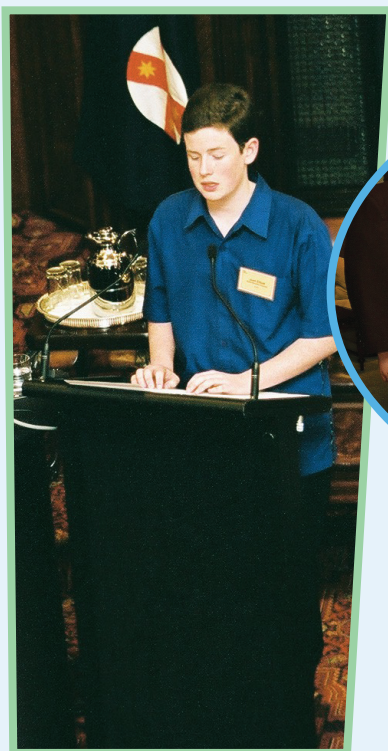




Government Response to the NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse 2003





Introduction

In May 2003 the Government announced it was going to hold an Alcohol Summit. It particularly wanted to find out what young people thought about alcohol and wanted young people to be part of solving the problem.

So the Government asked the NSW Commission for Children and Young People to speak with children and young people. The Commission asked young people their views through schools, universities, local government networks, focus groups and websites.

The ideas from these consultations helped to generate topics for discussion at the Young People and Alcohol Forum which the Commission hosted the day before the Summit. The Forum was a chance for young people to talk about their experiences with alcohol and what they think is important about alcohol for young people, their families and their communities.

Fifty-eight young people attended the Forum. They were aged between 13 and 22 years and came from all over NSW. At the Forum, they broke into groups to discuss different issues and ideas and come up with suggestions to reduce or avoid harm caused by alcohol. These ideas and suggestions formed 67 Resolutions which were presented on the first day of the Summit by two of the Forum participants. Another 14 young people from the Forum attended the Summit as delegates.

Forty-seven (47) of the 67 Resolutions from the Forum were adopted or partially adopted by the Summit.

This document summarises the Government Response to the Summit's recommendations including the young people's resolutions.

The full Government Response (Changing the Culture of Alcohol Use in New South Wales), the Key Initiatives (a summary of the main initiatives) and the Communiqué are available on the Government Alcohol Information Website at www.alcoholinfo.nsw.gov.au

More information about the Commission is at www.kids.nsw.gov.au



Section 1: The Community

What young people suggested at the Forum:

- Educate young people about alcohol in many ways including through:
 - schools
 - role models
 - technology based applications
 - friends.
- Set up an advisory group of young people to advise government bodies, community representatives and other young people about ways to reduce alcohol use.
- Start education about alcohol in primary school.
- Introduce a dollar for dollar program so that for every dollar spent on advertising or sponsorship, the company has to spend the same amount on harm minimisation.

What the Government said it will do:

- Establish an Alcohol Education and Information Taskforce which will include community representatives and will consult with different groups including young people.
- The Department of Education and Training will develop a new primary school “big book” kit on alcohol issues for teachers and parents.
- Review alcohol products and promotions that deliberately target young people.
- Hold a trial of peer led lessons about alcohol issues for students.
- Establish an Aboriginal Youth Leadership project to promote positive role models, the participation of Aboriginal young people within the community and healthy lifestyles.



Section 2: Preventing Abuse and Harm

What young people suggested at the Forum:

- Introduce a role model system in schools.
- Have adults as role models.
- Start education about alcohol in primary schools.
- Provide alternative entertainment and recreation activities for young people.

What the Government said it will do:

- Review the school curriculum about alcohol use and misuse.
- Fund the Youthsafe program for the prevention of serious injury in young people aged 15 to 25 years. The program will include school workshops looking at the consequences of risk-taking in relation to alcohol and drugs.
- Revise the high school drink driving program.

Section 3: Dependence, Disease and Treatment

What young people suggested at the Forum:

- Have specialist youth staff with experience in alcohol issues available for young people.
- Provide a link between young people and local services and their staff.
- Provide follow up treatment and services for young people dealing with alcohol dependence.

What the Government said it will do:

- Support taking young people on school excursions to local services and providing opportunities for youth services to visit schools and provide information, like a “Service Expo”.
- Investigate the feasibility of non-government organisations providing ongoing follow-up and support services to people.



Section 4: Service Delivery – Health

What young people suggested at the Forum:

- Develop a more holistic approach to alcohol abuse.
- Develop links between youth services, alcohol treatment facilities and schools.
- Increase awareness and training in relation to young people who have a mental illness and abuse alcohol.
- Introduce services that are one-stop shops staffed by specialists who understand the needs of young people.
- Start a specialist youth alcohol free hotline.
- Develop a directory of services for young people.
- Introduce a protocol for doctors and health clinics to be young people-friendly.
- Give young people their own Medicare cards.

What the Government said it will do:

- Support the concept of an holistic approach and providing links between schools and local services.
- Pilot one-stop shop services to provide integrated health services to young people.
- Trial early intervention and prevention strategies for young people who have a mental illness and abuse alcohol.
- Lobby for a nationwide campaign to inform young people of their rights under Medicare.



Section 5: Injury and Trauma

What young people suggested at the Forum:

- Educate young people about drink spiking and date rape and what to do if things go wrong while under the influence of alcohol or if a friend is affected by alcohol.
- Avoid drink driving by introducing services like:
 - night shuttle bus services
 - increased public transport
 - breathalysers in bars and cars.

What the Government said it will do:

- Investigate alcohol interlocks for new vehicles. Alcohol interlocks breathalyse a driver when he/she attempts to drive. The vehicle cannot be started if the driver is over the limit.

Section 6: Family and Wellbeing

What young people suggested at the Forum:

- Explore the idea of supervised drinking spaces for under 18s.
- Family-based services should use individualised approaches for young people who are alcohol dependent.
- Introduce more programs for parents to help young people become responsible drinkers and to enable parents to effectively supervise underage drinking. This could be done through advertising and information packages provided to parents.

What the Government said it will do:

- Support the concept of family-based programs.
- Look at the information needs of parents and carers and make information and tools for parents and carers more widely available.
- Start a Families and Carers Training Project to provide information for families and carers. It is being developed with the Commonwealth Government.



Section 7: Alcohol Related Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

What young people suggested at the Forum:

- Find ways to promote positive relations between young people and police.
- Increase services and recreational opportunities to deter young people from crime and anti-social behaviour.

What the Government said it will do:

- Expand programs designed to improve relations between police and young people.
- Extend programs to tackle underage drinking by educating suppliers.
- Provide resources for students about the risks of alcohol consumption.
- Survey young people's knowledge of Alcohol Free Zone laws.

Section 8: Alcohol and the Justice System

What young people suggested at the Forum:

- Introduce more programs to stop young people getting into trouble with the law and avoid young people being separated from families/friends.
- Introduce programs to help young people when they leave detention centres, to stop young people re-offending.

What the Government said it will do:

- Trial a Juvenile Correctional Centre Release and Treatment Scheme in western NSW so that young offenders connect with community services and gains made while they were in custody are maintained.
- Develop proposals for a youth circle sentencing scheme for young Aboriginal offenders. Circle sentencing is carried out by community committees. Participants include the offender, the victim and their support people, a judge, an Aboriginal elder, the prosecutor, the defence lawyer, police, court workers, professionals and friends and relatives of the offender and the victim.



Section 9: Responsible Supply and Consumption

What young people suggested at the Forum:

- Review responsible ways of serving alcohol so they can be improved.
- Look at advertising, in particular:
 - make the voluntary alcohol advertising code mandatory
 - stop advertising that appeals to young people
 - ban alcohol advertising at sporting events and other public places
 - ensure all alcohol products have adequate warnings on them.

What the Government said it will do:

- Support further action about the advertising code at the Federal level if necessary.

Wrap Up

The Government Response to the Summit recommendations shows the Government has taken up lots of the ideas and suggestions from young people at the Forum.

This happened because of the great work done by young people during the lead up consultations to the Forum, the Forum and the Summit.

The contributions of all these young people have greatly assisted the Government in finding a way forward in relation to alcohol issues. Thank you!

For more information about the Alcohol Forum and Summit and the NSW Commission for Children and Young People visit www.kids.nsw.gov.au

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