



# NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse 2003

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Parliament House  
Macquarie St,  
Sydney

## Interim Report

December 2003

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# NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse: Interim Report

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## Foreword

Alcohol is part of our lives.

It has long been associated with relaxation and enjoyment. Our celebrations and social activities, cultural and religious observances often involve its use.

The responsible use of alcohol can have social and health benefits.

The liquor and hospitality industry is a major generator of economic activity and provides employment for many Australians.

Unfortunately, there are tragic consequences when alcohol is abused.

Violence in the home, loss of income, preventable death and disease, crime and disorder, neighbourhood disturbance, and family breakdown can be the result of abusive drinking.

Alcohol abuse also affects different communities in different ways. Regional and rural areas have particular issues, as do certain population groups such as young people and Indigenous communities.

The Government convened the NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse at Parliament House in Sydney from 26 - 29 August 2003 to reflect on these problems and find a way forward.

The Summit brought together alcohol experts, families, liquor industry representatives, representatives of interest groups, community leaders and Members of Parliament. It examined existing laws and policies involving alcohol, and considered new information and research.

There was unprecedented interest from the community. Over 300 public submissions were received from a wide range of individuals and organisations for consideration by Summit delegates and Government.

The Summit recognised that alcohol use must be considered in its historical, cultural and social context, and that legislation and regulation alone will not stop dangerous and abusive drinking behaviour.

The Summit agreed on a final Communiqué containing 318 recommendations. These recommendations are being carefully considered by the Government.

This *NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse: Interim Report* provides a report on some of the Government's activity since the Summit to reduce alcohol abuse in NSW.

It is, however, only the first step.

The Government aims to provide a comprehensive response to the Communiqué recommendations at the end of March 2004. This will identify ongoing action to tackle the difficult problems associated with alcohol abuse.



The Hon John Della Bosca MLC  
Special Minister of State



# Alcohol Abuse in New South Wales – An Overview

According to the *2001 National Drug Strategy Household Survey*, nine out of ten Australians over 14 years of age had tried alcohol at some time in their lives and four in five had consumed alcohol in the 12 months preceding the survey.

The social cost of alcohol in Australia in 1998/99 was estimated at \$7.6 billion. This includes costs associated with health and medical services, road accidents, lost productivity in the workplace and alcohol-related crime.

Preliminary estimates indicate that the NSW Government spends almost \$1 billion annually on drug and alcohol services and dealing with the associated problems in the community.

Recent studies indicate that around 3,300 deaths per annum in Australia are attributed to alcohol use, which is second only to tobacco as a preventable cause of death and hospitalisation.

More than 72,000 hospital admissions per year in Australia are estimated to be caused by high-risk drinking.

The main alcohol-related causes of death and hospitalisation are cirrhosis of the liver, cancers, stroke, falls and motor vehicle accidents.

## Facts on Alcohol Abuse

- One third of all driver and pedestrian deaths are alcohol-related.
- 12% of suicides, 16% of child abuse cases, 44% of fire injuries and 34% of falls and drownings are associated with alcohol consumption.
- Alcohol and drugs contribute to between 3-11% of workplace injuries and fatalities. Alcohol is also implicated in impaired work performance, productivity and absenteeism.
- Between 41-70% of violent crimes are committed under the influence of alcohol; in New South Wales alcohol has been estimated to be a factor in 42% of homicide incidents (although the exact role of alcohol in homicide is under debate).
- Prisoners and offenders, prior to incarceration, show higher levels of alcohol consumption than the general population, with between 32-50% of offenders classified as alcohol dependent or heavy users.
- About 5-10% of the population drinks amounts that are considered harmful or hazardous.
- Women are more vulnerable to both the acute and chronic effects of alcohol misuse.
- Research indicates that almost 80% of domestic violence and street incidents (assaults, offensive behaviour or conduct, malicious damage and noise complaints) are alcohol-related.

## A Partnership with Industry

*Many of us have passionate concerns about the problems of alcohol, as did the followers of the temperance movement and their opponents in decades past. We have to achieve unity; we cannot afford a society that repeats the mistakes of the brawls between publicans and temperance leaders and libertarians of the past. We need a more united and enlightened position to rise to those challenges as a group.*

Opening address to the NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse by the Hon John Della Bosca MLC, Special Minister of State, Minister for Commerce, Minister for Industrial Relations, Assistant Treasurer, and Minister for the Central Coast.

### **Government Commitment**

The Government is committed to working with the alcohol industry to reduce alcohol abuse and the damage it causes. A partnership approach will be adopted so industry and Government can work together to continue to manage the supply of alcohol and encourage its responsible use.

### **More Industry Training**

New regulations came into effect on 5 December 2003 increasing the training standards for the State's 12,000 licensed venues.

The new regulations ensure that all staff directly involved with the supply of alcohol complete responsible service of alcohol (RSA) training.

All licensees and permanent staff are required to undergo training by the end of 2003, while all casual staff will have until the end of June 2004 to complete the course.

The regulations apply to staff in pubs, clubs, restaurants and other retail liquor outlets. They also apply to volunteer and promotional staff involved in serving alcohol.

Courses approved by the Liquor Administration Board can be undertaken through TAFE, industry associations and private colleges.

The Government has also decided to apply mandatory responsible service of alcohol training to security officers working in licensed venues. New laws are expected to be introduced in the first half of 2004, following consultation with liquor and security industry partners.

### **Community Liquor Accords**

The Government is strengthening the ability of local liquor accords to reduce alcohol abuse in and around licensed venues.

The Government hosted the inaugural *Liquor Accord Coordinators Conference* in Parramatta on 18 November 2003. This was the first time that liquor accord participants came together to share information and discuss accord strategies that have had success in addressing local alcohol-related problems.

As a result of this conference, further seminars will be held during 2004 – particularly in remote or disadvantaged areas. The Government will coordinate the strategic direction of the 90 accords and assist the implementation and development of future accords.

### **Review into Marketing of Designer Drinks**

On 1 December 2003, the Government announced a review of alcohol products and promotions that may be deliberately targeted at minors.

The review will consider how existing controls can be improved to ensure products and promotions do not encourage underage drinking or excessive consumption by legal age drinkers.

The review will also consider what research is required to determine which types of beverages and marketing approaches are potentially detrimental to young people.

### **Standardise Identification Cards**

Licensees need people to provide proof of age identification in order to restrict underage drinking.

The Government will introduce a new voluntary identification card to benefit the thousands of people who do not drive or cannot obtain other types of Government-issued identification.

The cards will be issued by the Roads and Traffic Authority and it is expected they will be available during 2004.

The new ID card will go a long way towards standardising the forms of identification which are required by licensees.

The ID card will have the same security features as a driver's licence, including holograms, watermarks and magnetic strips. If necessary, supporting legislation will be developed, including penalties for fraud, theft and other forms of misuse.

# Improved Road Safety: Targeting Drink Driving

## Government Commitment

Before the introduction of Random Breath Testing (RBT), drink driving was considered the norm by many people. Since the introduction of RBT in 1985 this attitude has largely been reversed - a cultural change has been effected. But more needs to be done. The Government is committed to reducing the number of road injuries and fatalities associated with drink driving and will continue to examine evidence-based approaches to road and water safety in relation to alcohol, and where appropriate, introduce new measures to improve safety.

## Zero Blood Alcohol Limit for Novice Drivers

Anyone who drinks and drives is at greater risk of having an accident. Young and novice drivers are especially vulnerable because their skills are still developing and they are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviour.

The blood alcohol limit for novice drivers is currently 0.02. This could allow some drivers to consume small amounts of alcohol before driving, which could affect their driving ability.

The Summit recommended that a zero blood alcohol limit for L and P plate drivers be considered. This recommendation was supported by the NRMA.

Following the Summit, the Government announced its support for a zero blood alcohol limit.

The new limit is being introduced through the *Road Transport (Safety and Traffic Management) Amendment (Alcohol) Bill 2003*. This Bill was introduced into the Parliament on 3 December 2003, and will be considered in early 2004.

Under the new laws, L and P plate drivers will not be able to drive if they have consumed any alcoholic drinks - providing a clear message that any consumption of alcohol by novice drivers before driving will not be tolerated.

The Government will run a public information campaign educating young drivers about the new law. All high school and novice driver resource materials will be revised and reprinted to reflect the new law.

## Drink Driving Christmas Campaign

The NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse heard that while drink driving in metropolitan areas has decreased over the last five years, it has actually increased over the same period in country areas.

The Government implements drink driving public education every year in March and November. This year the Government will run an additional drink driving education campaign in country areas of New South Wales over the Christmas/New Year holiday period.

The campaign uses new drink driving material, including a 30-second television commercial featuring a female police officer relating the trauma of attending drink driving accidents. The advertisement emphasises the effects of these tragedies on local communities and highlights the fact that drink driving is a crime.

This advertising will support both the State-wide police enforcement operation 'Safe Arrival' and localised police regional operations such as 'SouthRoads', 'WestRoads' and 'NorthRoads'.

## Country Road Safety Summit

A *Country Road Safety Summit* will be held in May 2004 to address the road toll in country New South Wales. The focus of the Summit will be on practical ways to reduce trauma on country roads.

## **Sober Driver Program**

Almost two-thirds of repeat traffic offenders are drink drivers. In November 2003, the Special Minister of State, John Della Bosca MLC, announced the State-wide expansion of the *Sober Driver Program*.

The *Sober Driver Program* is a court based program for repeat drink driving offenders. It provides a further sentencing option in addition to court imposed fines and sentences.

As part of their sentence, offenders are required to attend a compulsory nine week education course on the consequences of drink driving, the effects of alcohol on driving, managing drinking situations, alternatives to drinking and driving, relapse prevention and stress management.

## **Driving While Consuming Alcohol - Legislation**

The *Road Transport (Driver Licensing) Amendment (Drinking While Driving) Regulation 2003* was passed in September 2003 banning the practice of drinking alcohol while in control of a motor vehicle or riding a motor bike in New South Wales.

Under the new offence of driving whilst consuming alcohol, drivers caught are subject to a \$237 fine and lose three demerit points.

## **Alcohol Interlock Program**

As of 8 September 2003, NSW magistrates have been able to include a specialised in-car breathalyser – known as an interlock device – as a sentencing option for drink drivers.

The *Alcohol Interlock Program* will require a convicted drink driver to breathe into a breathalyser attached to their car's ignition. If they fail the breath test, their ignition will lock and their car will be immobilised.

## **Drink Driving Sentences**

During the NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse the sentencing patterns for drink driving were tabled.

An application for a guideline judgment for High Range Prescribed Concentration of Alcohol (PCA) offences was filed with the Supreme Court. The Court has tentatively set a hearing date for 5 May 2004.

The Government will await the Court's determination.

The Government will closely monitor the sentencing patterns of PCA offenders, specifically the extent that courts order newly developed rehabilitation programs such as the *Alcohol Interlock* and *Sober Driver Programs*.

The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) released a Crime and Justice Bulletin in December 2003 titled *Sentencing High Range PCA Drink Drivers in NSW* and will continue to monitor and research sentencing for drink driving offences.

# Healthy People, Families and Communities

## Government Commitment

The Government is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of people in New South Wales. We will work to improve alcohol treatment services and provide greater access to a range of treatment options, in a range of communities and settings.

## Controlled Drinking by Correspondence Program

In December 2003, the Government announced details of the ground breaking *Controlled Drinking by Correspondence Program*, which has been trialled by Western Sydney Area Health Service.

In three of these trials, participants have reduced their drinking by an average of 50 per cent.

The *Controlled Drinking by Correspondence Program* is designed for people not severely dependent on alcohol but who may be classified as "problem drinkers". Problem drinkers are unlikely to attend a treatment clinic but could benefit from professional assistance.

The Program offers a free, confidential service that assists people to reduce their drinking through fortnightly mail-outs containing tips and ideas about controlling alcohol use.

## Aboriginal Families and Carers Training

The Government, in partnership with Aboriginal communities, is developing an education program for families and carers of people with a drug and/or alcohol problem in Aboriginal communities in New South Wales.

The program will be delivered in appropriate cultural environments and aims to equip Aboriginal families and carers with information about drug and alcohol issues, treatment options and self care skills.

NSW Health is developing resources with funding from the Commonwealth Government.

## Support for Vulnerable Families

The Government has established the *Vulnerable Families Project* to support first-time parents of children aged 0-5 years who are at risk, including through parental alcohol abuse.

The *Vulnerable Families Project* will identify children and families at high risk of entering the child protection system and provide families with intensive, tailored services structured around their specific needs.

The project is commencing in 2003/04 in Bankstown, Blacktown, Maitland and Tweed Heads with progressive roll out across the State over the next four years.

Planning is already under way to identify sites for implementation in 2004/05.

## Early Intervention Project

The *Early Intervention Project* is intended to better support children and young people who have been reported to the Department of Community Services and who have less serious problems.

The goal is to prevent their further contact with the statutory child protection system. This will be achieved by:

- providing early intervention caseworkers to support these families; and
- assessing their needs and providing a range of support services to help the family function better.

The Project is expected to commence in March 2004. Four pilot sites have been identified - Bankstown, Blacktown, Maitland and Tweed Heads. It is expected that a number of other Community Service Centres will be added in the first year.

### **Alcohol Website**

The NSW Government currently hosts the DrugInfo website, [www.druginfo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.druginfo.nsw.gov.au). Statistics indicate that this is an important information source for issues relating to illicit drugs in New South Wales. In the last 12 months, 168,682 visits were made to the site and more than 3.4 million files were viewed.

The Government will establish a new website that focuses solely on alcohol issues. Cross referencing links will be placed on the home pages of both websites.

### **Crisis Housing Accommodation**

The Government will expand access to, and supply of, affordable housing for people needing housing who also have alcohol abuse problems.

In 2003/2004, approximately 83 dwellings will become available as crisis accommodation or supported housing. The proportion of dwellings targeted to assist clients with alcohol abuse problems will depend on the range of applications received from support providers, such as Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) services.

In addition, new proposals to assist people with alcohol problems will also be encouraged using housing funds for leasing from the private market or from existing stock.

### **Housing for People with Dual Diagnosis Issues**

People with multiple needs are acutely vulnerable to harm and have a heightened risk of prolonged homelessness.

The Government will trial new models of housing and support to better meet the needs of people with multiple and complex problems that include alcohol abuse.

The Government is developing three supported housing projects to be trialled in 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 for people with co-existing mental health and substance use disorders, who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

### **Homeless People with Alcohol Abuse Problems – Inner City Sydney**

The Government will increase assistance to homeless people in the inner city of Sydney through the expansion of the Homelessness Action Team Support and Outreach Service.

Over the coming 12 months the Service will implement outreach programs to respond specifically to Aboriginal people and people with a co-existing mental health and substance abuse disorder living on the streets.

The Government is establishing a new *Bennelong Housing Company* to assist low-income people with housing and support needs through partnerships with existing support providers.

Company will commence operations in 2004/05 with around 200 new and existing properties. The Company will provide a broad range of housing and support options for multiple target groups, including transitional and longer term accommodation, floating care, furnished and unfurnished units, and in-house care-takers.

The initiative will assist people with alcohol abuse problems.

### **Homeless People at Train Stations**

StateRail is developing a policy, in partnership with community service groups such as *Missionbeat*, to encourage homeless people to move to safer places rather than congregating at railway stations.

## **Keys to Recovery: Moving on from Drug and Alcohol Issues**

On 13 November 2003, the Government released the video *Keys to Recovery: Moving on from Drug and Alcohol Issues*.

The video and accompanying booklet provide practical information to people struggling with a drug problem, as well as family members supporting a loved one going through drug treatment. The package is the result of a partnership approach between the Liverpool Community Drug Action Team and Drug-Arm NSW.

# Alcohol and Law Enforcement

## Government Commitment

The Government is committed to effective law enforcement measures and working with the community to reduce alcohol-related crime, violence and anti-social behaviour.

## Expanding the Linking Project

The *Linking Project* is an initiative to reduce alcohol-related crime by targeting licensed venues that have irresponsible alcohol service practices.

It was established in the Hunter area as a joint initiative between the Hunter Centre for Health Advancement, NSW Health and NSW Police.

The Project enables Police to “link” alcohol-related crime to places of alcohol consumption by mapping where offenders, victims or drivers last consumed alcohol.

Police may then visit problematic licensed venues to review alcohol service practices and make recommendations for improvement. Follow-up letters are sent to licensees as a reminder of their responsibilities.

The *Linking Project* will be rolled out across New South Wales with funding provided by the NSW Government and the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation.

## Improved Intelligence and Information for Enforcement

The Department of Gaming and Racing and NSW Police are working together to better identify recidivist licensed venues that have a history of breaching the liquor laws.

While the means of enabling this intelligence to be centralised are being examined, the Department of Gaming and Racing and NSW Police are sharing information and intelligence gathered through liquor accords and breaches identified by law enforcement agencies.

This information has been used to develop a region-based audit program to measure compliance by licensed venues with the requirements of the liquor laws.

## Strengthening the liquor laws – definitions and penalties

The Government has established a senior level interagency working group of law enforcement agencies to review the liquor laws. The group will make recommendations to the Government to strengthen the legislation to enable more effective enforcement.

In particular, the working group will review the need for a statutory definition of “intoxication” and whether guidelines for industry workers, regulators and Police may be a more effective aid in deciding whether a person may be intoxicated.

The working group will also review the penalties for licensees, staff and patrons who sell or supply alcohol to minors and intoxicated persons and how intoxicated persons causing public disturbances outside licensed premises are dealt with.

The working group will report to the Government in early 2004.

## Licensing and Alcohol Crime Coordination Unit

NSW Police is establishing a new Police Unit to coordinate the NSW Police response to licensing and alcohol-related crime.

This will provide operational police with ready access to intelligence and other information and facilitate a consistent NSW Police response to alcohol-related incidents.

The new Unit will also be a central point of contact for external agencies and liquor stakeholders that need to work with police as part of their daily business.

### **Training and Education of all Police in Licensing and Alcohol-Related Crime**

NSW Police is currently reviewing police education and training in relation to licensing and alcohol-related crime, including:

- *Recruit education* to make sure that Police have sufficient knowledge on alcohol-related crime from the day they become a probationary constable.
- *Mandatory training* for all Police at each Local Area Command.
- *Specialist training* for Licensing Officers will be reviewed and where necessary modified.

The review also includes an examination of competency standards for security industry employees engaged in the provision of security and crowd control in or around licensed venues, as recommended by the Summit.

# Alcohol and Justice

## Government Commitment

The Government is committed to legislative and justice initiatives that reduce alcohol-related crime, violence and anti-social behaviour. Options for sentencing offenders will continue to be considered by the Government and implemented as appropriate.

## Inquiry into the Inebriates Act

On 23 September 2003, the Government requested the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues to conduct an inquiry into the *Inebriates Act 1912*.

The Inquiry is considering:

- whether the compulsory treatment of people (not offenders) with severe dependence should be provided, and if so under what conditions; and
- whether legislation is required to provide for compulsory assessment or treatment of persistent alcohol-related offenders.

The Inquiry has commenced. Public submissions have been invited and the first hearing took place on 26 November 2003.

The Inquiry will report in mid-2004 and the Government will consider and respond to all recommendations.

## MERIT for Alcohol-Related Cases in Western New South Wales

The Magistrate's Early Referral into Treatment program (MERIT) has been one of the NSW Government's most successful diversion programs aimed at breaking the drug-crime cycle by making drug treatment a condition of bail for certain offenders.

The NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse recommended that MERIT be extended as a trial to target alcohol offenders in one rural area.

The Government has developed proposals to trial the extension of the MERIT model to offenders with alcohol problems in two locations, in the west and mid-west of New South Wales, in 2004.

These proposals have been submitted for approval to the Commonwealth Government which provides funding for the MERIT program under the National Illicit Drug Diversion Initiative.

## Better Management of Offenders with Alcohol Problems

A review has commenced in the corrections system to better target adult offenders at serious risk of re-offending. A new assessment process is being trialled to improve identification of problems, including alcohol problems, which may have contributed to the offenders' criminal behaviours. This will enable better access to treatment and reduce the risk of re-offending.

In the juvenile corrections system, three new programs are being implemented called ACE, Targets and R&R2, to directly target the criminal behaviour of young offenders and reduce the risk factors which contributed to their crimes, including alcohol use.

A new program that targets alcohol use has been established for adult offenders with intellectual disabilities. This program has been specially designed to communicate key learning points in visual and concrete ways that may be more readily understood by these offenders.

A specialist Aboriginal Alcohol and Violence program for adult offenders has also been developed in association with Aboriginal stakeholders.

## **A Skilled and Professional Workforce**

### **Government Commitment**

The Government is committed to building the skills and capability of the workers who prevent and manage alcohol abuse problems in New South Wales.

### **NSW Drug and Alcohol Workforce Development Council**

The Government is establishing a Drug and Alcohol Workforce Development Council to improve the skills and capability of specialist and frontline workers.

The Council is to provide leadership for the Government and non-Government sectors, and monitor and support the implementation of workforce development initiatives, including those arising from the NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse.

The Council is bringing together experts in the area of workforce development, and alcohol and other drug issues. Membership is currently being finalised.

The first meeting of the Council is scheduled for February 2004.

### **'Just in Time' Training on Alcohol Abuse for Frontline Workers**

The NSW Government will negotiate with the Commonwealth Government to have the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) fund the development and maintenance of an on-line web portal and training materials.

ANTA is the statutory authority that provides a nationally consistent focus for vocational education and training. ANTA has previously funded on-line toolboxes on drug and alcohol competencies. It is anticipated that the proposed web portal will provide internet accessible vocational and educational training specific to frontline drug and alcohol workers.

The proposed ANTA funded portal will complement existing websites and information which the NSW Government currently supports.

The website would be actively promoted to drug and alcohol workers. It would provide links to practical information relevant to their day to day educational and training needs. Furthermore, it will increase the confidence and capacity of frontline workers to respond to the complex situations that they have to manage.

### **Improving Postgraduate Training Options for Drug and Alcohol Workers**

The Department of Education and Training will meet with universities, NSW Health and the Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies to review the current provision of postgraduate training for professional and clinical staff in regional and metropolitan New South Wales.

At present NSW postgraduate training is provided at a range of levels with some courses for specific disciplines and some multi-disciplinary. The proposed review will focus on identifying the strengths in current training and ways of working more effectively to build workforce capacity.

## Local Communities, Local Solutions

### Government Commitment

The Government is committed to increased local community awareness and action regarding the damage caused by alcohol abuse, the risk factors associated with alcohol abuse and ways that abuse can be prevented. Communities will be encouraged to work with the Government to identify ways to reduce alcohol abuse and implement local solutions to local problems.

### Good Sports Accreditation Program

The Australian Drug Foundation *Good Sports Accreditation Program (GSAP)* helps sporting clubs implement and promote responsible service of alcohol (RSA) policies and practices, and develop a culture that attracts families and junior players.

The GSAP can also contribute to a reduction in binge and underage drinking, lead to a lower incidence of offences, such as drink driving, violence and assault, and reduce the risk of potential liability by upholding "duty of care" with respect to safety of players, members and supporters.

A pilot program is currently underway in southern New South Wales. This involves 15 sporting clubs from the sports of Australian football, cricket, rugby league, rugby union, surf lifesaving and touch football.

The Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation and the NSW Motor Accident Authority will fund research examining the attitudes and behaviours of NSW cricket, rugby league, rugby union and surf lifesaving club members towards alcohol use. The research will form the basis of marketing the *Good Sports Accreditation Program* in New South Wales.

The Australian Drug Foundation is preparing a national implementation plan that will assist the Government support the expansion of Good Sports in New South Wales.

### Community Drug Action Teams Addressing Alcohol

Community Drug Action Teams (CDATs) are coalitions of volunteer community representatives and local agencies originally set up to address illicit drug issues. There are 79 CDATs across New South Wales presently. These CDATs are now being encouraged to address alcohol issues in addition to illicit drugs and to get involved in the development of local liquor accords. Examples of CDAT projects include:

- The Surry Hills Community Drug Action Team has been working on safety issues in the Oxford Street entertainment area. The Team identified the need for licensees to communicate with each other, Police, South Sydney Council and community agencies. As a result, the Oxford Street licensees met for the first time in September 2003 and agreed to the establishment of a *Community Liquor Accord* for the Oxford Street/Surry Hills area.
- A *Community Alcohol and Drug Information Forum* was held in Helensburgh on 18 November 2003 to create awareness about drug and alcohol issues in the area. The forum featured a range of speakers talking about drug and alcohol use including police officers, health workers, specialist youth workers and psychologists.
- A *street theatre production* has been produced by Kyogle, Casino, Lismore, Ballina and Nimbin Community Drug Action Teams. The show features a family as they deal with various drug and alcohol issues and illustrates the pressures that can impact on families.
- Drugs and alcohol were the themes for the *Ballina 2003 Art Express Exhibition* that encouraged reflection about drug and alcohol use through the medium of art. The exhibition attracted over 130 entries from young artists across the Northern Rivers and the Far North Coast areas. *Art Express* was organised by Ballina Youth Service with the assistance of Kyogle, Casino, Lismore, Ballina and Nimbin Community Drug Action Teams.

## **Snowfields Injury Prevention Service**

The *Snowfields Injury Prevention Service* is being trialled to reduce the harms associated with drug and alcohol misuse by young people during the snow season.

A range of health promotion and injury prevention activities were carried out, including breath testing stalls and information booths in pubs and clubs across the three main sites – Jindabyne, Perisher and Thredbo.

1,436 people were breath tested in an endeavour to raise awareness of the correlation of alcohol consumption and blood alcohol concentration.

The *Snowfields Injury Prevention Service* steering committee will meet in December 2003 to discuss improvements for the 2004 Winter Season.

## **Drug Information at Your Local Library Project**

The Government will expand the range of credible alcohol information sources available to the community through the highly successful *Drug Information at Your Local Library Project (Di@YLL)*.

Di@YLL provides parents and local communities across New South Wales with access to drug and alcohol-related information through their local library.

A greater range of alcohol information will be made available through the State's 382 libraries (250 of which are in regional areas), including resources on alcohol and young people, tips for parents, alcohol and sport, safe partying and liquor accords.

## **Alcohol Free Zones**

Outdoor areas, especially around shopping centres and entertainment venues should be able to be enjoyed by the whole community, without interference from groups of intoxicated persons. The use of alcohol free zones are a method of preventing consumption of alcohol in these areas.

The Government is committed to ensuring that alcohol free zones are an effective tool in managing intoxication fuelled anti-social behaviour and that this is reinforced by laws and penalties.

The Government will review penalties relating to intoxication and liquor and will examine the effectiveness of current fines imposed in respect of alcohol free zones.

NSW Police and council rangers will enforce breaches in alcohol free zones and will record details relating to those offences in order to understand the nature and extent of alcohol use and anti-social behaviour in these zones.

## **Late Night and After Hours Transport Options**

The NSW Taxi Council has produced a guide for implementing a late night taxi voucher system at licensed premises.

The State Transit Authority (STA) makes buses available at minimal cost for "Under 18" dances and also provides bus services to assist Police in moving large crowds that "spontaneously" congregate at venues.

Programs have been developed and trialled with NSW Police, local councils and venue licensees. Such initiatives include *Linking Public Transport to Planned Venue Events* operating in the Pittwater Local Council area.

Implemented measures include:

- supervision of bus stops located in front of hotels and clubs by security guards employed by the licensee;
- licensee funded bus services between late night venues;
- the sale of bus tickets at licensed premises, thus preventing ticket related disputes between passengers and bus operators;
- bus advertising targeting alcohol consumption;
- planning to ensure sufficient bus services are provided to cater for specific events or functions; and
- possible reduced late night trading times and restricted patron numbers after a certain time.

# Aboriginal Communities and Alcohol

## Government Commitment

The Government is committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal communities to reduce alcohol abuse and determine culturally sensitive and appropriate responses for communities in need.

## No Shame, No Blame Program

The Moree Community Drug Action Team, in partnership with a number of local services, has developed the *No Shame, No Blame* campaign to help Moree families and community members respond to drug and alcohol issues.

*No Shame, No Blame* is the theme of a rap music and radio education campaign launched on 13 October 2003.

The campaign raises awareness of the devastating and long term effects drugs and alcohol can have on families and encourages people to seek help.

The campaign features a series of eight radio advertisements, five recorded rap songs and interviews with local drug and alcohol service providers.

The New England Area Health Service has provided a 1300 information line for people to get further information and assistance.

## Aboriginal Community Justice Groups Expansion

The NSW Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council has been working to establish local *Aboriginal Community Justice Groups* in New South Wales. A training package for those groups has been developed.

Aboriginal Community Justice Groups are representative groups of local Aboriginal people who come together to examine crime and offending in their communities and develop ways to solve those problems at the local level and improve community safety.

These groups form a coordination point for local Aboriginal communities wanting to be actively involved in resolving their own law and justice problems. They are often established on clan or family lines and normally include Aboriginal Elders.

As at October 2003, seven groups have been established in New South Wales at Nowra, Lismore, Grafton, Maclean, Yamba, Bowraville and Toronto. New groups will be established in up to five more communities in 2004.

The effectiveness of the groups will be evaluated by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

## Circle Sentencing Expansion

The *Circle Sentencing* program has been in operation in Nowra since February 2002 and in Dubbo since August 2003.

*Circle Sentencing* involves placing the sentencing court in a community setting where Aboriginal community members and the magistrate meet in a circle to develop a sentence that best suits the crime and the offender.

Circle Sentencing is currently being expanded to Brewarrina and Walgett and is expected to commence in January 2004.

Circle Sentencing will be further expanded later in 2004 to Aboriginal communities in Bourke, Lismore, Kempsey, Tamworth and Armidale.

The expanded Circle Sentencing program will be evaluated over the next two years by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

### **Aboriginal Community Patrols**

The Government will invest additional resources to support the *Aboriginal Community Patrols*. The Government currently supports 13 Community Patrols in rural and regional areas.

Community Patrols involve buses staffed with volunteers to patrol the streets and provide a protective presence for the community. Young people and others are transported to a safe place to avoid their involvement in unlawful and anti-social behaviour.

A significant number of users of the service are affected by alcohol.

It is anticipated that Patrols will commence in Bourke, Dubbo, Coonamble and Condobolin in 2004.

The Government has ordered a further four leased mini-buses to ensure that patrols in Dareton, Campbelltown, Newcastle and Armidale operate more consistently.

### **Information for Aboriginal Families**

The Government is working with Aboriginal communities in South West Sydney and Western Sydney on a print resource for Aboriginal families that provides specific information on drug and alcohol use.

The brochure will be bilingual (Tharawal and English) featuring artwork from an artist in the South West Sydney area. The project is in the final stages of development.

### **Aboriginal Youth Leadership Project**

An *Aboriginal Youth Leadership* project is being developed under the *Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family Strategy* to develop Aboriginal youth leadership and foster the participation of Aboriginal young people within the community.

The project will pick up on recommendations resulting from consultation with Aboriginal young people and will encourage healthy lifestyles and positive role models.

An *Aboriginal Youth Leadership Project* committee is being established to guide development of this project which will commence in February 2004.

### **Talking About Grog: Follow-Up Forum**

In 2004, the NSW Government, in association with Aboriginal communities, will hold a follow-up forum to the *Talking About Grog* meeting held prior to the Summit. This will provide Aboriginal leaders and Elders with the opportunity to come together and discuss program and service roll-out in their communities.

# Young People and Alcohol

## **Government Commitment**

Recognising that young people face specific issues in relation to alcohol abuse, the Government is committed to working with them to make sure a range of measures is in place to educate and prevent, as well as treat those in need of assistance and support.

## **Play Now Act Now Film Competition**

On 21 October 2003, the Government announced the winners of the *2003 Play Now Act Now Film Competition*.

*Play Now Act Now Film* is open to all NSW residents aged 18-25.

There were a record 52 entrants who produced short videos addressing the theme of "getting smashed: young people, alcohol and drugs."

In 2004, the Government will continue to fund *Play Now Act Now*.

There will be an associated publicity and education campaign designed to gain entries and to spread the safer drinking messages of the campaign.

The *Play Now Act Now* website will be updated with appropriate health messages, application forms and other relevant information in a format accessible to the target audience.

## **Youth Drug and Alcohol Prevention Projects 2003/2004**

In 2003/04 the NSW Government will implement a series of the local *Youth Drug and Alcohol Prevention Projects*.

The program was established so local Area Health Services can undertake projects to address alcohol abuse by young people between the ages of 12 and 24 years old.

These projects focus on consultation, involvement and participation of young people.

## **Supply Means Supply**

The *Supply Means Supply* campaign is a public education media program targeting the secondary supply of alcohol to young people under the age of 18 years.

*Supply Means Supply* includes secondary supply blitzes, high profile media publicity, television, cinema and print advertising, as well as information for bottle shops, local high schools and other outlets.

The campaign includes a senior secondary school lesson, and resource kits have been distributed to all secondary schools on the Central Coast. An educational CD-ROM teaches students about the dangers of alcohol abuse and its legal consequences.

The campaign originated on the Central Coast and was a partnership between Brisbane Waters Police Local Area Command, Central Coast Area Health Service, Gosford City Council and NBN Television.

Three more councils including Greater Taree City Council, Hastings Council and Kempsey Council are now launching the program in partnership with NSW Police and Mid North Coast Area Health Service.

## Better Futures

The *Better Futures Strategy* has been developed by the NSW Government to improve health, education and safety outcomes for vulnerable young people aged 9-18 years.

This year, six demonstration services have started. The services are preventative, especially in relation to risk-taking behaviours such as alcohol abuse, and disconnection from school, family and community. Examples of *Better Futures Demonstration Services* are:

- *Menai Youth Action Plan* which works with young people to enhance their life skills to improve their social, emotional and physical well-being;
- *Dapto/Koonawarra Youth Connect* is working to engage young people aged 11-15 years who are at risk of disconnecting from school, their families and/or their communities and taking up risk-taking behaviours. The project is providing a range of healthy alternatives, including after school and vacation activities to reduce opportunities to become involved in anti-social and alcohol-related activities;
- The *Werrington Youth Centre* is providing a comprehensive outreach service for young people living in Kingswood Park. The program provides educational and family support and recreation activities and has a focus on the transition of young people from primary to high school; and
- The *School Transition and Outreach program* targets all young people in school years 5 to 8 from public primary and high schools in Cessnock. The program includes vocational and educational activities, counselling, case planning, personal development programs, parent meetings, community events and recreational activities.

## 'Arrive alive' Road Safety Grants

Recently, the Government announced the release of the *Arrive alive* road safety grants, valued at up to \$10,000 each.

Young people and local organisations such as a local council, youth centre or TAFE, who have innovative ideas to improve road safety are encouraged to apply for the grants from the Motor Accidents Authority.

The *Arrive alive* road safety grants complement the traditional speeding and drink driving campaigns but have a specific focus on road safety issues that face young people in NSW.

*Arrive alive* has established partnerships with the National Rugby League and youth events such as the Big Day Out, and focuses on issues such as peer pressure, driver distraction and risk-taking behaviour.

## Indent Grant Program

At the beginning of December the Government announced that young people would be able to create their own drug and alcohol free entertainment with funding through the latest round of the *Indent Partnership Grants*.

Each *Indent Partnership Grant* goes to a committee of young people aged between 12 to 25 years who work with local organisations to create drug and alcohol free events.

Indent provides ongoing support, information and advice to help ensure the events' success and conducts workshops with young people in event management, publicity, promotion and understanding the music industry.

26 recipients of this year's grant program will add 75 events to the 2004 youth event calendar including:

- Battle of the Bands Action Team, Orange City Council;
- Outback Indent, Broken Hill City Council;
- Rockfest, Forbes Shire Council;
- Hype, Baulkham Hills Shire Council; and
- Mt Pritchard Youth Group, Cabramatta.

### **Youth in Sport Program**

The Government will continue to implement the *Youth in Sport (YIS)* program through the NSW Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation.

This program aims to give young people at risk of offending a chance to develop self-esteem and skills that will assist them to stay out of the criminal justice system.

The program consists of a variety of sport and recreation programs conducted in partnership with NSW Police and Community Youth Clubs (PCYCs) throughout New South Wales.

Projects that address alcohol and other drug issues through sport and recreation will be considered during the 2004/05 program.

# School Based Approaches

## Government Commitment

The NSW Government will continue to implement school-based drug education to support the prevention of alcohol-related abuse and harm. Schools can help to address known risk and protective factors, and provide an environment that fosters the resilience of children and young people.

## Reduce Risk Increase Student Knowledge (RRISK) Seminars

Over 2000 students from 24 high schools in Northern Rivers attended the Northern Rivers Area Health Service annual *Reduce Risk Increase Student Knowledge* (RRISK) Seminars from 18-21 November 2003 in Lismore and Tweed Heads.

This program targets Years 10 and 11 students and provides schools and students with the opportunity to design their own strategies to minimise harm in relation to drug and alcohol use, driving and celebrating.

A primary component of the program is to train 160 peer facilitators to run small group problem solving activities as part of a seminar program. The peer facilitators reinforce the messages of the RRISK program by being active in their schools the following year.

## Review PDHPE Syllabuses

The Department of Education and Training and the NSW Board of Studies will review the content of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) syllabuses by March 2004.

Alcohol education is currently included in the NSW Board of Studies PDHPE syllabuses and taught from Kindergarten to Year 10.

The PDHPE syllabuses focus on encouraging students to make informed decisions relating to health and physical activity and developing positive attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle.

The focus of alcohol education in the PDHPE syllabuses includes:

- effects and consequences of alcohol use;
- reasons why some people use drugs and others do not;
- influences on decisions to use alcohol, including peers, family and the community;
- strategies to minimise harm including assertiveness and refusal skills;
- impacts of alcohol use on the community;
- road safety issues;
- marketing strategies and media influences; and
- management of basic first aid situations, including poisonings and overdose.

## Schools as Community Centres Program

The *Schools as Community Centres Program* improves prevention and early intervention support for families with young children aged from birth to eight years. The initiative provides a range of programs to improve parenting skills.

The program also assists to reduce the impact of disadvantage for children entering school, especially in communities where indicators of disadvantage are high.

There are 29 Schools as Community Centres operating across the State. Seven more will begin operations in 2004.

Where alcohol is identified as impacting on children's health, development and wellbeing, the Schools as Community Centres Program will promote family discussion of alcohol issues. Parents will be helped to

develop an understanding about how they influence even young children by role modelling the use of alcohol.

### **Peer-Led Alcohol Lessons for Year 8 Students - PALS**

The Government has developed a peer-led alcohol education program known as *PALS* in consultation with the Peer Support Foundation.

PALS will be available for use in NSW schools in early 2004.

Schools will be able to implement appropriate and relevant peer-led alcohol education activities for junior high school students. Older students will be trained as peer leaders.

The program will increase students' knowledge and understanding of alcohol and its effects. Students work in small peer groups to develop and practise skills to help them make informed and responsible choices about alcohol.

### **Young People and Drugs: A Guide for Staff to Support Students**

The Government has produced a booklet that helps schools support young people at risk of abusing alcohol and other drugs.

*Young People and Drugs: a guide for staff to support students* will assist schools to undertake prevention and intervention strategies, and to identify and support young people who may be experiencing problems with drug and alcohol abuse.

### **Teachers Training on Alcohol Education in Culturally Diverse Classrooms**

The Government has developed a CD-ROM training package, *Drug education in culturally diverse classrooms: tobacco and alcohol*, to assist teachers with alcohol and tobacco education in culturally diverse classrooms.

The CD-ROM will be provided to government schools in 2004 and will deliver school-based, professional development for teachers that includes video clips and training choices to suit the different learning needs of teachers.

# Schoolies Week and End of Year Celebrations

## Government Commitment

Traditionally, 'Schoolies Week' and end of year celebrations are a time of increased alcohol use. The Government will work to increase the number of safe end of year celebrations and put in place measures to reduce the level of alcohol abuse and risk associated with end of year partying.

## End of Year Celebration Kit

An *End of Year Celebration Kit* for senior secondary students was developed by the Department of Education and Training with the key themes of *Survive, Stay Alive, Play it Safe, Have Fun*.

The Kit included information on issues such as the NSW liquor laws, drink driving and driver fatigue and a booklet titled *Do you know when to stop?*, which focused on the hazards of driving under the influence of alcohol.

The Kit was distributed to all Year 12 students in New South Wales.

## HELP Card

Every Government school student in Years 10 and 12 has received a *HELP Card*, which lists numbers such as the Alcohol and Drug Information Service, Poisons Information Service, the Ambulance and the Kids Help Line.

## Web Link to Queensland Schoolies Website

A link was established on the NSW Department of Education and Training website that directed young people and parents to the Gold Coast Schoolies Week website, *SW03 – Celebrate – Watch Your Mate*, developed by the Queensland Government.

## Working with Licensed Venues during Schoolies Week

On 15 October 2003, the Minister for Gaming and Racing, the Hon Grant McBride MP, issued a warning to licensed premises of their responsibilities during the end of year school celebrations and warning of the fines that may be imposed if licensees or their staff serve alcohol to minors.

The Department of Gaming and Racing also conducted an audit of a number of licensed venues targeting functions attracting young people to determine compliance with the responsible service of alcohol.

In addition, information and advice about Schoolies Week was provided to licensed venues in New South Wales through the Department of Gaming and Racing's quarterly Liquor and Gaming Bulletin.

## More Law Enforcement – Operation Vikings

NSW Police have been out in force throughout the end of year/Schoolies Week celebration period, with high visibility policing operations targeting street crime and anti-social behaviour.

Funding under *Operation Vikings* has been provided to increase police numbers in several locations. One such area is the Tweed/Byron Local Area Command where additional police were rostered on every day over the Schoolies Week period.

*Operation Vikings* has also been operational in Inner-Sydney on weekends in the lead up to Christmas and New Year with around 400 officers targeting street offences, alcohol-related violence, anti-social behaviour and drug and weapons offences.

Operation Vikings began in mid-2001 and has so far deployed more than 14,800 additional police shifts, resulted in 2,943 arrests, with around 4,800 charges brought before courts.

### **Drinks Without Dramas Campaign**

The *Drinks Without Dramas* campaign has been launched in Northern NSW and will continue into the New Year period.

The program encourages more people to act as designated drivers during the summer holiday period.

The program is a partnership between the NSW Government and licensed hotels, clubs and local councils. As part of the campaign licensed venues offer free non-alcoholic drinks to designated drivers.

### **Safe Celebrations in Ballina**

Ballina Community Drug Action Team along with the Local Council and Youth Service are working in partnership to provide young people with opportunities for safer celebrations in Ballina.

On New Year's Eve, the traditional Ballina celebrations will provide a safer environment for young people.

Young people will have a specially designed alcohol-free chill-out space with entertainment, including a video of local surfers, skaters and BMX bikers and other sports enthusiasts projected onto a maxi-screen. Free food and free non-alcoholic drinks will be provided in a youth-friendly safe space supervised by local youth workers.

