

prevention post

NEWSLETTER OF THE PREMIER'S DRUG PREVENTION COUNCIL

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SEPTEMBER 2004

Message from the Chairperson



We are now in the midst of the second term of the Premier's Drug Prevention Council (PDPC), which was announced by the Premier earlier this year. Appointed until the end of 2006, the PDPC is excited by the opportunity to consolidate its work from the first term, continue to commission innovative work to inform good practice, and take a leadership role in drug prevention.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the valuable input of members from the first term of the PDPC, particularly those who have left the Council – Professor Glenn Bowes, Cheryl Baulch, Bern Murphy, Liberty Sanger, Marg

Welsh and the inaugural Chairperson, Peter Maher. Their expertise, commitment and enthusiasm contributed to a strong foundation for the PDPC's work and helped ensure a strong future for the PDPC.

The achievements of the PDPC's first term were recognised when the Council was nominated as a finalist for the Prevention Award category in the National Alcohol and Drugs Awards. The Awards were hosted by the Ted Noffs Foundation, the Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia, the Australian Drug Foundation, and the Australian National Council on Drugs. Being selected as a finalist places the PDPC as one of the leaders in drug prevention in Australia.

The PDPC also won the Australasian Evaluation Society's Evaluation Development Award for its *Guide to Evaluating Drug Prevention Projects in Victoria*. This award for leadership or innovation in evaluation was won jointly with BearingPoint (formerly KPMG Consulting), which was commissioned to undertake the work. The prize is testament to the PDPC's commitment to evaluation to help inform good practice and future directions.

I would like to welcome new members to the PDPC's second term – Janine Kirk, Cathy Lambie, Frank McGuire and Kay Rundle. I am confident that together with those members continuing from the first term, the PDPC will make a significant contribution to drug prevention efforts in this state. I also look forward to the involvement of Peter Allen, Chief Drug Strategy Officer (Department of Human Services) with the PDPC.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON – CONTINUED

The PDPC has identified five strategic priorities for its current term. These are:

- **Intelligence gathering** – to ensure that drug prevention directions and activities are informed by comprehensive national and international intelligence and evidence-based practice. Strategies related to this include annual surveys of drug use, evaluation, benchmarking and monitoring, and research.
- **Communication** – to promote community awareness about alcohol and drug related issues and how they are prevented. Major strategies include the support of the DrugInfo Clearinghouse, promotion of DirectLine 1800 888 236, support for ongoing community awareness campaigns, providing training on drug prevention to over 200 workers on an annual basis, and the establishment of a drug prevention network.
- **Community drug prevention** – we are developing a model on how communities can embed drug prevention in programs such as Neighbourhood Renewal, crime prevention, suicide prevention, and community strengthening that deal with similar risk and protective factors.
- **Connectus: engaging with the business sector** – we have commenced a major employment and mentoring program with the business sector.
- **Advocacy** – to provide leadership at a state and national level in relation to drug prevention policy, strategic directions and activities.

Surveys done by the PDPC in Victoria, in addition to studies in other states of Australia, are showing us that alcohol and drug use (with the exception of tobacco) are becoming greater problems, particularly among young people. These data show how important it is to substantially increase our efforts to prevent harmful alcohol and drug use. After all, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Dr Rob Moodie

Chairperson

Premier's Drug Prevention Council

Terms of Reference

The **Terms of Reference** set out the **role of the PDPC** and provide the focus for activities.

It is the role of the PDPC to:

1. Provide expert advice on effective, evidence based prevention programs, drawing on international research and best practice, and which are appropriate to the Victorian context
2. Advise Government on where additional primary prevention efforts should be directed
3. Commission or contribute to research and other projects to inform best practice on prevention
4. Inform and educate the Victorian community about risk and protective factors associated with drug use and effective drug prevention responses
5. Engage the business, media and philanthropic sectors to harness and further support drug prevention strategies.

PREMIER'S DRUGS PREVENTION COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP



Dr Rob Moodie, Chief Executive Officer, VicHealth (Chairperson)

Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Health Promotion, Editor of the *Australian Health Promotion Journal* and board member of the Mediciens San Frontieres. Dr Moodie has professional appointments in Public Health at Melbourne and Monash universities and is currently a member of several boards. He is also Vice-President of the International Union of Health Promotion and Education.



Paul Briggs OAM, President, Rumbalara Football and Netball Club and consultant on Indigenous issues

Convenor, Victorian Aboriginal Leadership network, Chairman, First Nation Credit Union and a board member, Victorian Qualification Authority.



Professor Neil Comrie AO, APM

Visiting Professor, Faculty of Business and Law, Victoria University. Former Commissioner, Victoria Police, led the Delta Taskforce 1982–84 into child exploitation. Former member of the Board of Directors of Open Family and has had a strong interest and commitment in drug policy and education for over 20 years.



Professor Margaret Hamilton, Chair, Multiple and Complex Needs Panel

Member of the Prime Minister's National Council on Drugs, member of the National Expert Advisory Committee on Illicit Drugs, Deputy Chair of the National Expert Advisory Committee on Alcohol, Chair of the Drug Advisory Committee – Council of Capital City Lord Mayors, and Chair of the Royal Women's Hospital Ethics Committee.



Janine Kirk, Executive Director, Committee for Melbourne

Chairman of the Melbourne Convention and Visitors Bureau (MCVB), Immediate Past President of Berry Street Victoria, an advisory board member of the University of Sydney/ANU Centre for the Mind Management Board, a board member of the Victorian Endowment for Science, Technology and Innovation (VESKI), and a member of the Victoria Harbour Advisory Group.



Cathy Lamble, Magistrate

Magistrate for eight years currently based at Heidelberg. Legal background includes 26 years as a lawyer, initially in private practice, then at the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, followed by 10 years with Victoria Legal Aid. Ms Lamble has also been a part-time member of the Social Security Appeals Tribunal, Mental Health Review Board and Workcare Appeals Board.



Frank McGuire

Managing Partner of *george*, a corporate think tank specialising in strategy, communications and advertising. Former journalist, producer and communications advisor, and winner of a Walkley Award, a Human Rights Award and nominated for a United Nations Media Peace Prize.



Phong Nguyen, Director, Springvale Indo-Chinese Mutual Assistance Association

President of the Vietnamese Community in Australia – Victorian Chapter, and Director of the Springvale Indo-Chinese Mutual Assistance Association. Extensive community involvement includes Westernport Drug and Alcohol Services, Coordinator South Eastern Region's Indo-Chinese Young Offenders Program, and Chairperson of the Ethnic Communities Council Victoria.



Kay Rundle, Chief Executive Officer, City of Greater Geelong

Kay has worked in Local Government for over 20 years, in eight different Councils. She was the Manager of Family and Children's Services at St Kilda Council before becoming Chief Executive Officer of Maribyrnong in 1999. Kay is now the first female to be appointed as the Chief Executive Officer for the City of Greater Geelong, Victoria's second largest City. It is the largest regional local government organisation in Victoria and administers a budget of \$195m with 1,890 staff and 82 business units, to a population of 198,164 with over 10,000 businesses.



Peter Wearne, Manager, Residential Unit and Special Projects, Youth Substance Abuse Service

Youth Worker with the Youth Substance Abuse Service and Chairperson of the Yarra Drug and Health Forum. Peter has a strong interest in drug treatment and prevention issues.

PDPC Initiatives

SCHOOL RETENTION

The Premier's Drug Prevention Council recently joined forces with the Department of Education to support an initiative to encourage young people to stay connected to schools and learning.

There is growing concern about the number of young people who are under 15 years of age that, for a number of reasons, have poor patterns of attendance at school. Participation in schooling and learning underpins young people's future economic and employment opportunities, and educational achievement is clearly associated with health risk behaviours, including alcohol and drug abuse.

The School Retention Project is being undertaken by the Centre for Adolescent Health in partnership with the Australian Youth Research Centre and the Centre for Youth Drug Studies and has involved school communities in Bendigo, the Mornington Peninsula and Geelong.

The project documented and reviewed how these schools engaged with students, their families and the broader community to identify and respond to school retention issues. A literature review of national and international best practice was completed to inform the development of a resource on *Good practice guidelines for keeping young people connected to school*.

The guidelines focus on young people under 15 years of age and provide good practice examples, tools and resources in relation to:

- school strategies
- young people and their families
- partnerships with other education providers
- community networks.

Schools and community agencies will be able to use the guidelines to review and reflect on their current practice and develop activities and approaches that will help keep young people connected to school and to learning.

The guidelines will be available later this year.



Young people enjoying the secondary school experience

CONNECTUS

Connectus, a new program funded by the PDPC, is engaging with the business sector to establish a major employment and mentoring program for at-risk young people.

The *Connectus* program recruits and trains young people aged 16–20 years to be 'job ready' for entry level positions in a range of industries. What makes *Connectus* different to other training programs is that the young people who successfully complete the program are assured of a job. This is because *Connectus* staff work closely with employers who commit to employing *Connectus* graduates.

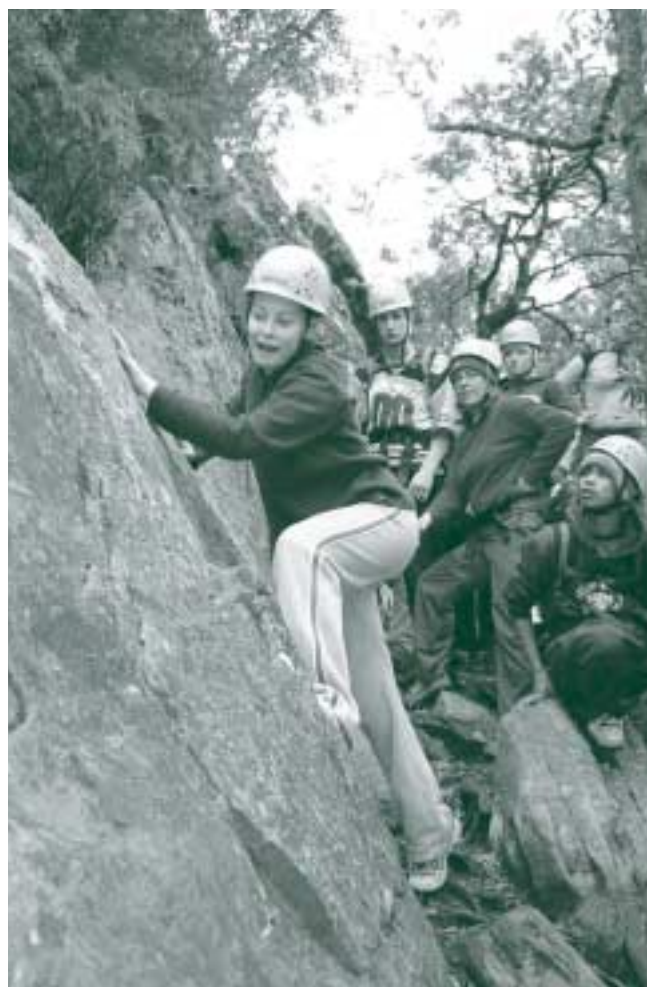
Young people graduate from *Connectus* after completing a three week pre-employment program. The first week focuses on developing life skills and becoming competent in areas that employers value, such as cooperation, initiative and communication. The wilderness trek in the second week challenges the young people to support each other in a harsh environment. The final week of work skills consolidates the learnings of the previous two weeks within a more tightly structured framework to prepare participants for the demands of the world of work.

Three graduation ceremonies have already been held in the local government areas of Hume, Casey and Brimbank/Melton, where *Connectus* is already operating. The graduation ceremonies celebrate the participants' significant achievements. Proud families, friends and community members are treated to speeches from the young people who are then awarded their graduation certificates.

Since the program commenced in April 2004, 43 young people have graduated from *Connectus*. Seven more programs will be completed by July 2005 and it is anticipated that up to 150 young people will graduate in this time.

Connectus ran a highly successful community campaign during June and July on television, radio and in the print media. Since then, staff have been busy responding to the many requests for information from employers, interested communities, parents and young people themselves.

The Legislative Assembly Chamber of the Victorian Parliament was the novel setting for a recent lunch hosted by the PDPC for 150 business people who gathered to hear the Premier and the



Connectus participants meeting the challenge of the wilderness trek

Minister for Health talk about *Connectus*. Guests were told how the untapped abilities of our young people can help their business. Enthusiasm for the program was widespread with many business people pledging their support and commitment over the coming year.

The next phase of *Connectus* will involve an evaluation of the program to develop it into a model that can be implemented by communities in future years.

For more information on *Connectus* please visit www.connectus.com.au

BREAKING CYCLES – BUILDING FUTURES

BREAKING CYCLES – BUILDING FUTURES IS AN INNOVATIVE PROJECT THAT FOCUSES ON THE ROLE OF UNIVERSAL EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES IN IMPROVING THE LIFE CHANCES OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN.

This project is focused on those young children at greatest risk of a range of poor outcomes later in life, including problematic drug use, and their families. The Project is aimed at improving our understanding of the needs of the most vulnerable young children in communities, the barriers they experience to early years service access and service models and work practices that are showing promise in addressing identified concerns.

Breaking Cycles – Building Futures is being undertaken by the Brotherhood of St Laurence in partnership with the University of Melbourne, with funding provided by the PDPC through BEST START.

The project aims to improve the life chances of the most vulnerable and at risk young children by developing more engaging and inclusive universal early childhood services. It is set within an evidence-based context and combines research, community consultation and program implementation and evaluation to develop strategies that can be used across communities and services.

The project has two phases. The first phase involves:

- a literature review on the barriers that children and their families experience in accessing early childhood services, including identifying models and practices that might improve service access
- consultation with parents, service providers and peak bodies regarding their views about barriers to universal service access
- the development of guiding principles and proposed strategies for consideration by Best Start Partnerships.

Early findings from the literature review reveal few studies that specifically investigate barriers to service access. Instead, research has focused on methods of engaging vulnerable families in specific services. Findings also indicate that there is no one single barrier that prevents or discourages vulnerable families from using universal services but rather numerous barriers that seem to be cumulative.

The second phase of the project is intended to trial specific inclusion strategies, developed in phase one, in local Best Start sites. Three sites have been selected – the cities of Maribyrnong, Greater Shepparton and Whittlesea.

The City of Greater Shepparton project is focusing on access to maternal and child health services; the Maribyrnong project on access to preschool (including transition to school); and the Whittlesea project on access to maternal and child health services by Indigenous families (including the link to antenatal services).

This phase is due for completion in December 2004.



Young children absorbed in play at preschool

PHD AND TRAVELLING SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM 2004

To promote and encourage research into drug prevention and enhance Victoria's drug prevention capacity the PDPC is funding an inaugural PhD and Travelling Scholarship program.

One (1) Travelling Scholarship and one (1) PhD Scholarship will be awarded in 2004 to advance the PDPC's primary aim of preventing alcohol and drug related problems from occurring in the first place, with an emphasis on delaying the uptake of harmful alcohol and drug use and reducing related harm.

The Travelling Scholarship, which is up to the value of \$15,000 for 4 to 12 weeks travel, will be awarded for the purpose of pursuing an overseas investigative project into drug prevention and models of best practice.

The three year PhD scholarship, valued at \$25,000 per annum, is being offered for doctoral research into drug prevention.

The successful applicants will have developed proposals that are relevant to the PDPC framework of

- addressing drug related issues at an individual, family, community and macro-environmental level;
- increasing the community's capacity to address drug-related issues at a local level; and
- viewing drug issues in a social health context.

The proposals will also be aligned with one or more of the PDPC's priority areas of intelligence gathering, communication, community drug prevention and advocacy and will have relevance to one or more of the following areas of interest: alcohol, cannabis, amphetamines, party drugs, heroin and parents.

Information and application forms can be downloaded (in Word) from the PDPC website at www.health.vic.gov.au/pdpc.

Applications are due to be lodged no later than 4.00pm on Friday 15 October 2004.

FOETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME RESEARCH AND AWARENESS PROJECT

The World Health Organisation, the US Institute of Medicine, the Australian National Drug Strategy, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Supplement and the Victorian Premier's Drug Prevention Council have all identified Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) as a significant issue in infant and maternal health.

In Australia, FAS has also been identified as an important issue among Indigenous communities. While projects to raise awareness of FAS have been carried out among Aboriginal people in Western Australia and Cape York, the PDPC has now funded a FAS Research and Awareness Project within Victoria for indigenous communities.

The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) is leading a consortia of health and research organisations, including Victorian Aboriginal Health Service, Koori Health Research and Community Development Unit, University of Melbourne, Ngwalla Willumbong, and the Children's Hospital, to conduct this project which aims to identify the levels of awareness of FAS in Victoria.

The research team will develop a literature review of FAS and consult with Indigenous communities regarding levels of FAS awareness. They will also develop a training package for health care providers and culturally appropriate resources to raise community awareness about FAS.

The project will be completed in March 2005.



Information and Application Booklet for the PhD and Travelling Scholarship Program 2004

PARTY DRUG INQUIRY RECOMMENDS FURTHER RESEARCH

The Parliamentary Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee Inquiry into Amphetamines and 'Party Drug' Use in Victoria has made a number of recommendations and helped inform the PDPC strategic directions on party drugs.

The final report of the Inquiry was released in May 2004. The report is extensive and covers a number of areas, including the nature, extent and effects of amphetamines and party drug use; the culture and patterns of use; law, law enforcement, policing and supply control; education, information, harm reduction, treatment and research issues.

The committee made 82 recommendations in total.

One recommendation related to the development of a research program and agenda to address amphetamines and 'party drugs'. In response to this, the PDPC hosted a research forum into party drugs.

The forum involved 25 invited representatives from health, law enforcement, customs, the night club and dance party industry and eminent researchers who have conducted or are currently conducting research into party drugs.

The forum, held in August 2004, has been vital in highlighting research priorities on party drugs, including prevention, and shaping the PDPC's advice to the Government on future research directions.

The report also made two recommendations relating to pill testing; firstly that accurate information regarding contents of pills that are submitted for testing be made available to medical staff, through a system of alerts provided by Victoria Police Forensic Science Laboratories, and secondly that pill testing kits should not be available to the public because of their inaccuracy as a tool to measure the content of particular pills. The Premier has requested advice from the PDPC on these issues.

ENCOURAGING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO SCHOOL FOR KOORI CHILDREN

Keeping children and young people in school is a major protective factor in relation to a number of social issues, including the prevention of alcohol and drug related harm.

Recent data on school attendance within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities shows that 13 per cent of children aged five to 14 years are not attending school, compared to five per cent of those who do not have an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

In response to this issue, the PDPC is funding a research project to investigate the key factors that affect Koori children's successful transition to primary school. The research, conducted by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI), will have three components – a literature review, consultation with key stakeholders to determine the issues affecting school transition, and identification of good practice models.

The PDPC anticipates that the research findings will improve participation and educational outcomes for Koori children in primary education, particularly those in Grade Prep.

The project will be completed in March 2005.

KOORI AND CALD ACCESS PROJECTS

The PDPC has funded two access projects to ensure that the DrugInfo Clearinghouse is providing a range of services that are accessible to everyone.

The Access Projects target Koori and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) workers.

Partnerships have been established with Victorian Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisations (VACCHO) and with the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) to undertake consultations with workers to determine what drug information services are currently used and what further services are needed.

The Koori Access Project commenced in January 2004 and the CALD Access Project has just begun. While both projects focus on cultural barriers to accessing services and information, and a lack of knowledge and awareness of the services, access strategies are different for each project.

KOORI ACCESS

The Koori Access Project has completed, or almost completed, the following activities:

- design and development of an Indigenous webpage for the DrugInfo Clearinghouse website
- audit of computer hardware and software availability for relevant Indigenous workers
- installation of several computers in areas of identified need to enable worker and community access to the DrugInfo Clearinghouse website and services
- provision of training to Indigenous workers to support the use of information services and cross-cultural training for Australian Drug Foundation staff
- enhancement of the DrugInfo Clearinghouse Resource Centre collection to include a comprehensive range of Indigenous resources
- marketing and promotion of DrugInfo Clearinghouse services to Indigenous workers and communities.

An evaluation will be conducted and a final project report produced, including recommendations to address issues around sustainability. This report will be delivered when the pilot project is completed later this year.

CALD PROJECT

The objectives of the CALD Access Project, which will be completed in mid-2005, are to:

- ensure that DrugInfo Clearinghouse services and resources are relevant and accessible for people working with CALD communities
- increase use of existing DrugInfo Clearinghouse services by those working with CALD communities
- develop and deliver appropriate, targeted marketing to workers involved with people from CALD communities
- update and maintain currency of resources for specific CALD communities
- provide support to CALD workers involved in drug prevention
- develop and disseminate a current collection of CALD resources
- establish partnerships with CALD organisations to ensure their involvement in the development of CALD specific services and resources.

For more information contact the DrugInfo Clearinghouse on 1300 85 85 84.



CALD workers accessing the DrugInfo Clearinghouse

ALCOHOL AND DRUG SURVEY FINDS INCREASE IN USE AMONG VICTORIA'S YOUNG PEOPLE

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AND ILLICIT DRUG USE AMONGST VICTORIA'S YOUNG PEOPLE INCREASED IN THE 12 MONTHS FROM 2002 TO 2003, ACCORDING TO THE VICTORIAN YOUTH ALCOHOL AND DRUG SURVEY.

Once again, the PDPC funded the Victorian Youth Alcohol and Drug Survey, which is the only survey that monitors the alcohol and drug use behaviours of young Victorians on a regular basis. The 2003 survey of more than 6,000 young people aged between 16 and 24 produced two reports on the *Alcohol findings* and the *Illicit drugs findings*.

ALCOHOL FINDINGS

The survey found that young Victorians' alcohol consumption has increased since the previous survey in 2002. One in every five young people surveyed said they intended to get drunk most times or every time they drink. Almost one in three said they intended to get drunk some times and almost half of those surveyed said there had been at least one occasion in the past year when they have not been able to remember what happened after they had been drinking.

A significant change from the previous year is the increase in 16–17 year old girls who have tried alcohol (94 per cent compared with 90 per cent in 2002).

Ninety-one per cent of all young people surveyed had had an alcoholic drink in the past 12 months (up from 89 per cent in 2002). Half of these describe themselves as social drinkers, 3 per cent see themselves as 'heavy' drinkers and only 3 per cent as 'binge' drinkers.

Of those under 18 who had drunk in the past 12 months, 51 per cent had their parents buy the alcohol for them on some occasion.

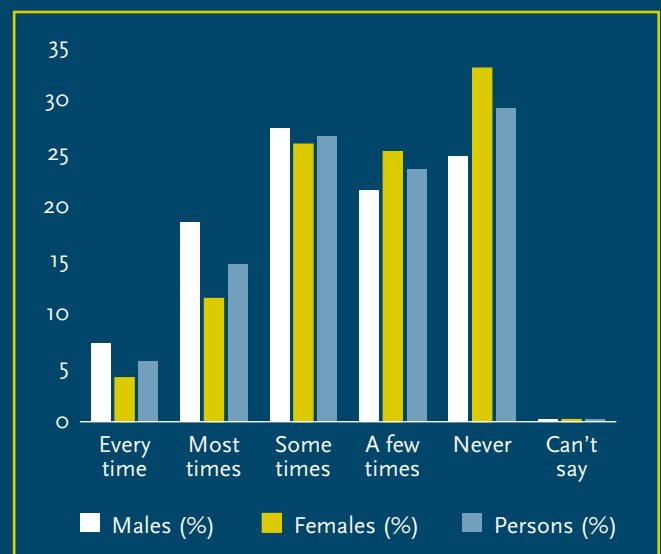
While under the influence of alcohol, 26 per cent of the young people surveyed said they had verbally abused someone, 13 per cent had driven a car, 12 per cent created a public disturbance, and 8 per cent had caused property damage. Among those young people aged 18–21, males are more likely to engage in these behaviours.

Forty-one per cent of young people report being verbally abused and 20 per cent have been put in fear by somebody under the influence of alcohol.

Females are more likely to drink bottled spirits and liqueurs, pre-mixed bottles and pre-mixed spirits. Males most commonly drink regular beer, followed by bottled spirits and liqueurs and pre-mixed spirits.

An interesting finding is that the later young people start to drink, the more likely they are to see themselves as light or occasional drinkers and the less likely they are to be heavy or binge drinkers.

HOW OFTEN YOUNG PEOPLE DRINK INTENDING TO GET DRUNK (IN PAST 12 MONTHS)



ILLICIT DRUGS FINDINGS

The 2003 survey found that the levels of use of illicit drugs have increased compared with the 2002 survey, up from 51 per cent to 54 per cent of all young people.

Cannabis is the most frequently and widely used illicit drug with over half of all young people in the survey admitting to using it.

The major difference between the 2002 and 2003 survey results amongst 18–21 year olds is the swing away from their perception that heroin is more of a problem drug than cannabis.

More than one in five young people surveyed in 2003 have used ecstasy, with 16 per cent having used amphetamines.

Increased use of ecstasy and amphetamines is not evident amongst 16–17 year olds but is significant in the 18–24 year old age group. 'Curiosity' was the most frequently mentioned reason for first using an illicit drug (68 per cent).

Other than driving a motor vehicle, those 16–17 year olds who have used drugs tend to report more anti-social behaviours than older age groups. These findings contrast with those for alcohol,

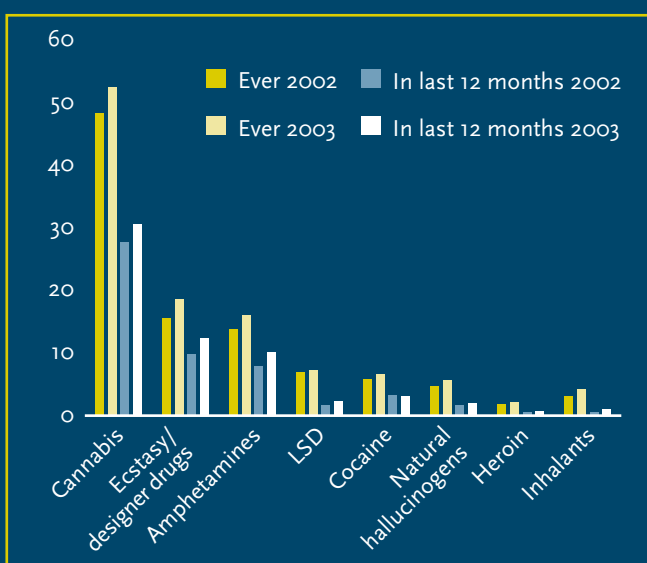
suggesting that 16 and 17 year olds have particular problems managing their behaviour while under the influence of drugs.

Consistent with the 2002 surveys, drug taking is more prevalent among those in more advantaged socioeconomic areas (as defined by the SEIFA classification). In addition, illicit drug use is higher among males than females and this increases with age. Commensurate with these age and income factors, the extent of drug taking varies with occupational status, being lowest among those at school, and rising among those in tertiary study and then still further among those in part-time or full-time work.

Family conflict is found to increase the risk of drug taking behaviour, as do positive attitudes towards drugs and alcohol. Positive social involvement at school can be a factor in reducing the likelihood of using drugs. These findings confirm the effect of some risk and protective factors in relation to drug taking which have been developed in other research.

The emerging factor for 2003 is the greater proportion of young people who do not use drugs stating they are not interested in trying illicit drugs (34 per cent compared with 20 per cent in 2002). Concern for health was the most frequently cited reason, however, drug education at school and advertising (on TV or elsewhere) were also reported as factors in young people's decision not to use drugs.

LIFETIME AND RECENT USE OF EACH DRUG IN 2002 AND 2003



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Copies of the reports can be downloaded from druginfo.adf.org.au

INTRODUCING THE SECRETARIAT

The PDPC Secretariat has five staff who provide valuable support to the Council.

The Secretariat assists the PDPC in all meeting proceedings and with the implementation of initiatives. This includes monitoring projects, supporting advisory groups, making recommendations on effective prevention initiatives, commissioning research, managing consultants, and developing and implementing communication strategies.

Members of the Secretariat are:

Julie L Rolfe	Manager
Kate Wright	Project Manager
Diane Edwards	Senior Research Analyst
Maree Tehan	Project Leader – Communications
Melanie Selvaratnam	Office Manager

The PDPC Secretariat can be contacted on 03 9637 5940, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.

Introducing the Secretariat

DrugInfo Clearinghouse still first port of call



druginfo.adf.org.au 1300 85 85 84

The DrugInfo Clearinghouse continues to be the first port of call for information on drugs and drug prevention in Victoria.

Funded by the PDPC and managed by the Australian Drug Foundation (ADF), the DrugInfo Clearinghouse includes a Resource Centre and a website (the 'virtual' Resource Centre). The DrugInfo Clearinghouse has become a valuable service for workers and community members.

In the period July 2003 to June 2004, the Resource Centre provided services to 8,900 people, 80 per cent of which were professional enquiries and 20 per cent from the community. Approximately 41,000 information resources were disseminated.

There has been a continuing trend of increased alcohol-related enquiries (from 23 per cent of enquiries in the July to September 2003 quarter to 34 per cent in the April to June 2004 quarter). A significant proportion of enquiries focus

on young people and binge drinking. There has also been increased enquiries related to party drugs.

Web traffic has been consistently busy with about 25,000 visits monthly. The most popular pages are: DrugInfo, Alcohol, Fact Sheets, Cannabis, and Ecstasy.

A new service has recently been added. The 'Popular Library Searches' web page links to lists of resources in the library collection that are commonly searched and also to the latest items in the library. Another innovation is the 'Library Alerts' which are monthly e-mails containing information and news specifically for library members.

New reading lists that have been distributed include:

- Prevention in Indigenous communities
- Workforce development
- Dual diagnosis (an update).

The bi-monthly 'suites' of drug prevention information that have been developed since July 2003 include:

- Family intervention
- Prevention issues in communities characterised by cultural and linguistic diversity
- Law, regulation and policing
- Drug prevention strategies for Koori communities
- Inhalants.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the website at druginfo.adf.org.au or contact the Resource Centre on tel: 1300 85 85 84.