies Education Program* is coordinated by the Department of Communities with representatives from the Queensland Police, OLGR and Office of Fair Trading. This program will deliver sessions at 52 schools in south east Queensland in the lead up to the Schoolies event this year. The sessions advise students of the serious health and safety consequences of underage drinking. These sessions provide information to schoolies on the law and their responsibilities relating to under aged drinking and supply of liquor; drinking in a public place; and safety issues. A formal evaluation of the program has not been conducted, however, the sessions are very well received with positive feedback provided to Department of Communities. Whilst there has been no formal evaluation, anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that the initiative is achieving some success.
 - The *Self-preservation Program* is designed to assist 'pre-schoolies' students to make better choices regarding excessive drinking and combine education resources from community groups, OLGR and the Queensland Police. The program educates Year 11 students on the harm associated with excessive drinking, explains the legal restrictions, how to identify the signs of alcohol affected behaviour, and how to responsibly serve alcohol through Responsible Service of Alcohol training. On completion, each student receives a qualification in Responsible Service of Alcohol. The program currently runs as a pilot program in schools in Hervey Bay and Brisbane, with each program being locally funded. The program was recently implemented for a second year at Kelvin Grove State College.
 - The Queensland Police Service *Love Bites Program* is an intervention and prevention program that aims to teach young people about respectful relationships using an innovative mix of workshops that provide information about sexual assault and domestic violence and then empowers young people to express this information into their own language through art and hip hop workshops. Love Bites is aimed directly at high school students to tackle family violence and prevent sexual assault, while addressing gender stereotypes and encouraging young people to seek help from friends and local service providers. The Program involves a day long program teaching students about respectful relationships.
 - *Crime Stoppers Youth Challenge Queensland* is a competition for students from Years 6-12 in schools and youth organisations such as Scouts, Guides, Cadets and PCYCs throughout Queensland. The topic for the 2009 challenge is Stop Youth Violence. Crime Stoppers Youth Challenge Queensland is a collaborative program delivered by the Crime Stoppers Queensland Limited, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Ambulance Service, Department of Education, Training and the Arts and the Matthew Stanley Foundation. Participants are encouraged to research the issues, the impact and consequences of youth violence from the perspective of the victim, the community and the offender. Working together in groups, or individually, participants interact with their local Crime Stoppers volunteers, police officers, ambulance officers and community groups to build their understanding of the work of Crime Stoppers and the responsibility of citizens to stop youth violence.

- The Queensland Police Service *U-Turn Program* supports the Government's priority of providing safer and more supportive communities by influencing the offending behaviour of young offenders and thereby reducing the impact of vehicle theft on the community, through training and life skills components of the Program. The Program objective is to target recidivist offenders aged 14 to 20 who have a history of vehicle theft, burglary and also includes young people at risk of offending. Young people at risk includes those that are disengaged from school, welfare dependant or the long-term unemployed.
- The *Coordinated Response to Young People at Risk* (CRYPAR) is a whole-of government initiative which covers four police districts (Brisbane North, Pine Rivers, Rockhampton and Logan). The CRYPAR program aims to help young people address issues often identified as contributing factors in the development of criminal, self-harming and antisocial behaviours. It promotes a positive and proactive response that will benefit the community at large and help identify issues young people face at an early stage. CRYPAR is a simple referral process that allows police officers in the field to refer young people to an agency that can assist them with their identified issue. The program achieves success through collaboration of government agencies and non government organisations who have agreed to respond to referrals within 48 hours, ensuring a prompt response.
- A *Guide to Social and Emotional Learning in Queensland State Schools* was released in October 2008 to assist schools in selection and implementation of social and emotional learning programs.
- Evidence-based *Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support* approach to building responsible student behaviour expanded with approximately 250 schools receiving training to assist with its implementation since 2005.
- The *Act Smart, Be Safe* website launched in August 2008 to provide information and proactive strategies to schools, students and parents. Between August 2008 and March 2009, approximately 66,000 hits on-site with approximately 500 posters on average per month downloaded.

The *Act Smart, Be Safe* project aims to:

- assist students to make good decisions when confronted with violent or potentially violent situations
- support teachers in delivering knowledge and skills to help young people stay safe
- promote with school leaders the importance of a safe and supportive school environment where violence is not tolerated
- provide information to parents to help them to make young people's celebrations and activities safer.

The link to the site is <http://education.qld.gov.au/actsmartbesafe/>.

- Queensland Corrective Services provides substance programs that are also relevant to young people and violence. These include:
 - *Pathways program* – a high intensity substance abuse program for offenders with a history of criminal conduct and alcohol and other drug use problems
 - *Getting Smart program* – a moderate intensity substance abuse program
 - *Smart Recovery program* – a maintenance program for offenders who have completed the Pathways or Getting Smart programs
 - *Ending Offending program* – a program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders which aims to modify alcohol use and offending behaviour

- An *Indigenous Peer Education program* – delivers an innovative approach to dealing with issues of harm reduction and encourages early referral and treatment through a culturally appropriate peer delivered education and awareness methodology. The program was piloted at Lotus Glen Correctional Centre.
- Queensland Corrective Services also facilitates a number of other programs that address the link of violence and substance abuse from a broader perspective. These include:
 - The High Intensity Violent Offending Program which consists of the *Cognitive Self Change Program (CSCP)* and the *Making Choices Program*. The CSCP addresses the thinking patterns, attitudes and beliefs which support, promote or precipitate violent behaviour. After an offender completes the CSCP they are placed on the *Making Choices Program* which is detailed below. Offenders who have a history of violent offending and have scored high on the Risk of Reoffending measure, are typically referred to the *High Intensity Violent Offending program*, and are required to complete both the *Cognitive Self Change Program* and the *Making Choices Program*.
 - *Making Choices Program* targets a range of dynamic risk factors or criminogenic needs related to general offending which when addressed have been shown to reduce the risk of reoffending. The primary treatment targets, which are those that have a direct link with offending behaviour, include violence propensity (at the moderate level) and alcohol and drug misuse (as it relates to the offence). The secondary treatment targets include insight into offending, improving poor relationships, relapse prevention and self management. Offenders with moderate to high levels of assessed need for substance abuse will need to undertake additional programs to address these issues.
 - Substance abuse programs such as *Getting Smart*, *Smart Recovery* and *Ending Offending* are also delivered by Probation and Parole staff in the community to cater for offenders placed on parole, probation or intensive corrections orders. Probation and Parole also refer offenders to non-government organisations or peer support groups that specialise in substance abuse or violence issues. Referrals to psychologist may also be made in the situation where the offender has high needs that require one on one intervention.
 - A range of other intervention services including health and medical services, counselling, mutual self-help groups and peer support, and transitional support is also available.
 - Facility-based and/or contracted Queensland Corrective Services drug and alcohol treatment services respond directly to the needs of individual offenders in relation to their substance abuse, as well as other related health and well-being needs.
 - Peer based education and/or support programs also provide a valuable bridge to other treatment/interventions for offenders in Queensland corrective services facilities. Access to Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous is provided to all offenders and an addictions module is included in the Transitions Program, which prepares prisoners for release into the community and links them to community-based agencies that can provide treatment and support after release. In respect of modules regarding addictions, partnership arrangements have been developed with Queensland Health (Alcohol Tobacco and other Drug Service) to assist in the delivery of these modules.

- Youth driven arts projects are another mechanism to understand and address youth violence. For example, *Contact Inc* was the first youth arts and cultural development company in Australia to bring together young people from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Pacific Islander and emerging communities within peace building frameworks. They work long term in communities to mobilise young people and artists from diverse cultural backgrounds to be active citizens and change agents within their communities.

An example project is the *Each One, Teach One* initiative which *Contact Inc* undertook in collaboration with the Foundation for Young Australians, Brisbane City Council and Sunnybank High School. The initiative involved skilling up a 'Contact Crew' of young arts workers to create and deliver workshop programs for other young people, service providers and community members which directly address issues such as racism, gangs, police harassment and personal safety. Using dialogue, hip hop, media, performance and cultural exchange, young people learn how to get along, build peace in the community, solve problems creatively and achieve their aspirations. Key success factors are its youth driven process with young people leading all project stages, its focus on local issues, development of young people's skills and networks, and opportunities to showcase young people's work to the broader community. <http://www.contact.org.au/>.

There is a significant body of literature suggesting that for education campaigns to be effective, young people should play a central role in developing and delivering key social change messages.²⁵ Young people are more likely to listen to interventions that do not 'preach', that are peer driven, that rely on youth culture and language, and that are contextualised within other issues affecting their lives.²⁶

The arts offer a useful tool for directly engaging young people in a positive way to develop communication campaigns about issues such as violence.

- *Under Cape York Welfare Reforms (CYWR)* and the related *Alcohol Reforms* implemented by the Queensland Government, Well Being Centres (WBCs) have been introduced in each of the four CYWR communities. The WBCs provide support services, generalist counselling and community engagement on a range of issues impacting on individual and community well being. In one of the communities, local women are working with the WBC to tackle bullying on the school bus. Family Responsibility Commissioners proactively and regularly engage with authorities and community members to address issues such as bullying and teasing. The WBCs also support men's and women's groups which are an effective means of addressing family violence through prevention and early intervention.
- The *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009* which was passed by the Queensland Parliament and received Royal Assent on 17 September 2009 aims to deliver a scheme which is easier to access, timely and meets the needs of victims of crime including young people.

The objectives of the Act are to:

- provide a scheme to give financial assistance to certain victims of acts of violence
- declare fundamental principles of justice to underlie the treatment of victims by certain government entities with them
- provide a mechanism for implementing the principles and processes for making complaints about conduct inconsistent with the principles.

²⁵ Mason, H. 2003 "Peer Education: Promoting Healthy Behaviours". Advocates for Youth, Washington DC.
 Berlin, C. and J. Hantman 1999 "Taking stage: the NiteStar program". National HIV Prevention Conference, 29 August – 1 September 1999, Atlanta.
 Delgado, M. and L. Staples 2008 "Youth-led community organizing: theory and action". Oxford University Press, New York.

²⁶ Berlin, C. and J. Hantman 1999 "Taking stage: the NiteStar program". National HIV Prevention Conference, 29 August – 1 September 1999, Atlanta.

The new financial assistance scheme incorporated into the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009* called *Victim Assist Queensland* will be established within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. The scheme will commence on 1 December 2009 and will focus on victim recovery by paying for, or reimbursing the costs of goods and services that victims require to help them recover from the physical, emotional and psychological effects of crime by providing a tailored, needs-based response and allows for earlier intervention in the victim's recovery.