

Media Release

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VIOLENCE AND DRINK-DRIVING TOP CONCERNS ABOUT WA ALCOHOL AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Alcohol-related violence and drink-driving were the top concerns about alcohol and young people in a survey of West Australians conducted for the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth at Curtin University.

The survey of 1,002 WA adults carried out by Painted Dog Research showed that 9 in 10 are concerned about alcohol use among young people.

The survey asked for the first time about the role of parents in regard to young people's drinking:

- 83% agree that parents' own drinking influences their children's drinking behaviour.
- 56% agree that parents who limit their children's access to alcohol reduce the likelihood of their child's drinking.

The Executive Officer of the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth, Julia Stafford said, "Ahead of school leavers' celebrations, one of the best things parents and other adults can do is not supply alcohol to under-18s."

"It's encouraging that many people are aware of the impact of parental modelling of drinking, but it seems some parents underestimate the importance of limiting their child's access to alcohol. Limiting access to alcohol will help to make sure leavers' fun is not ruined by risky behaviour and doing something they later regret," Ms Stafford said.

For the first time West Australians were asked, "What concerns you most about alcohol and young people?" Respondents could select multiple answers, including 'drink-driving and road crashes' (78%), 'violence' (77%), 'binge drinking' (60%), 'impact on their mental health' (56%), doing things they later regret' (53%), 'damage to the developing brain' (46%) and 'impact of alcohol on the unborn child, including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders' (39%).

"Community concerns reflect the wide range of risks associated with young people's drinking, including the immediate harms of violence and drink-driving, and longer term harms such as the impact on the developing brain and FASD," Ms Stafford said.

Public support for effective policies to prevent harm from alcohol continues to be very strong:

- 77% support removing alcohol advertising from buses and bus stops to reduce young people's exposure (with only 8% opposed).
- 91% support all school students having regular, well-resourced alcohol and drug education (with only 2% opposed).
- 82% support police powers to ensure liquor outlets do not sell to minors by allowing police to work with underage young people to attempt to purchase alcohol (with only 7% opposed).

"As the 2017 WA election approaches, all sides of politics have the opportunity to commit to policies that will prevent harm from alcohol to young people and can expect strong public support," Ms Stafford said.

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