



VICTORIAN ALCOHOL & DRUG ASSOCIATION



## ***'Is getting pissed getting pathetic?'***

**A Report of the joint VAADA/YACVic Youth Binge  
Drinking forum held at the Melbourne Town Hall  
21 June 2004**

## **Forum Report**

**Authors: Ms Carol Bennett (VAADA Executive Officer) and Ms Jade Bilardi  
(VAADA Project Officer) on behalf of the Victorian Alcohol and Drug  
Association and the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria.**

**July 2004**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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VAADA would like to thank the Premier's Drug Prevention Council and the City of Melbourne for their sponsorship of this event (please note that while the sponsors generously provided support for this project, the report and its recommendations do not reflect their position or views on the matters outlined).

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of all speakers, discussants and participants. We would like to specifically acknowledge the following individuals for their contribution:

## WELCOME AND LAUNCH OF FORUM

Mr Daniel Andrews, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health

## FORUM FACILITATOR

Professor Terry Laidler, *Logical Ideas*

## SPEAKERS

Dr John Howard	<i>Ted Noffs Foundation</i>
Professor Margaret Hamilton	<i>Chair, National Youth Alcohol Campaign Reference Group Member, National Expert Advisory Committee on Alcohol Member, Premier's Drug Prevention Council</i>
Mr David Crosbie	<i>Member, National Expert Advisory Committee on Alcohol Board Director, Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation</i>
Dr Yvonne Bonomo	<i>Research perspective, Youth Substance Abuse Service Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre St Vincent's Drug and Alcohol Department</i>
Mr Brian Kearney	<i>Australian Hotels Association (Industry perspective)</i>
Mr Brad Rowsell	<i>Youth perspective</i>
Ms Donna Gross	<i>Youth perspective</i>
Dr Rodger Brough	<i>Rural perspective, Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre</i>
Mr Bruce Clarke	<i>Parents perspective</i>
Mr Robert Johnson	<i>Swan Hill Salvation Army</i>
Mr Geoff Munro	<i>Community Alcohol Action Network</i>

## DISCUSSANTS

Ms Lill Healy	<i>Office for Youth, Department of Victorian Communities</i>
Mr Paul McDonald	<i>Drugs Policy and Services, Department of Human Services</i>

## VAADA AND YACVic STAFF

Ms Carol Bennett	(VAADA Executive Officer, Report Co Author)
Mr Nik Beuret	(YACVic Communications Officer)
Ms Jade Bilardi	(VAADA Project Officer and Report Author)
Ms Rys Farthing	(YACVic Information and Participation Officer)
Ms Georgie Ferrari	(YACVic Executive Officer)
Ms Paula Grogan	(YACVic Senior Policy Officer)
Ms Litsa Kane	(VAADA Project Officer and forum organiser)
Mr Chris McDonnell	(VAADA Project Officer)

Speaker presentations and a copy of this forum report are available on the VAADA website at [www.vaada.org.au](http://www.vaada.org.au)

*'Is getting pissed getting pathetic?'*  
**Forum Report**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>FORUM PROGRAMME OVERVIEW</b>	<b>8</b>
<u>WELCOME</u>	8
Mr Daniel Andrews	8
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	8
Ms Carol Bennett (VAADA)	8
Ms Paula Grogan (YACVic)	9
<u>SESSION 1: 'Is youth binge drinking worse than before?'</u>	
Mr John Howard	9
Prof Margaret Hamilton	9
Mr David Crosbie	9
Dr Yvonne Bonomo	10
Mr Brian Kearney	10
Morning Facilitated Panel Discussion	10
<u>SESSION 2: 'From the coalface'</u>	
Mr Brad Rowswell	11
Ms Donna Gross	11
Dr Rodger Brough	11
Mr Bruce Clarke	12
Mr Robert Johnson	12
Mr Geoff Munro	12
Afternoon Facilitated Panel Discussion	12
<b>KEY ISSUES</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>APPENDIX A</b>	<b>18</b>
PROMOTIONAL FLYER	17
<b>APPENDIX B</b>	<b>18</b>
PROGRAM	19
<b>APPENDIX C</b>	<b>23</b>
EVALUATION FORM	23
<b>APPENDIX D</b>	<b>25</b>
FORUM EVALUATION OUTCOMES	25

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

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The issue of youth binge drinking has attracted intense community and media interest in recent times. The perception in the community, often due to sensational media, is that young people are binge drinking more than ever before. While the concerns raised are understandable, youth binge drinking represents a more complex issue than what is often portrayed in the media and provides some very real challenges for governments and the broader community.

What is clear is the need to gain a greater understanding of youth binge drinking; the issues surrounding binge drinking; the associated harms and approaches to dealing with these harms; and the need for effective harm minimisation strategies. It is also important to understand drinking from multi-dimensional perspectives including: young people, parental, industry, rural, indigenous and alcohol and drug service providers in order to gain an understanding of the complexity of this issue and the need for a comprehensive approach.

The joint Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) and Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) forum on Youth Binge Drinking, '*Is getting pissed getting pathetic?*', aimed to explore these complexities and provide participants with information about the harms, the extent of the problem and the strategies and prevention approaches to address youth binge drinking. The forum was held on Monday 21 June 2004 at the Melbourne Town Hall and showcased leading experts on the issue.

The forum highlighted two very important issues relating to youth binge drinking:

- Acknowledging that drinking is an inherent cultural problem affecting both adults and young people and society can not continue to scapegoat youth binge drinking as the problem.
- The need for effective evidence-based harm reduction strategies that we know work but that government and the community may find difficult to accept.

The forum highlighted a lack of comprehensive statistical and social research data; effective strategies and treatment programs; and recognition of drinking as a problem within the general community. This has informed VAADA and YACVic's support for the adoption of a comprehensive Victorian policy approach to dealing with the harms through prevention and treatment strategies associated with binge drinking at a broader community level. We commend this report and the following recommendations:

## **Research**

- Increased social research on youth drinking and alcohol, including culturally and locally relevant research;

## **Cultural acceptance of alcohol**

- Making binge drinking unacceptable within the general community;
- The acknowledgement that alcohol is a drug;
- Acknowledging that drinking is a cultural problem affecting both young people and adults.

## **Harms**

- The interception of drinking at an early age in order to reduce the likelihood of excessive adult drinking;

## **Strategies to address alcohol related harms**

- Broad multi-faceted campaigns which also target the practices and behaviour of adult drinking, encourage healthy levels of alcohol consumption and address the unacceptable culture of excessive drinking in Australia;
- Positive campaigns rather than campaigns which target and label young people negatively;
- Engaging young people in the issue of binge drinking in order to gain a better understanding of youth binge drinking issues and why young people partake in excessive drinking;
- Alcohol taxation reform and pricing controls;
- Strict controls on the availability and supply of alcohol;
- Properly enforced liquor licensing laws;
- More appropriate and resourced treatment options particularly within the Indigenous and rural communities;
- Increased random breath testing on our roads;
- Further strategies to regulate sponsorship, advertising and media in relation to alcohol;
- The redirection of a percentage of excise and taxation collected on alcohol products into public health initiatives that address alcohol related harms and;
- Changes to current labelling and packaging requirements.

# INTRODUCTION

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The Inaugural Youth Binge Drinking Forum '*Is getting pissed getting pathetic?*' was a core component of Drug Action Week activities conducted jointly by VAADA and YACVic on 21 June 2004 in Melbourne, Victoria.

This forum, sponsored by the Premier's Drug Prevention Council (PDPC) and the City of Melbourne, presented a valuable opportunity for people from within the alcohol and other drug (AOD) sector, youth sector, education, law enforcement, health, government representatives and people across the broader community to gain information about youth binge drinking from some of Australia's leading experts on this issue.

One of the most important acknowledgments from the forum was the recognition that youth binge drinking is part of a cultural problem affecting both adults and young people and therefore society must not just target young people's drinking habits.

A range of key issues were highlighted at the forum, and have lead to recommendations outlined in this report.

# FORUM PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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The forum drew upon leading experts in Victoria and nationally as well as those working at the coalface to discuss these and other key questions. As part of these discussions, issues about the role of governments, alcohol producers and retailers, parents, media, welfare and health agencies, and youth were also addressed. Over 120 people participated in the forum, from a diverse range of sectors (see Appendix D for sector breakdown). The forum was opened by Mr Daniel Andrews MP, and an introduction to the issue was provided by Ms Carol Bennett, Executive Officer at VAADA and Ms Paula Grogan, Senior Policy Officer at YACVic.

The forum was structured in two sessions. The first session set the context for discussion by informing delegates about youth binge drinking, including current trends, associated harms and approaches to dealing with these harms, and effective harm minimisation strategies.

The following provides a brief overview of each speaker's presentation from Session 1 of the forum.

## **WELCOME**

### **Mr Daniel Andrews**

Mr Andrews launched the forum, providing information and findings about youth binge drinking from the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee report '*Indicators of Trends in Youth Binge Drinking*'. He also outlined the prevention and harm minimisation initiatives, strategies and treatments the Victorian State Government has undertaken in relation to youth binge drinking.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Ms Carol Bennett (VAADA)**

Ms Bennett introduced the forum, noting that there were a number of key questions that the forum may address through the keynote speakers presentations, panel discussions and audience participation. The key questions included:

- Is youth binge drinking really out of control?
- Is the government's getting pissed getting pathetic campaign hitting the right target?
- Are we 'scape-goating' youth binge drinking as the problem or is it a reflection of binge drinking in the general community?
- Are the harms caused by youth binge drinking acceptable?

Carol outlined three issues that she believed had been instrumental to change in youth binge drinking patterns in recent years:

- The ready acceptance of alcohol in our culture
- The increase in women's alcohol consumption and binge drinking
- The introduction of the zero tolerance alcohol limits for learner and probationary drivers.

*'Is getting pissed getting pathetic?'*

**Forum Report**

### **Ms Paula Grogan (YACVic)**

Ms Grogan followed on from Ms Bennett's introduction, noting a number of key points that were reiterated throughout the day. The issues she highlighted included: that young people drink for the same reasons as adults; that the issue of binge drinking is not only an issue for youth and; that similar drinking patterns in the adult population are often ignored. She also noted the culture of excessive drinking in Australia which actively promotes drinking.

## **SESSION 1: 'Is youth binge drinking worse than before?'**

### **Dr John Howard**

***"We adults are the problem and the solution lies with youth"***

Dr Howard's presentation outlined the cultural context in which binge drinking occurs, examining definitions of binge drinking, patterns of binge drinking, adverse harms and outcomes, increase of female binge drinking and the need for positive rather than negative harm minimisation strategies and campaigns. He also stressed the importance of acknowledging adult binge drinking as part of a culture of drinking in Australia.

### **Professor Margaret Hamilton**

***"...bingeing is actually abhorrent behaviour, but we think it is normal"***

Professor Hamilton examined the culture of drinking in Australia, emphasising the need to acknowledge it as a problem affecting both adults and young people rather than 'scape-goating' young people. She drew on research as well as anecdotal experiences to highlight the issues surrounding youth binge drinking. Posing a wider range of strategies, Professor Hamilton acknowledged that effective strategies are those we are least likely to use because they impact economically and conflict with the culture of drinking in Australia.

### **Mr David Crosbie**

***"My experience has been that the power of the alcohol industry is phenomenal"***

Mr Crosbie outlined the economic, social, health, aesthetic and community benefits that alcohol has for the individual and community and the ways in which alcohol use is ingrained in every part of Australian life. He also examined the harms of binge drinking and the economic benefits of alcohol use to governments. He challenged us to look toward the more politically unpopular strategies that are known to be more effective. A number of these strategies were outlined, including the need to stop scape-goating the 'soft targets', young people.

## **Dr Yvonne Bonomo**

***“We’re talking the talk, we just need to walk the walk”***

Dr Bonomo presented findings on the *Victorian Adolescent Health Cohort Study* which examined youth binge drinking practices and patterns of 15-18 year olds. The study found that young people were more likely to undertake episodic binge drinking sessions rather than a pattern or regular consumption, an increase in adverse consequences of youth binge drinking, and that adolescents who drink heavily are more likely to abuse alcohol as adults. Dr Bonomo also noted concern about the younger age onset of binge drinking.

## **Mr Brian Kearney**

***“...we need to respect the youth in this debate”***

Mr Kearney, on behalf of the AHA, expressed a desire to contribute to the debate on youth binge drinking and examine strategies to improve underage drinking. He felt that we need to be more creative in our approach to youth binge drinking and have solutions that recognise and respect young people’s circumstances, rather than scape-goating them. In his opinion, reducing alcohol availability and implementing taxation and pricing strategies were unlikely to be effective.

## **Morning Facilitated Panel Discussion**

The morning facilitated panel discussion included the morning keynote speakers in addition to Mr Paul McDonald from Drugs and Policy Services, Department of Human Services, and Ms Lill Healy from the Office for Youth, Department of Victorian Communities. The panel discussed various issues and answered a number of questions from the audience in relation to;

- the rise in female drinking;
- targeted advertising towards this market;
- issues of availability;
- the culture of drinking in Australia;
- the need to recognise alcohol as a drug;
- the need to target campaigns to adults not just young people;
- the power of the alcohol industry;
- the scape-goating of young people;
- the need to recognise binge drinking as a wider societal problem and;
- the need for effective harm minimisation strategies which are more difficult for the government and community.

***“There is very little sympathy in the community for drinking problems amongst adults as they are seen as being responsible for themselves”***

(Mr Paul McDonald)

***“I think it’s just broader than focusing on the grog”***

(Dr John Howard)

***“Without utility, speech is just decorative”***

(Saul, J., *The Unconscious Life* – quoted by David Crosbie)

***“If you ask me, it’s definitely worse than it used to be”***

(Dr. Yvonne Bonomo)

***“Governments don’t want to be accused of being the nanny state or wowers”***

(Mr Paul McDonald)

*‘Is getting pissed getting pathetic?’*

**Forum Report**

## **SESSION 2: 'From the coalface'**

While the morning session provided an overview of different expert perspectives on the key issues relating to youth binge drinking and the ways to address them, the afternoon session highlighted another set of perspectives: those of the young, rural, parents, indigenous and community, and again provided some interesting debate on the issues.

### **Mr Brad Rowswell (Youth Perspective)**

***"What young people who are deliberately getting drunk are doing is sending out a message, to you, saying 'Give me some attention, I need some help, help me'...so it goes much deeper"***

Mr Rowswell's presentation focused on the ways in which we 'scape-goat' young people and binge drinking and the need to examine other ways to convey our concerns about the harms of youth binge drinking. Mr Rowswell spoke of the ineffectiveness of current campaigns aimed at youth binge drinking, noting that the negative connotations of these advertisements only make matters worse. He also emphasised the ways in which youth binge drinking is singled out as the problem while similar patterns in adults are often ignored. The drinking hypocrisy adults impose on youth only serves to create a divide of trust between young people and adults.

### **Ms Donna Gross (Youth Perspective)**

***"In a country that does have a National Drug Strategy that is very much a harm minimisation approach rather than a zero tolerance, where is the harm minimisation in our service system, schools and society in regard to teen binge drinking?"***

Ms Gross' presentation outlined her own personal experiences with youth binge drinking and its associated effects and harms. She also noted the ways in which young people are targeted and demonised for drinking even though they are surrounded by a culture of alcohol.

### **Dr Rodger Brough (Rural Perspective)**

***"We need a comprehensive approach, we need better information...we need smarter research...we need local knowledge"***

Dr Brough spoke on alcohol use in rural areas and the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing alcohol problems at a local level. This included the need for infrastructure and leadership at a state level; addressing adult drinking as also part of the problem and undertaking local specific research in order to implement locally appropriate harm minimisation strategies and; the need for local liquor licensing regulations and adequate rural treatment facilities.

### **Mr Bruce Clarke (Parent Perspective)**

***“...someone should do something about kids like that”***

(a quote from a woman passing by the place where Leigh Clarke died)

Mr Clarke’s presentation focused on the tragic story of his 15 year old son Leigh, who lost his life on August 13 1999, from “hypothermia, in a setting of severe intoxication”. Leigh had been at a party where Vodka essence had been supplied. Mr Clarke also spoke of his involvement and dedication since this time to alcohol policy reform and the policy changes he has been involved in. He noted the important impact policy change (such as his involvement in Victorian legislation to remove alcohol essence from the market) could have on rates of harmful use. He urged participants to remain vigilant in tackling the issues.

### **Mr Robert Johnson (Indigenous Perspective)**

***“Now society is a hard place to live but when you’re Aboriginal it’s even harder”***

Mr Johnson’s presentation outlined the alcohol use in the indigenous communities, the impact and harms it is causing, and the need to understand its place within indigenous communities’ broader struggle for survival. He spoke of the lack of prevention and treatment facilities within remote communities and the high ‘burnout’ rate of drug and alcohol workers in this area. He recommended the use of broader strategies to address these issues, but equally culturally appropriate alcohol treatment services that are appropriately resourced.

### **Mr Geoff Munro (Community Perspective)**

***“...to raise the drinking age to 21 is to still focus on young people drinking...I’d rather focus on the cultural way we make everyone drink”***

Mr Munro’s presentation focused on the culture of drinking in Australia and the ways in which alcohol is marketed in Australia. He outlined the work of the Community Alcohol Action Network (CAAN). Reflecting on the *Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code*, he provided examples of various alcohol advertisements which breach these codes. He noted that whilst code regulators monitor these codes, they do not respond to complaints about breaches of these codes.

### **Afternoon Facilitated Panel Discussion**

The afternoon facilitated panel discussion involved all the afternoon session speakers. Again, the panel discussed various issues and answered a number of questions from the audience. Issues discussed included:

- the need for community ‘ownership’ of the problem of binge drinking;
- the need for positive strategies rather than negative campaigns and the labelling of young people, i.e. *‘Is getting pissed getting pathetic’* and *‘wasted, wasted, wasted, wanker’*;
- the recognition that drinking is both a youth and adult problem;
- the cultural acceptance of excessive alcohol use in society;

*‘Is getting pissed getting pathetic?’*

**Forum Report**

- the need for advertising to present a mature and responsible approach to drinking
- the need to look at strategies that we know will have a positive impact.

***“...we must passively subject ourselves to market forces...rather than act to control or direct them, even if the result of such passivity is the destruction of our society”***

(Mr John Saul, *Voltaire's Bastards*, quoted by Mr Geoff Munro)

***“Alcohol is a drug, work it out, call it one and treat it like one”***

(Mr Bruce Clarke)

# KEY ISSUES

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A number of key issues highlighted and discussed throughout the Youth Binge Drinking Forum. The major points and issues surrounding youth Binge Drinking include:

## **Research**

- The difficulty of defining 'youth binge drinking' - binge drinking should not focus on the number of drinks, as much as the pattern of binge drinking;
- The need for more social research on drinking, including culturally and locally relevant research.

## **Cultural acceptance of alcohol**

- Drinking is an ingrained part of our culture which is not only viewed as normal but is accepted and promoted in the media and every significant social event in our country;
- Drinking is a cultural problem affecting both adults and young people and society cannot continue to scape-goat youth binge drinking as the problem;
- The necessity of acknowledging, without prejudice and moralising, the positive aspects of drinking as well as the negative.

## **Harms**

- Youth binge drinking, especially female binge drinking, is on the rise as is the increase in adverse consequences of youth binge drinking;
- Youth are starting to binge drink at earlier ages and those who binge drink as teenagers are more likely to abuse alcohol as adults;
- We need to recognise that alcohol is a drug and costs the Victorian community 5 million dollars a day in associated harms.

## **Strategies to address alcohol related harm**

- We need to intercept at an early age and set positive examples of responsible drinking;
- The need to listen and engage young people in the issue of binge drinking and have strategies which recognise their circumstances;
- Need for broad multifaceted campaigns and harm minimisation strategies which address adult drinking and the social acceptance of drunkenness and alcohol as a relaxant or reward;
- A whole of community response to the issue of binge drinking;
- The need for increased government funding in the drug and alcohol and youth sectors in order to undertake further social research on drinking and public health initiatives that address alcohol related harms;
- The need to implement effective harm reduction strategies that we know will work but are more difficult for the community and government to accept.

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**Forum Report**

As is evident from the above points, the forum acknowledged that youth binge drinking is increasing; that young people are more likely to undertake episodic binge drinking sessions rather than a pattern of regular consumption and; that adolescents who binge drink are more likely to abuse alcohol as adults. The age of onset also indicated future problematic alcohol use.

It is also evident from the information and views presented at the forum that the government's advertising campaigns aimed at youth binge drinking are not tackling the problem in the most effective way, but serve to further scape-goat young people as the problem whilst ignoring the fact that it is a cultural problem affecting the whole community.

Finally, it is apparent that the harms caused by youth binge drinking, both physically and mentally and in terms of the impact on the community, are unacceptable and need to be addressed using effective harm minimisation strategies and a whole of community approach. The harm minimisation strategies we require, however, are those we are least likely to engage because they impact economically on the governments and conflict with the widely accepted culture of drinking in Australia.

This report has represented an overview of the major themes highlighted throughout the forum and identified future strategies to reduce harm associated with youth binge drinking. A copy of the evaluation form is provided in Appendix C. A summary of participant evaluation feedback is provided in Appendix D.

Copies of the forum promotional flyer and forum program are attached at Appendix A and B. Individual presentations are available for download from the VAADA website ([www.vaada.org.au](http://www.vaada.org.au)).

# CONCLUSION

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The Inaugural Victorian Youth Binge Drinking Forum provided participants with a valuable opportunity to access information, express opinions and concerns and network with people from various sectors on this important issue.

A number of key issues were highlighted through the forum including: increase in youth binge drinking (especially young women) and the associated harms; the cultural acceptance of drinking in Australia; the scape-goating of youth binge drinking as the problem; the need for further social research and; the need for effective harm reduction strategies that we know will work, but that the government and community find difficult to accept.

The major strategies recommended to address these problems cover availability and supply; increased social research; taxation and pricing reforms; regulation of advertising and sponsorship; better resourced treatment programs; liquor licensing laws; multifaceted campaigns; labelling and packaging and; tackling the culture of drinking in Australia.

It is evident that there are a range of strategies that need to be implemented to deal with binge drinking and to address associated harms, however the most effective strategies are also likely to be the most politically unpopular. If we are serious about addressing youth binge drinking in our country, the more difficult strategies must form part of a comprehensive approach to the issue.

# Appendix

# APPENDIX A

## PROMOTIONAL FLYER

**VAADA**  
VICTORIAN ALCOHOL & DRUG ASSOCIATION

**youthaffairs**  
COUNCIL OF VICTORIA INC.

The Victorian Alcohol & Drug Association and the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria present:

### Is getting pissed getting pathetic?

**Monday 21 June 2004**  
**To start at 8.30am**

**Welcome and launch of forum by**  
**Mr David Andrews, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health**

**Registration costs**  
\$70 per person  
\$20 for VAADA & YACVIC members

**Book by Monday 14 June to**  
**Use of VAADA on 03 9434 0000**

**Sponsored by:**  
 **City of Melbourne**

**Where**  
Sapper River, Level 3  
Melbourne Youth Hall  
(corner of Collins and  
Swanston st)

## Forum presenters

- » Ms Carol Bennett, VAADA Executive Officer
- » Ms Paula Grogan, YACVIC Policy Officer
- » Dr John Howard, Clinical Director, Ted Noffs Foundation
- » Prof. Margaret Hamilton, Chair, National Youth Alcohol Campaign Reference Group  
Member National Expert Advisory Committee on Alcohol
- » Mr David Crosbie, Member National Expert Advisory Committee on Alcohol  
Board Director, Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation
- » Dr Yvonne Bonomo, Researcher, Youth Substance Abuse Service (YSAS)
- » Dr Lina Ricciardelli, Youth Alcohol Researcher, Deakin University
- » Dr Roger Brough, Medical Clinician, Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre
- » Alcohol Industry Representative
- » Ms Lill Healy, Office for Youth, Department of Victorian Communities
- » Mr Paul McDonald, Drugs Policy and Services, Department of Human Services
- » Mr Bruce Clark, Parent Representative
- » Mr Robert Johnston, Indigenous Representative
- » Mr Brad Rosewell and Ms Michelle Blanchard, Youth Perspective on Youth Binge Drinking
- » Associate Professor Terry Laidler, Forum Facilitator

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## APPENDIX B

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### PROGRAM



**The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association**

**and**

**The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria**

**Inaugural Victorian Youth Binge Drinking Forum**

**PROGRAM**

***'Is getting pissed getting pathetic?'***

monday 21<sup>st</sup> june 2004

At the

**Melbourne Town Hall**  
(cnr Swanston & Collins St)

Supper Room - Level 3  
9.30 am - 3.15 pm

Sponsored by:



Premier's Drug  
Prevention Council



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**Forum Report**

# PROGRAM

## **9.30 - 10.00am Registration**

## **10.00 - 10.30am**

### **Welcome and Introduction**

Mr Daniel Andrews MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health  
*Welcome and launch of forum*

Ms Carol Bennett, VAADA and Ms Paula Grogan, YACVic  
*Why a focus on youth binge drinking?*

## **10.30am - 12.30pm**

### **Session 1 - Is youth binge drinking worse than before?**

10.30 - 10.50 Dr John Howard  
*Clinical Director and Researcher, Ted Noffs Foundation*

10.50 - 11.05 Professor Margaret Hamilton  
*Chair, National Youth Alcohol Campaign Reference Group  
Member, National Expert Advisory Committee on Alcohol  
Member, Premier's Drug Prevention Council*

11.05 - 11.20 Mr David Crosbie  
*Member, National Expert Advisory Committee on Alcohol  
Board Director, Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation*

11.20 - 11.35 Dr Yvonne Bonomo  
*Research perspective, Youth Substance Abuse Service (YSAS)  
Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre  
St Vincent's Drug and Alcohol Department*

11.35 - 11.50 Mr Brian Kearney  
*Alcohol industry perspective, Australian Hotels Association, Victorian Branch*

11.50 - 12.30pm Facilitated panel discussion  
*The morning's speakers together with Ms Lill Healy (Office for Youth,  
Department of Victorian Communities) and Mr Paul McDonald  
(Drugs Policy and Services, Department of Human Services)  
Facilitated by Associate Professor Terry Laidler*

**12.30 - 1.15 pm Lunch**

**1.15 - 3.00pm**

**Response to Session 1 - *From the Coalface***

1.15 - 1.30 Mr Brad Rowswell, Ms Donna Gross and Mr Lindsay Parkhowell  
*Youth Perspective*

1.30 - 1.40 Dr Rodger Brough  
*Rural Perspective, Western Region Alcohol and Drug Centre*

1.40 - 1.50 Mr Bruce Clarke  
*Parent Representative*

1.50 - 2.00 Mr Robert Johnson  
*Indigenous Representative, Swan Hill Salvation Army*

2.00 - 2.10 Mr Geoff Munro  
*Director, Community Alcohol Action Network (CAAN)*

2.10 - 3.00 Facilitated panel discussion  
*Discussion with the session's speakers.*  
Facilitated by Associate Professor Terry Laidler

**3.00 - 3.15pm**

Ms Carol Bennett, VAADA and Ms Paula Grogan, YACVic  
*Summary and Close*

**VAADA**

**youthaffairs**  
COUNCIL OF VICTORIA INC.

**VAADA**

**youthaffairs**  
COUNCIL OF VICTORIA INC.

## Victorian Youth Binge Drinking Forum

*hosted by the*

**Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association**

*and*

**Youth Affairs Council of Victoria**

*Major sponsors:*



Forum registration costs:

\$70 per person \*  
VAADA/YACVic Members - \$50 per person \*

Registrations will be confirmed upon payment and will close on Wednesday 16 June 2004

RSVP: Litsa at VAADA on 03 9416 0899

\* GST Inclusive

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**Forum Report**

# APPENDIX C



## Is getting pissed getting pathetic? Evaluation Form



**1. I currently work in: (Please tick appropriate box)**

- Drug and Alcohol       Youth Services       Juvenile Justice  
 Mental Health       Youth D&A       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. How satisfied were you with the content of the forum? (Please circle one)**

Not at all Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
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**3. Was the forum relevant to your work?**

Not at all Relevant	Somewhat Relevant	Moderately Relevant	Very Relevant	Extremely Relevant
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**4. Did you find the forum interesting?**

Not at all Interesting	Somewhat Interesting	Moderately Interesting	Very Interesting	Extremely Interesting
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**5. Please rate each Keynote presentation from 1 to 5 (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)**

Morning Session

Afternoon Session

**A/Prof. Terry Laidler**  
Forum Facilitator

**Mr Brad Rowswell**  
Youth Perspective

**Dr. John Howard**  
Clinical Director and Researcher  
*Ted Noffs Foundation*

**Ms Donna Gross**  
Youth Perspective

**Prof. Margaret Hamilton**  
Chair, *National Youth Alcohol Campaign Reference Group*  
Member, *National Expert*

**Dr Rodger Brough**  
Rural perspective

*Advisory Committee on Alcohol*  
Member, *PDPC*

**Mr Bruce Clarke**  
Parent Perspective

**Mr David Crosbie**  
Member, *National Expert Advisory Committee on Alcohol*  
Board Director, *AERF*

**Mr Robert Johnson**  
Indigenous perspective

**Mr Brian Kearney**  
*Australian Hotels Association*  
Victorian Branch  
(*CAAN*)

**Mr Geoff Munro**  
Director  
*Community Alcohol Action Network*

**Facilitated panel discussion**  
Morning session

**Facilitated panel discussion**  
Afternoon session

**6. What did you find to be the most useful part of the forum?**

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**7. What did you find to be the least useful part of the forum?**

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**8. Were there any other topics that you felt should have been addressed at the forum?**

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**9. Do you have any other comments about the forum?**

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**10. How would you rate the forum venue? (Please tick)**

	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Venue</b>					
<b>Food</b>					
<b>Location</b>					
<b>Facilities</b>					

**11. What response/s would you like VAADA and/or YACVic to implement post-forum?**

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation form

*'Is getting pissed getting pathetic?'*

**Forum Report**

## APPENDIX D

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A total of 48 forum evaluation forms were received, indicating a response rate of approximately 40% of the 120 forum delegates.

Overall, the evaluation forms for the forum were very positive, indicating that the conference topic, content and quality of the program was appropriate to the delegates, their jobs and their interests. The location of the forum was also regarded favourably, due to its city location and easy accessibility.

**Figure 1: Delegates area of work**

<b>Service</b>	<b>n.</b>	<b>%</b>
Drug and Alcohol	25	42
Youth Services	6	10
Juvenile Justice	2	3
Youth D & A	2	3
Mental Health	4	7
Other:	21	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>*60</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Please note N = 60 due to a number of participants whose positions crossed over more than one category

As is evident from Figure 1 delegates at the forum came from a wide range of professional backgrounds, including the drug and alcohol sector (42%), youth services (10%), juvenile justice (3%), youth drug and alcohol (3%), mental health 7% and other areas (35%). The professional backgrounds of delegates from other areas included: health promotion, apprentice support, housing, education, training workers, shire councillor, employment consultant, Victoria police, community development, pharmacy, policy, local government, students and the alcohol industry.

*“glad to see positive action bringing people together from different professions to discuss this issue”*

Over two thirds of delegates indicated that they were either very satisfied or extremely satisfied with the content of the forum, as indicated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2 How satisfied were you with the content of the forum?**

	<b>n.</b>	<b>%</b>
Not at all satisfied	0	0
Somewhat satisfied	3	6
Moderately satisfied	10	21
Very satisfied	27	57
Extremely satisfied	5	10
n/a	3	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>

In terms of the relevance of the forum to delegates work, nearly 70% of delegates found that the forum was either very relevant or extremely relevant to their work. Given the broad range of delegate’s professional backgrounds these results were very positive.

*‘Is getting pissed getting pathetic?’*

**Forum Report**

**Figure 3: Was the forum relevant to your work?**

	n.	%
Not at all relevant	0	0
Somewhat relevant	6	12
Moderately relevant	8	17
Very relevant	24	50
Extremely relevant	9	19
n/a	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>

*“An excellent range of interesting topics and speakers”*

Three quarters of the delegates found the forum very interesting or extremely interesting, which again provided some excellent feedback for our keynote speakers and panel discussants.

**Figure 4: Did you find the forum interesting?**

	n.	%
Not at all interesting	0	0
Somewhat interesting	3	6
Moderately interesting	7	15
Very interesting	29	60
Extremely interesting	7	15
n/a	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>

Delegates were also asked to rate each of the keynote speakers presentations from 1 to 5 (1=poor, 5=excellent). The following figures provide the average rating of each keynote speaker, by delegates at the forum.

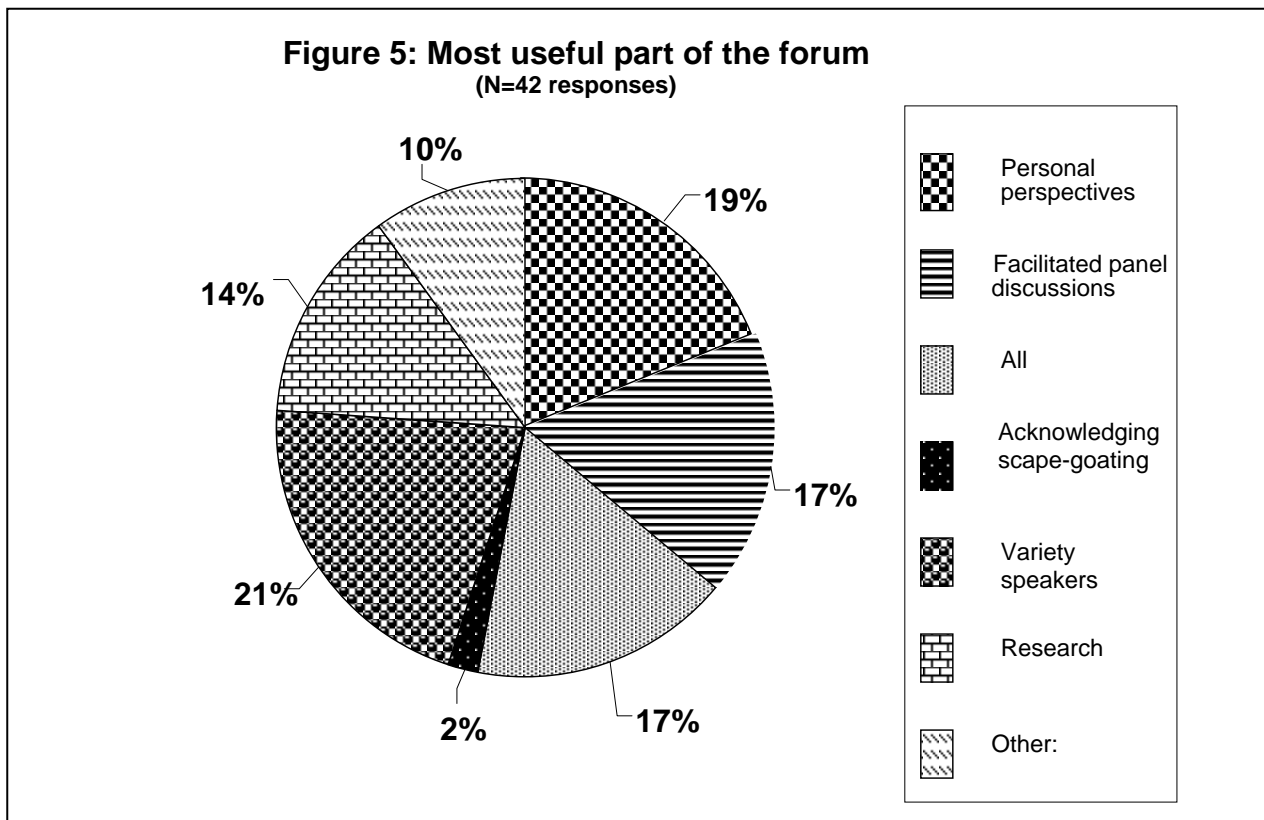
<b>A/Prof. Terry Laidler</b> Forum Facilitator	<b>4</b>	<b>Mr Brad Rowswell</b> Youth Perspective	<b>4</b>
<b>Dr. John Howard</b> Clinical Director and Researcher <i>Ted Noffs Foundation</i>	<b>5</b>	<b>Ms Donna Gross</b> Youth Perspective	<b>5</b>
<b>Prof. Margaret Hamilton</b> Chair, <i>National Youth Alcohol Campaign Reference Group</i> Member, <i>National Expert Advisory Committee on Alcohol</i> Member, <i>PDPC</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>Dr Rodger Brough</b> Rural perspective	<b>4</b>
<b>Mr David Crosbie</b> Member, <i>National Expert Advisory Committee on Alcohol</i> Board Director, <i>AERF</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>Mr Bruce Clarke</b> Parent perspective	<b>5</b>
<b>Mr Brian Kearney</b> <i>Australian Hotels Association</i> Victorian Branch <i>Network</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>Mr Robert Johnson</b> Indigenous perspective	<b>4</b>
<b>Facilitated panel discussion</b> Morning session	<b>4</b>	<b>Mr Geoff Munro</b> Director <i>Community Alcohol Action</i>	<b>4</b>
		<b>Facilitated panel discussion</b> Afternoon session	<b>4</b>

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**Forum Report**

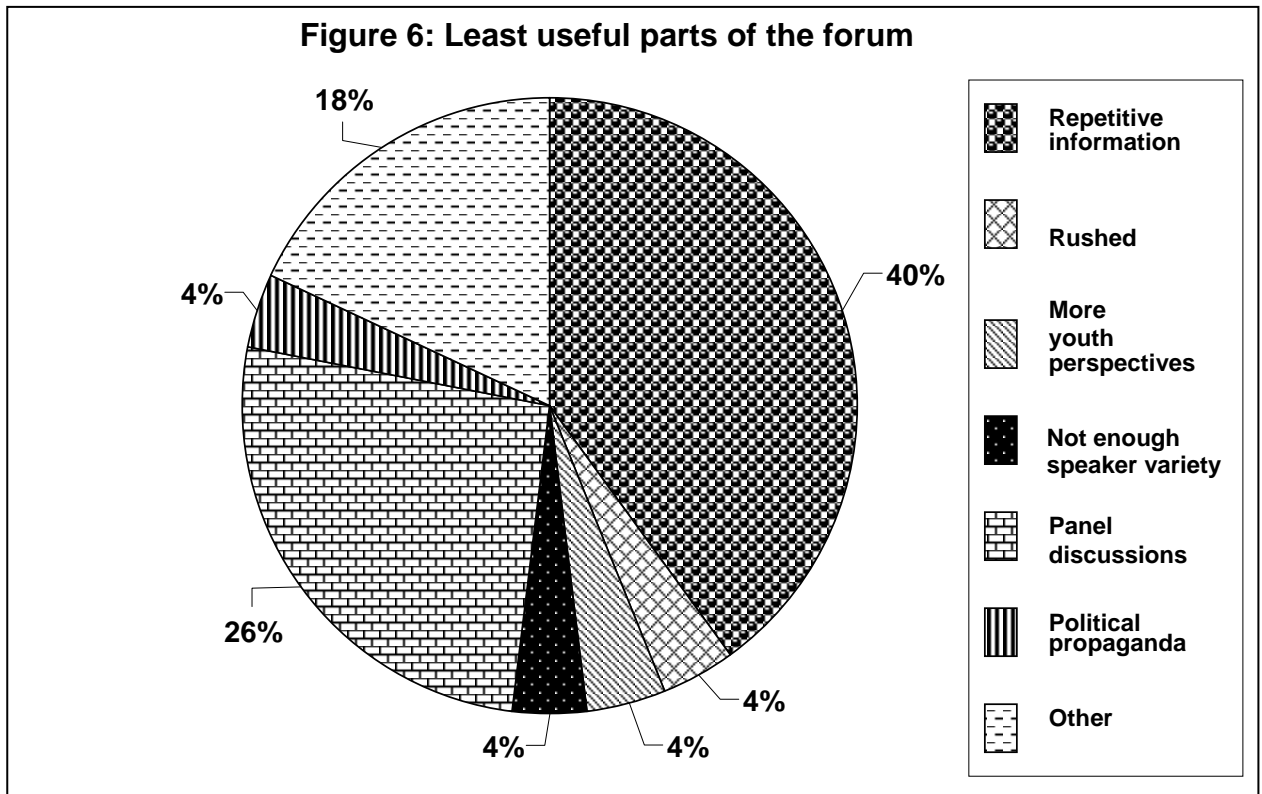
As is evident, overall the speakers presentations were rated very well, with numerous congratulatory remarks noted on the evaluation forms. VAADA would like to express sincere apologies to Dr Yvonne Bonomo, who was inadvertently overlooked in the list of presenters in the evaluation form. Feedback received personally by VAADA on Dr. Bonomo's presentation was extremely positive.

The following pie chart outlines what delegates found to be the most useful parts of the forum.



As outlined in Figure 5, delegates (N=47) who commented on this question noted a variety of forum areas they found most useful including: the variety of keynote speakers (21%); the personal perspectives (youth, rural, parent, Indigenous and community) (19%); the total forum (17%); the facilitated panel discussions (17%), research findings (14%) other areas (10%) and the acknowledgment of scape-goating youth binge drinking (2%).

The following figure, Figure 6, outlines the areas that some delegates (N=27) did not find useful. As is evident, delegate noted: repetitive information (40%); rushed (4%); not enough youth perspectives (4%); not enough speaker variety (4%); facilitated panel discussions (26%); political propaganda (4%) and; other (18%). Given the wide scope of delegate backgrounds it is understandable that the forum was not able to meet the needs of everyone involved. VAADA and YACVic have taken note of delegate's comments for future reference.



The following figure, Figure 7, outlines how delegates rated the forum venue, food, location and facilities. In terms of the venue, the Supper Room at the Melbourne Town Hall, nearly three quarters of delegates rated the venue as either good or excellent. Some general comments included:

***“Great speakers and well prepared forum overall”***

***“All of it was great!”***

***“Both morning and afternoon sessions were very good, morning just outweighing the afternoon”***

***“Thought provoking”***

The main concern noted was the low temperature in the venue due to technical problems during the morning with the heating units.

**Figure 7: How do you rate the forum venue, food, location and facilities?**

<b>N=48</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Facilities</b>
Excellent	25	15	38	27
Good	59	54	52	59
Average	10	25	4	8
Fair	2	0	2	2
Poor	0	2	0	0
NA	4	4	4	4
<b>Total %</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

In terms of the food served at the forum 15% rated it as excellent, 54% as good, a quarter as average and 2% as poor. Some delegates had dietary requirements that they felt had not been taken into account.

The majority of delegates were very pleased with the location of the forum, with 90% rating the location as either excellent or good.

Lastly, the facilities at the forum were also rated very highly by delegates, with over 85% rating them as either excellent or good.

**Other topics to address**

Delegates were also asked if there were any other topics they felt should have been addressed on the day. Whilst it is impractical to cover all the following topics within a one day forum, some additional topics delegates suggested included: ideas and strategies for the future; successful international and local harm minimisation strategies, current policies; further related research findings; small interactive group workshops and; more personal perspectives i.e. youth, industry, parents and community.

**Post forum implementation**

In terms of the types of responses delegated wanted VAADA and/or YACVic to implement post-forum responses included: continued lobbying of the government for increased funding for effective harm minimisation, policy change and further social research; ongoing discussion with a broad range of community sectors to formulate relevant and appropriate harm minimisation strategies; further forums in both metropolitan and rural areas to address youth binge drinking and ‘keep the issue alive’ and; further discussion with representatives from the alcohol industry to address ‘creative’ harm reduction strategies.



