

prevention post

NEWSLETTER OF THE PREMIER'S DRUG PREVENTION COUNCIL

ISSUE 3

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Message from the Chairperson



It is a great honour to have been appointed the new Chairperson of the Premier's Drug Prevention Council (PDPC). I am indebted to the previous Chairperson, Mr Peter Maher, for his excellent work in establishing the PDPC and look forward to the challenges ahead in ensuring the prevention agenda remains a key focus of activity.

2003 is shaping up to be an exciting year for the PDPC. While we continue with some of our flagship projects, including the DrugInfo Clearinghouse; the promotion of the new DirectLine 1800 888 236; the Healthy Communities Project; and Victorian Youth Alcohol and Drug Survey, we are

also undertaking a number of key projects that will help inform best practice in relation to some critical risk factors. This edition of Prevention Post provides an outline of some of this work.

In partnership with the Department of Education and Training, the Centre for Adolescent Health, the Centre for Youth Drug Studies and the Youth Research Centre, an important project looking at successful strategies to increase school retention is being implemented.

The PDPC is also providing support to BEST START to investigate how to more effectively engage vulnerable children and their parents in the early years service system. This work is critical to increase our understanding of how to help improve the outcomes for at-risk young children.

Training and employment have been highlighted as significant factors in helping young people build resilient lives. The PDPC is currently investigating avenues for working with business and industry to provide job opportunities for at-risk young people. Such endeavours are vital in our efforts to broaden support for prevention.

The importance of taking a long-term view of prevention is essential. An ongoing commitment to innovation, best practice, and monitoring and evaluation will continue to shape the work of the PDPC, together with collaboration with other prevention programs addressing common risk factors. We are receiving the results of some key initiatives over the next months, which will provide an excellent platform to provide advice to the Government on key strategic directions for drug prevention. We look forward to your continued support.

Dr Rob Moodie

Chairperson

Premier's Drug Prevention Council

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YOUNG PEOPLE'S DRUG USE PATTERNS

The PDPC commissioned three Victorian Youth Alcohol and Drugs Surveys (VYADS) in 2002, which report on the frequency, patterns and attitudes to drug use among Victorian young people aged 16-24. The three surveys were benchmarked against the National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2001, conducted by the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare (AIHW), and showed consistent findings. Key findings for the combined surveys of 2002 (n=4,500) include:

- The consumption of alcohol is commonplace among young people, with 94 per cent of the combined sample reporting consumption of alcohol in their lifetime.
- Cannabis use is also common, with 48.4 per cent of respondents for the combined sample reporting use of cannabis in their lifetime and 14.3 per cent reporting use in the last month.
- Of those young people who had used illicit drugs in the last 12 months 30% had gone to work or school and 24% had driven a motor vehicle while under the influence.
- Use of other drugs was considerably lower. Of the combined sample, only 15.6 per cent reported lifetime use of ecstasy, and 13.8 per cent lifetime use of amphetamines. The drug of least use was heroin, with 1.8 per cent reporting lifetime use.
- The most common reason for young people not trying any illicit drugs was worry about health problems (38%) followed by observing the negative experience of others (27%).

For the full VYADS 2002 Summary Report, contact the PDPC Secretariat or download a copy from the Drug Info Clearinghouse at www.druginfo.adf.org.au

Initiatives

WHAT'S THE DEAL? – THE COST OF HEROIN USE IN VICTORIA

A STUDY COMMISSIONED BY THE PDPC HAS ESTIMATED THAT HEROIN USE COSTS THE VICTORIAN COMMUNITY \$845 MILLION EACH YEAR.

The project included a literature review of direct and indirect costs associated with heroin use; the development of a framework determining heroin-related costs applicable to Victoria; and 12 case studies providing the 'human face' of heroin use.

Key findings include:

- Of all illegal drugs, heroin is responsible for the greatest cost burden in Victoria today. Heroin, more than other illegal drugs, is given as the main reason for arrests, hospitalisations, fatal car accidents, overdose and poor health. Basing the estimate of the cost of illegal drug use on heroin alone will underestimate the financial burden to some extent, but it is likely to capture the bulk of the costs.
- The total cost of \$845 million is divided into:
 - crime (\$312 million)
 - social security benefits (\$244 million)
 - lost tax revenue (\$160 million)
 - health care and social services (\$105 million)
 - prison costs (\$24 million).

Estimating the cost of heroin use in Victoria and What's the Deal? The cost of heroin use in Victoria (a summary report of the research) is now available online through the DrugInfo Clearinghouse (www.druginfo.adf.org.au).

THE EVALUATION OF DRUG PREVENTION PROGRAMS

The PDPC has developed an innovative framework to monitor and evaluate drug prevention programs in Victoria. This framework adapts a Program Logic approach to project evaluation, and includes ongoing monitoring of patterns of use, the policy context and the social environment, together with a validation process identifying links between project impacts with longer-term outcomes.

A user-friendly guide to the framework, *Guide to evaluating drug prevention projects in Victoria*, is available to assist people working in drug prevention programs to evaluate what they do and their outcomes.

For copies of the guide, please contact the PDPC Secretariat on (03) 9637 5940 or download a copy from the DrugInfo Clearinghouse at www.druginfo.adf.org.au

SUMMER EVENTS

Once again the Summer Events Campaign provided information and activities at the biggest youth events around Victoria. Now in its second year, the 2002 – 2003 Summer Events Campaign was launched by the Minister for Health, Bronwyn Pike, on 17 December 2002 at Maribyrnong Secondary College.



Minister for Health, Bronwyn Pike at the launch of the PDPC's Summer Events Campaign

The Summer Events Campaign reinforced the government's community awareness campaign by promoting messages and information about alcohol and drug use (including cannabis and ecstasy) and about how and where to seek help with drug problems through the promotion of DirectLine 1800 888 236.

The 2002–2003 campaign combined sponsorship, information and activities at a range of events attended by more than 80,000 young people, including the Falls Festival in Lorne, the Melbourne Big Day Out and orientation weeks at La Trobe University (Bendigo and Shepparton), RMIT (Melbourne), Monash University (Churchill), and Deakin University (Warrnambool). Activities included chill out areas, band nights, information days, information in student diaries and distribution of merchandise promoting DirectLine, including water bottles, key rings, frisbees and haccy sacks.

The campaign is being independently evaluated.

Preliminary findings show that the campaign has achieved:

- a high level of recognition of the campaign messages
- a high level of awareness of the DirectLine phone number
- increased awareness of the issues associated with ecstasy and cannabis.

PREVENTION: WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? – STAKEHOLDER SEMINAR

CLOSE TO 100 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE THIRD PDPC SEMINAR, 'PREVENTION: WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?', WHICH WAS HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2002 AT THE VICTORIAN ARTS CENTRE.

Rod Quantock hosted the seminar, which included presentations from:

- Belinda Jakiel, *Program Manager, Athlete Development Australia*
- His Honour Judge Eugene Cullity, *Chair, Youth Parole and Youth Residential Boards*
- Councillor Anthony Nicholson, *City of Melbourne*
- Paul Sheahan, *Head Master, Melbourne Grammar School*

Each of the panellists highlighted what prevention means to them professionally and personally. This was followed by discussion at each table, over lunch, about prevention issues and directions.

Key themes that emerged from these discussions include:

- the prevention agenda is broad and has many common risk factors with other social issues

- we must start early in addressing issues for families and children
- programs should be holistic, flexible and connected
- prevention is part of a harm reduction framework



Key Stakeholder Seminar, November 2002

- the community needs information about why people experiment with drugs or develop problematic drug use

The presentations and discussions that occurred at the seminar highlight that prevention is a whole of government and community responsibility. Many synergies exist with current programs that may not be branded as prevention but are building individual and community resilience.

The PDPC will work across government to strengthen and develop prevention programs across all life stages for both individuals and communities. A detailed overview of the day's proceedings is available online through www.druginfo.adf.org.au

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES PROJECT

The PDPC's Healthy Communities Project supports communities to build their capacity to identify drug-related issues, develop local solutions, and implement innovative prevention initiatives that draw on international experience and good practice. There are ten pilot healthy communities across Victoria.

Community involvement and ownership are cornerstones of this project. Each community has appointed a steering committee which draws together representatives from community-based organisations and groups, local government, education, police and business to identify the key issues and strengths that promote resilience within communities. The steering committees have also consulted with their communities, identified community strengths and assets and developed three-year plans of action.

Some of the projects funded by the PDPC include:

- a youth centre
- mentoring programs
- community-based training and information program
- a model of community building which brings together Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations and people
- service mapping
- community garden
- leadership development
- peer support programs
- community celebrations
- men's meeting space.

The projects will be funded by the PDPC until June 2003. In many cases, contributions of in-kind or financial support have been made by organisations within the community, which will increase sustainability beyond the PDPC's involvement.

Other communities around the State will also benefit from these projects through the development of a tool kit for undertaking community mobilisation processes, strengths and needs assessment tools, and documentation of the process and findings in each of the ten pilot communities.

An evaluation framework and process has been implemented to identify the key learnings and practice models emerging from both the individual projects and the overall process.

BREAKING CYCLES – BUILDING FUTURES

One of the key priority groups of the PDPC is children aged 0–4 years and their parents. This group was identified as there is a compelling body of research that supports the importance of pre-natal and early childhood years on whole of life development. We know that young children exposed to multiple risk factors early in life are far more likely to experience poorer health, education, employment and social wellbeing, including drug use and related issues.

BEST START is a program aimed at improving the life chances of all young children by improving the access to and responsiveness of universal early years services, such as maternal and child health. The project will trial community-driven approaches to more inclusive, innovative universal early years service provision within a number of demonstration sites across Victoria.

The PDPC is providing enhancement funding to BEST START to undertake the Breaking Cycles - Building Futures project. This project aims to improve the outcomes for the most vulnerable and at risk young children and their parents, with a focus on those families that do not use or prematurely stop using local universal services.

Following a tender process, the Brotherhood of St Laurence will undertake the Breaking Cycles – Building Futures project. This will include:

- a national and international literature review on the barriers to involvement of the most vulnerable parents/families in universal services
- extensive consultation with specialist and mainstream services
- focus groups with specific target groups
- the development of guiding principles and proposed options for system and service development to more effectively engage this target group in universal early year services.

Feedback will be sought on the guiding principles and the proposed options from local agencies and vulnerable families in each BEST START demonstration site. Subject to funding, strategies will then be piloted in each site to support the greater involvement of vulnerable families in the universal early year's service system.

For more information about this project please visit www.beststart.vic.gov.au

BUSINESS UPDATE

The PDPC is actively working to engage and involve business in providing training and employment for young people.



Sesuna Yemane, Kristy Warne, and Hawa Hashi Farah undertaking Pharmacy Assistant training at the Pharmacy Guild.

Recent success was achieved in partnership with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, who provided three places in the February 'Introductory Pharmacy Assistants' course. Three young women, identified by the Job Placement, Employment and Training agency at the Footscray Melbourne City Mission, recently completed the course. The Pharmacy Guild links recent graduates of the course with employment opportunities in member pharmacies and one of the young women has already secured a job in her local area upon completion of the course.

SCHOOL RETENTION

The cost to our community of not keeping young people connected to school is great. Young people leaving school early are at much greater risk of drug-related harm, crime, violence and becoming marginalised from obtaining a secure place in further learning or employment.

To address these issues, the PDPC is funding the School Retention Initiative. This initiative is a multi-faceted program undertaken in partnership with Department of Education and Training, Centre for Adolescent Health, Youth Research Centre and the Centre for Youth Drug Studies to:

- examine key transition points for young people and families, and issues of access to youth and support services
- generate the evidence about 'what works' to assist school communities to be successful in practice
- strengthen capacity in school communities to respond to local needs and implement effective programs
- create more 'joined up' approaches, in particular building strategies that link the health and education sectors as well as local government, schools, families and community

Best practice guidelines will be developed as part of the project. The School Retention Initiative commences in February 2003 and will run for the school year.

JANUARY IS RECORD MONTH FOR DIRECTLINE

ERIC TYSSSEN, MANAGER OF DIRECTLINE

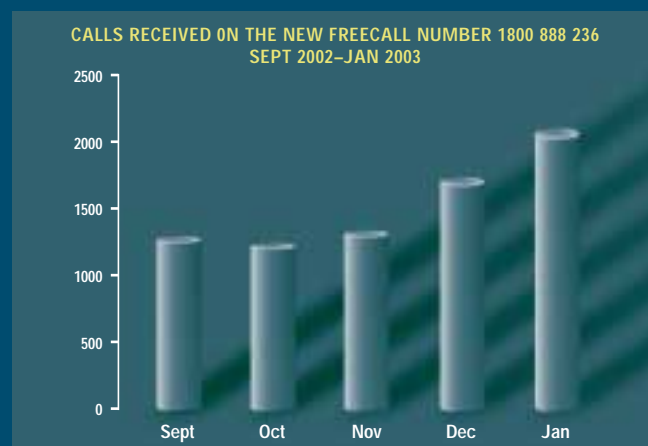
In the four months since the launch of its new Freecall number by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre and the PDPC, calls to the DirectLine service have increased by more than 12 per cent.

DirectLine is the 24-hour, seven-day telephone counselling and referral line for anyone in Victoria seeking assistance with an alcohol or drug related concern. The service is operated by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre, with professional counsellors providing confidential support and assistance to more than 55,000 callers per year.

The rapid uptake of the new number is attributed to a combination of factors, in particular increased awareness of the service in the general community through extensive marketing and promotional activities. In partnership with the PDPC and the business community, DirectLine advertising in both electronic and print media have resulted in a significant increase in the number of people seeking help. This includes a diverse range of calls from people using drugs as well as people responding to a drug use problem of a family member or relative.

Calls to DirectLine spiked around the key promotional activities of the PDPC Summer Events Campaign, with large quantities of the new youth-targeted DirectLine materials disseminated at the Big Day Out, Falls Festival and O-week at university campuses across Victoria.

Call rates over January have been among the highest recorded in DirectLine's 17-year history, with more than 5,600 callers contacting the service over the month. This reinforces our experience of the positive relationship between media promotion and help-seeking behaviour in the telephone counselling and referral environment.



SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS ARTS

Current evidence shows that young Kooris, particularly in rural Victoria, have limited access to learning, participation and opportunities for career pathways in Indigenous and mainstream arts.

In response to this, the PDPC has funded a statewide Indigenous arts worker to develop the Koori Arts Project as part of VicHealth's Koori Leadership Program. The Koori Arts Project is based on the need identified by the Leadership Project workers for a range of skill development and career opportunities in the arts to be made available to young Kooris. This will contribute to an integrated approach to vocational and career development.

The Arts Project will develop and implement a framework to improve access for young Kooris to information, education, participation, industry-based opportunities and career pathways in performance, visual, media and fine arts in both Koori and mainstream arts organisations.

Further information on the Koori Leadership Program can be accessed at www.vichealth.vic.gov.au or at <http://eelibrary.arts.monash.edu.au/mhp/default.htm>

KOORI LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The PDPC has funded a further Koori Leadership Program to be undertaken by a partnership of three Aboriginal community cooperatives in Gippsland. This builds on the five community leadership projects funded in 2001 by VicHealth to support programs that address emotional and spiritual wellbeing in Koori communities. These projects are located at:

- Winda Mara Aboriginal Cooperative, Heywood
- Victorian Aboriginal Youth Sport and Recreation, Northcote
- Rumbalara Football Netball Club, Shepparton
- Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative, Ballarat
- Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd, Fitzroy

Planning and interventions incorporate a strong focus on regional strategies involving ATSIC, the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council, the Department of Human Services Koori Services Improvement Strategy and the Aboriginal Cooperatives. The regional approach involves strong community collaboration, and a range of prevention and early intervention programs in sport, education and after school activities.

For more information on the Koori Leadership Program visit www.vichealth.vic.gov.au or at <http://eelibrary.arts.monash.edu.au/mhp/default.htm>

SPONSORSHIP OF VAYSAR SPORTING CARNIVALS

The Victorian Aboriginal Youth Sport and Recreational Co-operative Limited (VAYSAR) Senior Statewide Football and Netball Carnival held in Horsham in October 2002, provided a great opportunity to promote a healthy lifestyle to the 3000 Indigenous young people and families who attended.

Sponsored by the PDPC, the carnival included the competition as well as a drug prevention forum, which was held in Ballarat and attended by more than 60 coaches and players prior to the carnival. At the forum, coaches, managers and players discussed drug prevention issues and practices. An outcome of the forum was the development of a 'Code of Conduct' for teams involved in the carnival. Team representatives discussed the code of conduct with their communities and sporting clubs before participating in the carnival.

The forum and the carnival were well received and enjoyed by the sporting participants and their families.

VAYSAR is currently organising a series of 3-on-3 basketball carnivals to be held around Victoria, commencing in Melbourne late April. The Code of Conduct will also underpin these carnivals.



VAYSAR Sporting Carnival, October 2002

Resources

Australian websites

The Drug Info Clearinghouse www.druginfo.adf.au

The Alcohol and Other Drugs Council of Australia (ADCA) www.adca.org.au

Australian Drug Foundation www.adf.org.au

Australian Drug Information Network (ADIN) www.adin.com.au

Australian National Council on Drugs www.ancd.org.au

Centre for Adolescent Health www.copas.net.au/cah

Centre for Youth Drug Studies www.adf.org.au/cyds/index.html

VicHealth www.vichealth.vic.gov.au

Victorian Drug Awareness and Communication Campaign www.drugs.vic.gov.au

Premier's Drug Prevention Council www.dhs.vic.gov.au/phd/pdpc

International websites

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse www.ccsa.ca

Centre for Addition and Mental Health www.camh.net

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention www.samhsa.gov/centers/csap

DrugScope www.drugscope.org.uk

Lindesmith Center Drug Policy Foundation www.lindesmith.org

Prevlink www.prevlink.org

PDPC Members

Dr Rob Moodie - Chairperson

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, VICHEALTH

Cheryl Baulch

PRINCIPAL, BOX FOREST SECONDARY COLLEGE,
GLENROY

Professor Glenn Bowes

STEVENSON PROFESSOR, THE ROYAL CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL, DEPARTMENT OF PEDIATRICS

Paul Briggs

PRESIDENT, RUMBALARA FOOTBALL AND NETBALL
CLUB, CONSULTANT ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Professor Neil Comrie AO, APM

VISITING PROFESSOR, FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND
LAW, VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

Professor Margaret Hamilton

DIRECTOR, TURNING POINT ALCOHOL AND DRUG
CENTRE

Bernadette Murphy

EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT, YOUTH
PARTICIPATION

Phong Nguyen

PRESIDENT, VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN
AUSTRALIA, VICTORIAN CHAPTER
DIRECTOR, SPRINGVALE INDO-CHINESE MUTUAL
ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATION

Liberty Sanger

SOLICITOR, MAURICE BLACKBURN CASHMAN
PRESIDENT, YWCA, VICTORIA

Peter Wearne

MANAGER, RESIDENTIAL UNIT AND SPECIAL
PROJECTS, YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICE

Marg Welsh

COORDINATOR, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND HEALTH PROMOTION, DELATITE
COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE

P D P C S E C R E T A R I A T

Julie L Rolfe - Manager

Kate Wright - Team Leader

Andrew Dare - Project Officer

Catherine Doherty - Project Officer

Craig Rogers - Project Officer

Melanie Selvaratnam - Office Manager

The Secretariat can be contacted on (03) 9637 5940

DrugInfo Clearinghouse Update

CHRISTINE BURROWS, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES, AUSTRALIAN DRUG FOUNDATION



druginfo.adf.org.au 1300 85 85 84

The DrugInfo Clearinghouse is well on its way to achieving its goal of being Victoria's first port of call for information about drugs and drug prevention. Since receiving funding from the PDPC in June 2002, the druginfo website has received more than 50,000 visitors and the Resource Centre has provided service to almost 6,000 information seekers. Of those accessing the Resource Centre, 56 per cent are professionals and the rest are community members including parents and drug users. More than 30,000 information resources have been disseminated, about half of which are DrugInfo Clearinghouse publications.

Four bi-monthly 'suites' of drug prevention information have been produced and disseminated free to our 1,700 members. These publications include four editions of the DrugInfo newsletter, five prevention research evaluation reports, over 40 prevention research summaries, 16 fact sheets and four reading and resource lists.

Topics covered so far are:

- What is drug prevention?
- Drug prevention strategies: an overview
- Drug education in schools
- Community mobilisation.

The DrugInfo newsletter contains a broad range of news, articles, opinions, events,

information and case examples of prevention programs as well as reviews of the latest prevention research. The newsletter, and all clearinghouse publications, is available in hard copy and can be printed off or downloaded from the druginfo website.

New features and information are constantly being added to the website. Email alerts are regularly sent out to members on topics of interest in the format of their choice (plain text or HTML). So far, eight email alerts have been sent to a total of 5,500 recipients. Three of these alerts contained 'bundled'

information on the following topics:

- Binge drinking
- Latest statistics on drug use amongst school students
- Latest statistics on drug use amongst students from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

To ensure easy access for all Victorians, the DrugInfo Clearinghouse has established partnerships with the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV) and the Victorian Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisation (VACCHO). Access projects are about to commence to advise the DrugInfo Clearinghouse how best to meet the needs of people working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities and with Aboriginal communities. DrugInfo

Clearinghouse is very committed to its goals of being accessible, providing quality services and information, and being proactive.

The Advisory Partners Group continues to actively support and advise on service development issues and provides valuable feedback on products and services.

The response of service users to the DrugInfo Clearinghouse has been overwhelmingly positive. We regularly receive phone calls, letters and emails of thanks and support from workers – not just in Victoria, but from all over Australia and from overseas. The DrugInfo Clearinghouse is a world class service, unique and highly valued. It is a major enhancement to the drug prevention landscape, supporting and resourcing research and practice in drug prevention. As its membership continues to grow, so does its reputation and recognition as the 'go to' for drug prevention information.

The Australian Drug Foundation remains committed to ensuring that the Clearinghouse is relevant, useful and sustainable.



Premier's Drug Prevention Council