



No more drinks for me.
I'm on antibiotics
for snake-eye.

VicHealth's 'No Excuse Needed' campaign highlights the exaggerated excuses used for not having a drink.

You don't need an excuse.

Join the 61% of young Victorians who don't drink to get drunk.

04 Preventing harm from alcohol

OUR 3-YEAR PRIORITY

More people actively seeking the best ways to reduce alcohol-related harm.

WHY?

Alcohol is one of the top 10 avoidable causes of disease and death in Victoria.¹ The negative impacts of alcohol on individual Victorians, their families and the broader community is estimated to cost \$4.3 billion every year.²

Alcohol-related harm is a significant preventable health issue in Victoria. Each day, alcohol causes 15 deaths and hospitalises 430 Australians. This equates to 5,554 deaths and 157,132 hospitalisations caused by alcohol each year.³ Alcohol also causes a range of social problems that affect the drinker and those around them.

Alcohol-fuelled violence has been a hot topic for years, but lately the public debate has shifted to the underlying Australian drinking culture at the heart of this issue.

ENABLING A CULTURE THAT ENCOURAGES MODERATE DRINKING

Over the years, VicHealth has made a substantial contribution to alcohol culture change through long-term funding of programs such as Good Sports, and by investing in our own innovative programs such as Healthy Sporting Environments and Creating Healthy Workplaces.

Due to these successes, the Victorian Government tasked VicHealth with delivering a \$2.6 million Alcohol Cultural Change Project that aims to shift attitudes toward drunkenness among young people aged 16 to 29, as part of the Victorian Government's *Reducing the Alcohol and Drug toll: Victoria's plan 2013-2017*.

Our approach has been informed by four key insights:

- alcohol causes harm across our community, especially among young people
- most social situations involve alcohol consumption – and alcohol consumption is broadly accepted
- Australia is a society in which many people are tolerant of intoxication and drunkenness
- while people consider alcohol misuse to be a problem, most are personally comfortable with their own drinking.

Building upon this, VicHealth has developed two phases of campaign activity to drive the attitudinal change we need to see if Victoria is to have a more moderate drinking culture.

¹ Department of Human Services 2005, *Victorian Burden of Disease Study: mortality and morbidity 2001*, Public Health Group, Department of Human Services, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne.

² Victorian Auditor-General's Office 2012, *Effectiveness of justice strategies in preventing and reducing alcohol-related harm*, Victorian Auditor-General's Office, Melbourne.

³ Gao C, Ogeil RP & Lloyd B 2014, *Alcohol's burden of disease in Australia*, Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education (FARE) and VicHealth in collaboration with Turning Point, Canberra.

The Alcohol Culture Change Project is helping young people shape a shared vision of a Victoria where excess alcohol isn't integral to our celebrations.

'NameThatPoint' campaign

In the past, efforts to reduce excessive alcohol consumption in Australia have primarily focused on negative messaging about behaviour and resulting harms. This year VicHealth adopted a new approach, creating NameThatPoint, an online campaign to encourage young people to engage in a conversation about Victoria's alcohol culture.

Young Victorians perceive intoxication as acceptable behaviour because they believe most of their peers drink the same or more than they do. However, this isn't the case and this misperception creates a drinking culture where moderation gives way to excess.

The Alcohol Culture Change Project offers a valuable opportunity to take a positive approach to acknowledge the unease about how alcohol is used in Victoria, and to harness that concern to help young people shape a shared vision of a Victoria where excess alcohol isn't integral to our celebrations.

Supported by statewide advertising, NameThatPoint ran from December 2013 to April 2014. The campaign asked people to name that point when clear thinking turns into more drinking. It was hugely successful, with nearly 46,000 unique visitors to the website (20,735 return visitors), over 140,000 YouTube views and over 1800 competition entries.

An evaluation of the campaign showed that it had a positive influence on the majority of people who took part. It successfully prompted many people to think about Victoria's drinking culture, their own drinking behaviour, and the drinking behaviour of those around them.

A snapshot of Victoria's alcohol culture

Supporting the NameThatPoint and No Excuse Needed campaigns is VicHealth's pioneering research examining Victoria's alcohol culture, including the acceptability of drunkenness across a range of social situations and contexts.

In a research first, this study used a behavioural definition of drunkenness, 'losing your balance', and asked Victorians how often it would be acceptable to get to this level of drunkenness at a pub, bar or club, sporting event or party at a friend's house.

Generally, young Victorians aged 16 to 29 were more likely to agree that it was acceptable to get drunk in these places compared to those aged 30 or older. When asked whether they agreed with the statement, 'on occasions when I am drinking, I know I'll probably get drunk', 37% of young Victorian drinkers agreed, compared to just 9% of those aged 30 or older. However, this also indicates that a majority of those aged 16 to 29 (61%) do not intend to get drunk when drinking.

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/alcoholculturalchange

FUTURE FOCUS

'No Excuse Needed' campaign

Insights from NameThatPoint informed the development of a statewide social marketing campaign, No Excuse Needed. Launched in September 2014, it uses a positively framed approach to empower young Victorians aged 16–29 to moderate their drinking by challenging the perception that their peers are drinking heavily. By highlighting the exaggerated excuses used for not having a drink, we can begin to shape a new norm where drinking is not expected in all situations and it's 'ok to say no'.

The campaign features in cinemas, at tram and bus stops, through posters in bars and clubs, and online advertising.

Official campaign supporters include the Australian Drug Foundation, Turning Point, Ambulance Victoria, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Hello Sunday Morning and FebFast.

www.noexcuseneeded.com.au

The NameThatPoint campaign encouraged young Victorians to engage in a conversation about Victoria's alcohol culture.



Thousands of Australians are re-thinking their relationship with alcohol.



Drinking-related lifestyles: exploring the role of alcohol in Victorians' lives

This VicHealth-funded research informed our alcohol cultural change project with the State Government (see pp. 41–42). Led by RMIT University's Associate Professor Mike Reid, the research found that drinking is so culturally entrenched that we regularly use it as a way of expressing our values and beliefs. Four key 'drinking identities' emerged from the research, defined according to their acceptance of the prevalence of alcohol across society and influences on their drinking behaviour.

The research includes recommendations on how best to target responsible drinking messages to each type, and how to address Australia's heavy drinking culture, such as challenging the social acceptability of getting drunk and promoting the social acceptability of not drinking or drinking in moderation.

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/drinking-lifestyles

Attitudes of Australian cider drinkers

In response to the rapid growth in popularity of cider, VicHealth conducted an online survey of 6,000 Australians to understand why cider is becoming the drink of choice for many Australians. Cider is one of the fastest growing alcohol categories in Australia, with the volume of cider available on the market increasing by 30% in 2011 alone. The resulting research, published in January 2014, uncovered valuable data on why cider drinkers prefer the beverage over others, who is drinking it, whether there is a perception that it is healthier than other types of alcohol, and if it is being consumed in excess.

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/cider

Hello Sunday Morning

This year VicHealth joined forces with Hello Sunday Morning (HSM) to boost Victorian participation in this initiative that encourages Victorians to press pause on their drinking. HSM has helped thousands of Australians re-think their relationship with alcohol – without judgement. This partnership offers more Victorians a great way to challenge the notion that you need to get drunk to have a good night out and is part of a range of measures to reduce alcohol harm in the community.

- With VicHealth's support, HSM increased the number of Victorians participating in their program from 825 to almost 4,979 in under 18 months.
- During the same period, web traffic to HSM increased from 6,281 to 10,659 visitors on average per month.
- From this investment, HSM also launched a premium service, giving HSMers greater control of their profiles for a small fee. This revenue will help HSM to continue to drive reductions in the amount of alcohol Victorians drink over the long term in a sustainable way.

Concerning research into 'preloading'

This year, VicHealth research from a survey of 2,000 Victorians showed that drinking alcohol before, during and after going to licensed premises (pre, side and backloading) was associated with risky drinking and reporting alcohol-related harm. One in 10 people who completed the survey reported doing all three. Australian research shows that preloading is associated with aggressive behaviour, alcohol-related accidents and injuries and driving under the influence. The data used for this analysis was funded by the Victorian Law Enforcement Drug Fund (VLEDF) and commissioned by the Victorian Department of Justice.

VicHealth focuses its efforts to prevent harm from alcohol within settings that ‘capture’ a large proportion of the population in health promotion activities, such as workplaces and sports clubs.

INFLUENCING SETTINGS TO ADOPT POLICIES + PRACTICES THAT PREVENT + RESPOND TO ALCOHOL PROBLEMS

VicHealth focuses its efforts to prevent harm from alcohol within settings that ‘capture’ a large proportion of the population in health promotion activities, such as workplaces and sports clubs.

We work in partnership to promote effective interventions that enable all Victorians to take responsibility for alcohol harm reduction.

AFL and alcohol in community football

We are concluding our work with AFL Victoria on a cultural-change program to address risky drinking and related harms in community football. This program has raised the profile of responsible alcohol management in community football, and tested alcohol harm reduction interventions, such as the sale of only mid-strength alcohol on Grand Final days in four regional football leagues. This mid-strength alcohol policy led to approximately one-third of the drinking crowd reporting that they would drink less alcohol while the trial was in operation.

Good Sports program

Good Sports, an initiative of the Australian Drug Foundation, supports sporting clubs to manage alcohol responsibly and reduce alcohol-related problems. The program receives the majority of its Victorian funding from VicHealth. We are proud to have been supporting this program for more than a decade.

www.goodsports.com.au

Reducing alcohol-related harm in the workplace

LeeJenn Health Consultants, the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction and South East Business Networks are working with the Victorian manufacturing industry to develop new and innovative approaches to reducing alcohol-related harm in the workplace. This work is part of VicHealth’s \$3 million Creating Healthy Workplaces program, which is funding five large-scale pilot projects in Victorian workplaces to develop and test solutions for promoting good health and preventing chronic disease.

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/workplace

ENABLING HEALTHY PUBLIC POLICY TO FOSTER SAFER DRINKING BEHAVIOURS

For many years, VicHealth has helped shape alcohol policy and practice in Victoria and nationally. This year, we continued to be a voice in debates around alcohol and support programs that promote responsible drinking.

Putting Victoria’s liquor licences on the map

Councils throughout Victoria are now better placed to improve their planning around liquor licensing. A powerful online tool provides decision-makers and the community with information at a glance about licence density, and has the potential to improve ambulance response times to alcohol-related accidents and injuries. Launched in December 2013 by VicHealth, the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR) and the Emergency Services Telecommunications Agency (ESTA), the map presents information on the state’s 19,000 individual liquor licences in an interactive online tool that geo-codes the data and presents it in an easy-to-use format.

www.geomaps.vcglr.vic.gov.au

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/liquor-licence-map

Alcohol Policy Coalition

The Alcohol Policy Coalition is a group of health and allied agencies who share a concern about the level of alcohol misuse and the associated health and social consequences for the community. This year the coalition continued to provide expert advocacy and policy advice at a state level. VicHealth has been collaborating with the Alcohol Policy Coalition, including providing funding for legal capacity and the coalition’s new website.

www.alcoholpolicycoalition.org.au

Information on Victoria’s 19,000 individual liquor licences is now available in an interactive online tool.



VicHealth is helping to shape alcohol policy and practice in Victoria and nationally.



Understanding and reducing alcohol-related harm among urban youth

Research released this year by Turning Point Alcohol & Drug Centre, funded by VicHealth and the Australian Research Council, found young people in inner Melbourne were more likely to have liberal attitudes than those in growth areas when it comes to alcohol.

The ‘Drinking patterns and attitudes for young people’ research by Turning Point researcher Dr Sarah MacLean used data from the most recent Victorian Youth Alcohol and Drug Survey, and was published in *Urban Policy and Research*.

It identified how young adults’ drinking patterns and attitudes vary across Melbourne, comparing the responses of those living in growth areas such as Casey, Cardinia, Melton, Whittlesea, Wyndham and Mitchell with those in inner Melbourne, including Port Phillip, Stonnington, Yarra and the City of Melbourne.

The study suggests that different policy responses to alcohol are required across large cities such as Melbourne.

Children’s exposure to alcohol advertisements

The impact on young people of advertisements promoting junk food and alcohol that screen on television during sports broadcasts has been the subject of hot debate but little research. This year, a VicHealth-funded study by lead researcher Associate Professor Matthew Nicholson from the La Trobe University Centre for Sport and Social Impact identified the amount, and classified the nature of, alcohol and junk food advertising and promotion through sport on broadcast television in Victoria. Findings about the levels of exposure and results in terms of brand recognition and consumption were published in March 2014 and resulted in widespread discussion in the media about closing a loophole allowing alcohol ads on TV during live sport, especially in children’s viewing hours.

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/kids-and-ads

COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION

VicHealth was represented on numerous committees, advisory bodies and working groups that guide alcohol policy and practice in Victoria and nationally, including:

- Alcohol and Drug Strategy Executive Committee
- Alcohol Harm in the Workplace – national committee
- Community Alcohol Action Network (CAAN) Steering Committee
- National Alliance for Action on Alcohol
- Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation Stakeholder Forum
- Victorian Liquor Control Advisory Council