



Increasing alcohol harm prevention at a local level

VicHealth Local Government Partnership



This module covers:

Impact stream

Adopting alcohol harm prevention actions to protect children and young people

Partners

We would like to thank our development partners for co-authoring this module:



We would like to thank our development partners for contributing to this module:



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Overview

Children and young people have the right to grow and develop in safe, healthy and supportive communities where they are protected from harms from alcohol. However, alcohol use is common across Victoria – in social settings, at home, and in a variety of public spaces.



Alcohol products fuel poor health and disease. Harms from alcoholic products can limit children’s safety through increasing their risk of exposure to accidents, violence and crime in their surrounding community.

Alcohol consumption of parents-to-be prior to conception and by a person during pregnancy can directly harm a growing fetus. Alcohol contributes to more frequent and severe family violence by perpetrators, with more than a quarter of family violence incidents reported to police in Victoria involving alcohol.

The alcohol industry includes producers, distributors, retailers and marketers. They go to great lengths to produce, promote and sell their products for maximum profits. They spend millions of dollars on advertising every year to make their products look appealing, often placing ads where children, young people and their families are most exposed. This undermines local efforts to create healthy spaces for families.

During the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, alcohol retail turnover in Victoria soared by \$271.1 million (54 per cent) between January 2020 and December 2021.¹ Australian studies found that people older than 25 were more likely to increase their alcohol use during the pandemic than people younger than 25,^{2,3} and that many parents and carers used alcohol more often in response to stress.^{4,5} A study of alcohol marketing in Australia during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic found that sponsored alcohol marketing posts appeared on Facebook and Instagram feeds every 35 seconds, promoting easy access to alcohol without leaving the home, as well as buying more alcohol, and using alcohol at home to cope, survive or feel better.⁶

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Retail trade, Australia [November 2021], in Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, Alcohol use and harms during the COVID-19 pandemic, 2022.

2. S Callinan, K Smit, Y Mojica-Perez, S D’Aquino, D Moore and E Kuntsche, ‘Shifts in alcohol consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic: early indications from Australia’, *Addiction*, 2021, 116(6): 1381–1388, doi:10.1111/add.15275.

3. E Neill, D Meyer, WL Toh, et al., ‘Alcohol use in Australia during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic: Initial results from the COLLATE project’, *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, 2020, 74(10): 542–549, doi:10.1111/pcn.13099.

4. Alcohol and Drug Foundation, [Parents drinking more in isolation but they haven’t been drinking alone](#), May 2020.

5. M Cook, R Dwyer, S Kuntsche, S Callinan and A Pennay, ‘“I’m not managing it; it’s managing me”: a qualitative investigation of Australian parents’ and carers’ alcohol consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic’, *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy*, 2022, 29(3): 309–316, doi:10.1080/09687637.2021.1950125.

6. Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education and Cancer Council Western Australia, *An alcohol ad every 35 seconds. A snapshot of how the alcohol industry is using a global pandemic as a marketing opportunity*, May 2020

Council may be required to pay for the public clean-up of local alcohol-related harms (e.g. cleansing bodily fluids from public spaces, extra rubbish removal, vandalism repairs). The impairment of people's sense of safety and freedom to move around their towns or neighbourhoods impacts local governments' distribution of resources.

Alcohol products impact such a wide variety of factors in our lives that every dollar invested in effective prevention initiatives returns up to \$14 of long-term savings.

Crossover opportunity

This module is designed to be used in conjunction with [The Art of Community Alcohol Management: What local government can do to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm](#).

The online guide has been developed by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation and VicHealth to explore what Victorian local governments can do to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm, creating safer and healthier communities in their municipalities.

What are the benefits for councils?

Councils acting on alcohol harm prevention in their local communities can expect to see improvements across a broad range of outcomes including:

- Create fewer alcohol-related risks and liabilities, less waste collection and cleaning, fewer complaints (e.g. noise, antisocial behaviour) and less alcohol-related accidents, injuries and crime (e.g. physical and sexual assault, property damage)
- drive changes in social and cultural norms to promote activities that do not feature alcohol consumption, resulting in safer, healthier, more enjoyable and more inclusive community events
- promote cost savings (e.g. for property damage, insurance and legal costs associated with alcohol-related injuries) and sharing resources and improved revenue for council (e.g. through application processes and festival sponsorship)
- ensure legislative compliance.

Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from alcohol

The National Health and Medical Research Council's [Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol](#) were updated in December 2020 and include the following new recommendations in relation to pregnancy, breastfeeding, and for children and people younger than 18:

- To prevent harm from alcohol to their developing baby, women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy should not drink any alcohol.
- For women who are breastfeeding, not drinking any alcohol is safest for their baby.
- Children and people who are younger than 18 should not drink any alcohol, to reduce the risk of injury and other harms to health.

Impact stream:

Adopting alcohol harm prevention actions to protect children and young people

Implementation actions

To complete this impact stream, councils will select from:

- Quick win: Integrate alcohol harm prevention into local programs and activities aimed at young people.
- Quick win: Promote alcohol-free events and activities for children and families.
- Step up: Reduce the consumption and promotion of alcohol products at council-run festivals and events.
- Step up: Create a local alcohol awareness campaign to protect young children (first 2,000 days).
- Ambitious: Reduce the consumption and promotion of alcohol products on council-owned land.

This impact stream requires councils to increase alcohol harm prevention at a local level, thereby creating safer and healthier communities in which children and young people can live, study, work and play.

Councils are in a unique position to influence the consumption of alcohol products in their local community by implementing alcohol-free events or implementing practices to enable low-risk drinking at council-run festivals and events, and council-owned facilities.

Sometimes councils seek to partner with companies to provide sponsorship of community events. When such sponsorship arrangements include alcohol companies or brands, children and young people can be exposed to alcohol advertisements. These practices are harmful as they exploit children's vulnerabilities by creating positive norms around the consumption of alcohol products.

Such advertising directly undermines council obligations under the [Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008](#) (Vic) to improve and promote public health and wellbeing within municipal districts. Councils should be enabling children and young people to be involved in community activities in a safe and healthy way, free from the promotion of harmful products.

Councils can also influence alcohol product consumption and promotion on:

- the property they lease or license to commercial organisations and community groups each year, including cafes, kiosks, sports clubs, community halls, guide and scout halls, childcare centres and preschools
- other forms of property they own or manage across the municipality, such as sports ground fences, clubrooms and bus shelters.

These are ways to separate child-focused activities from alcohol products, to influence a broad cross-section of residents and visitors, and to educate many community leaders about alcohol management.

Focusing on the first 2,000 days in this impact stream

Children in their first 2,000 days should have the best chance of a healthy and happy start to life. Alcohol can impact the health and wellbeing of young children and families – including through alcohol exposure in pregnancy, and young children’s exposure to alcohol in family and community settings.

Councils can take actions that are important to protect young children and families from alcohol harm. These include raising awareness of the impacts of alcohol on families’ and children’s health and wellbeing, and promoting alcohol-free community activities and environments for young children.

Quick Note

Alcohol and young children

The [Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol](#) recommend that children should not have any alcohol.

However, for most children, the family environment is the first place they are exposed to alcohol. Often, this happens when children are offered sips or tastes of alcohol.

Evidence shows that parental behaviours and attitudes toward alcohol have a strong influence on children’s future alcohol use and behaviour. Positive role modelling in relation to alcohol use by parents and carers can help reduce the risk of children developing problems with alcohol use in adolescence and adulthood. See the [Growing Up in Australia report chapter on parental influences on adolescents’ alcohol use](#) for more information.

Offering sips of alcohol to children communicates permissive parental attitudes toward alcohol use and does not help prevent binge drinking or problems with alcohol use when they are older. Evidence shows young children who are given sips of alcohol are more likely than other children to drink full serves of alcohol as teenagers. See [information and evidence on alcohol sipping and children](#) on the Alcohol Think Again website.

Important note!

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)

FASD is a neurodevelopmental condition that can be caused when an unborn baby is exposed to alcohol during pregnancy. People with FASD experience challenges with learning, cognition and behaviour throughout childhood and adulthood.

Children with FASD may experience:

- physical and emotional developmental delay
- impaired speech and language development
- learning challenges, including issues with memory and attention
- difficulty controlling behaviour.

FASD is assessed and diagnosed by developing an overall understanding of physical and developmental delay, neurological impairment and alcohol exposure during pregnancy. Early diagnosis can help families access care and support.

For more information see the [FASD Hub](#) and the [NOFASD Australia website](#). Also see the [Every Moment Matters fact sheet on FASD](#).

Intended outcomes

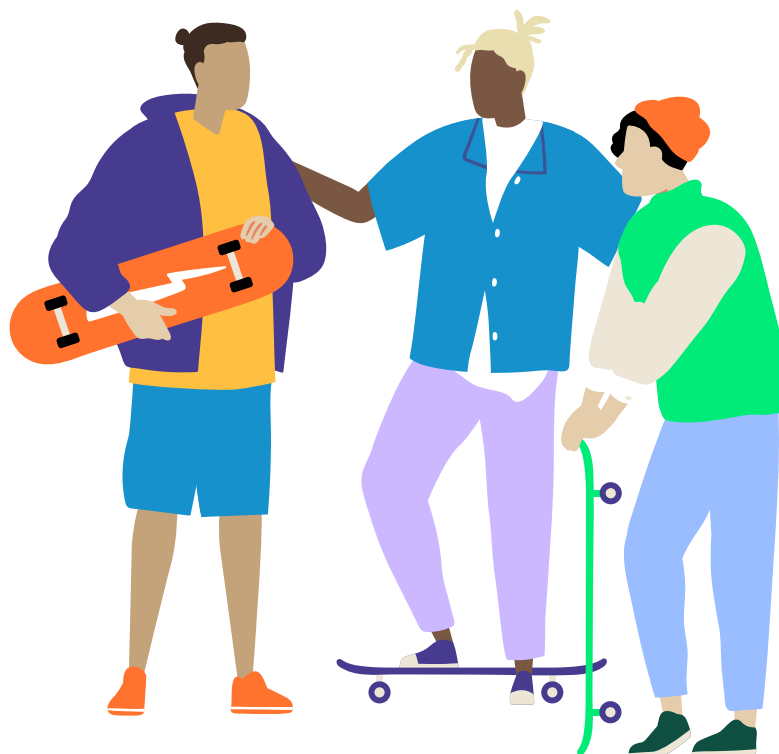
Councils undertaking this impact stream can expect to:

- provide safer and healthier entertainment options and increased benefits to participants
- decrease alcohol-related complaints and liability related to council-run events and facilities
- reduce the exposure of alcohol marketing and misinformation by the alcohol industry to children, young people and their families
- influence alcohol cultures to reduce risky drinking behaviours among young people and/or people caring for children.

Minimum deliverables

To complete the impact stream 'Adopting alcohol harm prevention actions to protect children and young people', councils will have:

- enhanced understanding of their community alcohol profile and prioritisation of actions for alcohol harm prevention
- demonstrated adoption of actions which lead to alcohol harm prevention to protect children and young people
- demonstrated support from council and local leadership for adopting alcohol harm prevention actions to protect children and young people
- demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of their current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.





Quick win:

Integrate alcohol harm prevention into local programs and activities aimed at young people

Councils are well-placed to work with their community to positively influence cultural shifts in relation to alcohol – such actions will greatly benefit young people within the community.

There are 2 key phases within this action:

1. develop a community alcohol profile
2. integrate alcohol harm prevention into local programs and activities aimed at young people.

To determine where efforts might be best directed, Council can start by developing a community alcohol profile. A community alcohol profile will assist councils to understand what local alcohol issues are occurring, what your council is already doing in response, then what additional actions are going to be the highest priority for the council and community.

If a council is considering integrating alcohol actions in their community, understanding what the local alcohol issues are and what the council is already doing in response is an important first step. This understanding will help to put actions in place that are cost effective and most likely to make a difference to the community and to the council's bottom line.

To complete this action councils are required to integrate alcohol harm prevention activities into council-run or supported community programs aimed at young people.



How-to guide to:

Integrate alcohol harm prevention into local programs and activities aimed at young people

Develop a community alcohol profile

The following steps provide some guidance for councils to assist with developing a community alcohol profile:

1. Identify local issues of concern to the community.
2. Clarify the nature of the issues, when they occur, how often, who is involved and who is affected.
3. Determine which of the issues directly or indirectly impact on or relate to local government business.
4. Determine which of the issues have alcohol product consumption as a causal or associated factor.
5. Identify the specific alcohol-related factors that contribute to the local problems occurring.
6. Identify how those alcohol-related factors sustain the problems that are occurring.
7. Identify how local government could prevent or minimise the problem (directly or indirectly).

Given the limited resources of local governments and their broad scope of responsibility, it is beneficial to place resources where they are most needed and most likely to have a positive, long-term impact.

Crossover opportunity

The following useful tools within the '[The Art of Community Alcohol Management: What local government can do to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm](#)' will assist councils to access high quality data to build a community alcohol profile, support councils to collect their own data to support their alcohol profile and to map priorities to inform an action plan or strategy.

[LGA guide tool 7 – High quality data sources](#) provide information on where councils can access high quality data sources to inform their community alcohol profile.

[LGA guide tool 8 – Developing a community alcohol profile](#) provides detailed guidance for councils on how to develop a community alcohol profile.

[LGA guide tool 9 – Local government alcohol-related data](#) provides guidance for councils on how to collect their own alcohol-related data to better inform strategy and actions efforts.

[LGA guide tool 10 – Mapping alcohol-related priorities in community](#) assist councils to identify alcohol related priorities in their community, to align these strategically, and to develop a plan or strategy.

Integrate alcohol harm prevention into local programs and activities aimed at young people

There are a range of council-run and supported local programs and activities aimed at young people that provide an opportunity to integrate alcohol harm prevention activities. These programs can therefore influence risky drinking behaviours and alcohol cultures among young people.

Councils also run and support a range of community programs for young people to build their social networks, skillsets and keep them occupied in fulfilling, alcohol-free activities. Councils can deliver these programs in partnership with other agencies (e.g. [Local Drug Action Teams](#)), or support other organisations through funding, venue hire or promotion.

Some samples of targeted free or low-cost programs are provided below:

- Youth programs – [Communities that Care](#), [Climate Schools](#), [PartySafe](#), [FreeZa](#)
- Sports club programs – [Good Sports Program](#)

Hot tip!

Defining alcohol culture

VicHealth's [Alcohol Cultures Framework](#) shifts the focus from the behaviours of individuals to the shared activities and practices of a group (a 'social world'). By first defining alcohol culture among young people and providing a lens for designing and implementing programs, practitioners with an interest in shifting risky drinking cultures can use the Framework as a planning tool to help inform the types of activities that would be best suited to priority populations.

Integrate alcohol harm prevention into local programs and activities aimed at young people cont.

Local sporting clubs play a pivotal role in the development of young people so it's essential that they create a safe, welcoming, and family-friendly environment for young players and spectators. The Good Sports program does just that through free tools and resources to enable clubs to build a policy around alcohol management, smoking regulations, mental health, illegal drugs, and safe transport.

Sporting clubs work through an online portal consisting of a questionnaire and action plan that is tailored to each individual club's circumstance. These activities include actions specifically aimed at clubs with junior members such as ensuring alcohol is not consumed in the change rooms when junior and underage players are present and ensuring there is no alcohol sponsorship on junior apparel.

In addition, Good Sports benefits young people by ensuring sports clubs role-model healthy behaviours and embody an inclusive and family-friendly environment reinforcing positive cultural norms and creating safer environments.

- Community action programs – there are other evidence-informed activities and programs that are outlined in a suite of toolkits and webinars [here](#)

Crossover opportunity

Further guidance on integrating alcohol harm prevention into local programs and activities aimed at young people, refer to sample actions 1-5 and case studies (p.41-45) in ['The Art of Community Alcohol Management: What local government can do to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm'](#).

Hot tip!

Local Drug Action Teams

The [Local Drug Action Team \(LDAT\)](#) provides a key opportunity to engage community to work together to strengthen factors found to protect young people from the risk of both alcohol and other drug harm and mental health issues.

More than 75% of the work LDATs doing in community is focused on supporting young people. The Program is delivered through successful community-based initiatives that increase community participation, social connection, and access to local supports as well as increased participation in supervised sport and community-based activities. Building strong relationships with positive adult role models and supporting healthy relationships with peers is also important.

Find out more in the Extra Resources section.



Quick win:

Promote alcohol-free events and activities for children and families

In this 'quick win' implementation action, council will undertake to deliver and promote alcohol-free community events and activities for children and their families.

Children and families should have opportunities to attend enjoyable local events and activities in safe and healthy environments that are free from alcohol.

These events help show children that alcohol does not need to be a part of these types of activities. They prevent exposure of children to alcohol industry advertising; branding, marketing and promotion of alcohol products; and role modelling of risky alcohol use.

Promoting and celebrating alcohol-free community activities can help influence positive alcohol cultures in the community, and change social and cultural norms.

Councils can deliver and promote alcohol-free events and activities in partnership with other agencies such as through a Local Drug Action Team or support other organisations with funding, venue hire or promotion.

Crossover opportunity

This implementation action can work in tandem with or build on a number of other actions in the VicHealth health promotion modules. These are:

'Strengthening tobacco control at a local level' stretch module

- Quick win: Promote smoke-free events and activities for children and families.

'Building better food systems for healthier communities' core module

- Step up: Implement a healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events.





How-to guide to:

Promote alcohol-free events and activities for children and families

Involve people

There are many opportunities to involve children and families in planning and promoting fun, local alcohol-free events and activities. Children are the experts on community events and activities they would enjoy. Including children in promotion can help remind adults involved in event planning and coordination of their role in ensuring safe, healthy and inclusive public spaces.

Involve local children and families using online surveys, or through local early childhood services and kindergartens, and other community facilities they frequent. Ask children and families to act as champions and be involved in promoting events or activities in local media, and through their early childhood services, schools and networks.

To shape this implementation action, councils may need to work with other staff who are familiar with council event planning, local laws and related processes, as well as staff who work with children and families.

Identify whether a Local Drug Action Team in the local community could be involved, or whether there is an opportunity to form one with local partners to undertake this action.

Share the objectives of the project with partners and stakeholders, and seek their support in promoting alcohol-free events or activities.

Quick Note

Protecting children from 'harmful industries'

Alcohol-free events are one pillar of creating holistically healthy environments to model the type of environment that should be freely accessible to children in their local area. Consider the range of relationships that your council directly or indirectly promotes to children through the locations, sponsors, partnerships and marketing opportunities that may occur at council events.

VicHealth encourages all arms of government to commit to leveraging every opportunity to ensure children are protected from harmful industries such as tobacco, alcohol, gambling and unhealthy food and drink when they are out in their community.



Plan

Identify existing council policies that support alcohol-free community events, such as the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and policies on reducing alcohol harm or sponsorships. Refer to these when seeking funding or support for the project from council leadership.

Make a list of existing local events and activities suitable for young children and families, and find out whether alcohol is available and promoted, or whether they are sponsored by the alcohol industry.

- If there are already alcohol-free events, consider how you can promote and celebrate the alcohol-free element as being suitable for children and families.
- If there are insufficient activities that are alcohol-free and suitable for families, consider if you can offer new and alternative activities, or opportunities to make or support events to be alcohol-free.

Prepare a project plan

Prepare a high-level project plan, setting out:

- objectives for the action
- alcohol-free events and activities that will be delivered or supported by council
- relevant policies you are drawing on
- stakeholders and partner roles
- available budget and resources.

Review existing event plans

If your council has formalised event planning processes or templates, review those documents to see how and where the alcohol-free component could be included. Sections that could reflect and celebrate the alcohol-free nature of the event include:

- purpose of the event
- what information will be included in event promotion and messaging
- how you will convey the alcohol-free aspect of the event to managers, venue owners and event staff
- how you will convey the alcohol-free aspect to community attending the event
- a risk plan to manage how alcohol marketing, sales or use would be addressed, if it occurs
- signage or other information required at the event.

If food and drink will be sold or provided, plan healthy food and healthy alcohol-free drink options that meet the [Healthy Choices guidelines](#). Make sure free water will be provided at all events and activities.

The [Vic Kids Eat Well](#) program and VicHealth's [Toolkit for creating healthy food and drink environment in community food retail outlets](#) include guidance and resources for planning healthy food and drink options and menus.

Prepare a communication plan

Prepare a communication plan to promote the events or activities to local children and families. This should cover how council will generate excitement, encourage attendance and promote positive messages about alcohol-free events to the community.

Here are some ideas to consider for communication plans:

- Prepare to use values-based key messages to promote the events. See VicHealth's Values-based messaging for health promotion guide for more information and guidance. Ground your promotion in the positive attitudes and change the project is aiming to influence. For example: 'Children and families want community events that are healthy, safe and enjoyable for everyone'.
- Plan for opportunities to involve children, parents and carers in developing the alcohol-free message and promoting the alcohol-free events.
- Identify a variety of communication channels to promote the events and activities, such as:
 - seeking children, parents and carers who can promote the events on local radio, news and in other forms of publicity
 - publishing news items on council's communication channels, including the council website and social media
 - displaying posters and promotional materials in local community centres and facilities, such as maternal and child health services, recreation centres and libraries
 - sharing promotional materials and communication templates with early childhood services and schools
 - asking local businesses to display promotional materials.

Design

Involve children in co-designing promotional materials for the events or activities, including by incorporating their ideas, words and artwork. Work with them on key promotional messages about why they value safe, fun and healthy events in the community.

Recommended resources

The [Kids Co-designing Healthy Places](#) resource can provide some initial ideas and tools for involving children in co-design of healthy places and could be adapted for co-designing healthy and fun events and activities.

Ideas for events or activities include:

- walks, fun runs, bike-riding and other sports events
- theatre, music and performances
- exhibitions
- fairs and festivals, such as children's film or music festivals
- farmers' markets, local produce or food festivals and picnics
- zoo, museum or botanical gardens events or activities.

Work with healthy sponsors

Consider if you need to seek sponsorship for council-run events from companies that do not seek to profit from products that are harmful to health and wellbeing. These include:

- children- or family-focused service providers and retailers (e.g. retailers of toys, books or children's clothes and children's entertainment, or education providers)
- health service providers (e.g. physiotherapy, dental services, allied health)
- sport, homeware, furniture, clothing and equipment retailers
- sport and recreation centres
- other local businesses such as banks, real estate agencies, local tourism operators, gardening business and trades businesses (e.g. building, plumbing, landscaping).

Crossover opportunity

Consider opportunities to promote alcohol awareness messages developed for 'Step up: Create a local alcohol awareness program to protect young children' as part of promotion of alcohol-free events and activities.

Deliver

Promote and deliver the council-run, alcohol-free events and activities for children and families, following the event plans and communication plans.

Ensure the alcohol-free message is promoted and celebrated throughout the day. Capture images or video footage for continued council use to celebrate children and families enjoying the event in a safe and healthy environment.

Review and embed

Monitor and evaluate impact and reach

Ensure any participant or stakeholder feedback surveys seek perspectives about the support for and feasibility of the alcohol-free aspect of the event.

Share key results with council leadership and work with council's budget processes to secure ongoing commitment, funding and resources for delivery of alcohol-free events and activities.

Consider how council could support partners or organisations to deliver and promote alcohol-free community events and activities. For example,

share the successful aspects of the action, highlight the good work of the partners involved, and share the communication plan as well as key messages developed by children.

Council may be able to offer some funding, venues and promotional support to partner events that similarly provide alcohol-free environments for children and families.

Recommended resources

- [Kids Co-designing Healthy Places](#) (Monash University project supported by VicHealth)
- The Alcohol and Drug Foundation's national [Local Drug Action Team program](#)
- [The Art of Community Alcohol Management: What local government can do to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm](#) (VicHealth and Alcohol and Drug Foundation guide)
- VicHealth's [Toolkit for creating healthy food and drink environment in community food retail outlets](#)
- VicHealth's [Alcohol Cultures Framework](#)
- VicHealth's [Values-based messaging for health promotion](#) guidance
- [Vic Kids Eat Well](#) resources (Cancer Council Victoria, Nutrition Australia and Victorian Government)





Step up:

Reduce the consumption and promotion of alcohol products at council-run festivals and events

Councils can prevent and minimise risks from alcohol-related harm and promote healthy, safe festivals and events through practices that reduce the consumption and promotion of alcohol products.

These actions will prevent or reduce harms from alcohol products and promote safer and more inclusive community events.

There are 2 key phases within this action:

1. review and redesign policies and procedures for hosting festivals and events
2. develop and implement a 'Healthy Sponsorships' policy.

This action aims to protect children and young people from advertising that alcohol companies use to promote harmful products at council-run events. To constitute successful completion, council should develop and implement a healthy sponsorship policy to not engage alcohol sponsors for council-run events where families, children or young people are present. If suitable, the policy could be integrated into an existing council policy such as an events policy.



How-to guide to:

Reduce the consumption and promotion of alcohol products at council-run festivals and events

Review and redesign policies and procedures for hosting festivals and events

Review councils policies that relate to festivals and events held on public property and ensure they support alcohol-free or low-risk drinking practices.

Crossover opportunity ↻

Refer to the sample action 1 (p.12) in ['The Art of Community Alcohol Management: What local government can do to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm'](#) guide for guidance on completing this phase.

Develop and implement a 'Healthy Sponsorship' policy

The policy would require council to not engage alcohol sponsors for council-run events aimed at families, children or young people.

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include sport and recreation, family and youth services, and festivals and events. Seek in-principle support for the approach from leaders of relevant teams.

Below are some key considerations to take into account when developing the healthy sponsorship policy. Consult widely with the relevant teams in your council and with trusted partners to come up with an approach that will work.



Plan

Determine your healthy sponsorship policy scope

Is the policy standalone or will the principles be integrated into existing policies, including:

- procurement policy
- sponsorship policy
- children and youth strategy
- Council Plan (this would allow high-level endorsement).

Quick Note

The Healthy Sponsorship policy would not include vendor retail relationships (e.g. sale of food or alcohol at events where the vendor could advertise at point-of-sale (immediate service area) only).

Allow for retail arrangements whereby alcohol vendors can sell products and advertise at the immediate point-of-sale, but not be sponsors of the event/s (noting that the sale of alcohol products at events primarily targeting children isn't appropriate).

It would also only be relevant to a sponsorship arrangement between the council and a company and wouldn't include existing semi or permanent advertising at event venues and spaces.

There are 2 options that council can consider for defining alcohol industries.

Broad

Include all alcohol industries. **For example, all:**

- producers (brands on alcohol products, brewers, wineries)
- alcohol industry-funded foundations (Drinkwise)
- retailers (bottle shops) and
- on-premise providers (pubs, clubs).

And then apply a risk or principles-based approach to decision-making (see step 2)

Limited

Include only alcohol industry associated with the most harm and whose sole or predominant activity is the sale of alcohol. **For example, all:**

- alcohol producers (brands which produce alcohol products)
- alcohol industry-funded foundations (Drinkwise)
- retailers (bottle shops).

This would not include:

- on-premise providers (pubs, clubs) or
- broader retailers who also sell alcohol (supermarket chains)

FIGURE 1: Defining alcohol industries

Articulate what events the policy applies to. For example, it may apply to all council-run events (including festivals, exhibitions, markets, music concerts) or council may limit the scope to include only those events that are targeted primarily towards families, young people or children (i.e. exclude certain exhibitions or music concerts targeting those aged over 18 years).

Applying it across all council-run events provides a consistent approach and would have the greatest impact. However, it may be easier to get buy-in by framing the policy specific to family, children and youth events.

Develop your decision-making process

If choosing a limited definition about which alcohol industries are included in the policy scope (as per Figure 1 above), apply a black-and-white decision-making approach that the council will not enter into sponsorships with those companies for any events primarily targeting families, young people or children that are run or commissioned by the council.

If choosing a broad definition (as per Figure 1 above), develop a decision-making guide. This can be approached using principles, risk assessments and/or matrixes.

Some examples of different approaches:

- Healthway Co-sponsorship [Policy and Procedure](#)
- Southern Metro Junior Football League
 - [Healthy Sponsorships Guide](#)
 - [Healthy Sponsorships Best Practice Guidelines](#)
- VicHealth harmful industry relationship funding and procurement [policy](#)



Design and Deliver

Write and implement the policy

Write up your healthy sponsorship policy (see the handy [template](#) at the end of this document) and progress the approval and implementation of the policy.

Consider alternative sponsors

Seek sponsorship for council-run events from companies that do not seek to profit from products that are harmful to health and wellbeing. These include:

- health service providers (e.g. physiotherapy, dental services, allied health)
- gardening or trades businesses (e.g. building, plumbing, landscaping)
- sport, homeware, furniture, clothing, equipment retailers
- sports/recreation centres
- banks, real estate, local tourism operators.

If council has an approved provider list, consider adding these types of companies and removing alcohol industries.





Step up:

Create a local alcohol awareness campaign to protect young children

To implement this 'step up' implementation action, councils will create and deliver a local program to promote alcohol awareness messages to target groups in the community, such as people who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, and families with young children.

Councils can leverage their position as a trusted source of information in the community and the wide range of communication channels into the community to ensure that facts are communicated clearly and without judgement. They can also focus on the right of children to be protected from the harms of alcohol use by parents, carers and others in the community. The goal is to increase supportive alcohol-free spaces for all adults with young children in their lives.



How-to guide to:

Create a local alcohol awareness campaign to protect young children

Involve people

Councils can involve local families in this action by seeking their input on alcohol awareness messages and engaging them as champions to support awareness-raising activities.



Plan

Decide on objectives and target groups or audiences for the program. This should be informed by evidence, and by surveys conducted at the Assess stage.

Objectives could be to raise awareness of:

- Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol in relation to pregnancy, breastfeeding and children
- risks of alcohol use during pregnancy or when planning a pregnancy, and FASD
- positive role modelling in relation to alcohol for young children
- the importance of ensuring young children do not have sips or tastes of alcohol
- where to find support for families in relation to alcohol or FASD
- how parents and carers support networks can contribute to a supportive environment for families.

Target groups for the program could include people in the municipality who are:

- pregnant
- planning a pregnancy
- parents or carers of young children
- parents or families at risk of alcohol harm or in need of support with alcohol.

Develop a project plan

Develop a project plan that sets out:

- objectives
- target groups/audiences
- time frame
- key awareness messages informed by evidence
- communication strategies, channels and activities
- materials and content that will be developed (e.g. posters, fact sheets)
- existing resources that can be used or adapted
- local media and public relations opportunities and strategies
- engagement of stakeholders, experts and champions to consult and/or seek support for the program
- available budget and staff resources
- an evaluation plan, including methods and key measures.

Use a wide range of channels throughout the program to ensure the best possible reach. Consider:

- offering free seminars or workshops for people who are pregnant, planning a pregnancy and parents or carers of young children
- integrating alcohol awareness messages in antenatal and parenting programs
- publishing news items on council's communication channels, including the council website and social media
- displaying posters, brochures and/or fact sheets in local community centres and facilities, including maternal and child health services, sports and recreation centres and libraries
- promoting messages at other community events
- sharing posters, brochures and/or fact sheets with early childhood services.

Engage with partners to support change

Consult with partners and stakeholders in developing the program and seek their support in promoting and amplifying alcohol awareness messages.

Consider forming a working group for the program. This could comprise relevant council staff, expert stakeholders and local health professionals, including maternal and child health nurses and individuals from community health services, and local parent champions.

Identify whether a [Local Drug Action Team](#) in the local community could be consulted and involved in the program, or whether there is an opportunity to form one with local partners to undertake this action.

See the VicHealth and Alcohol and Drug Foundation guide [The Art of Community Alcohol Management: What local government can do to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm](#) for advice on how councils can engage in strategic partnerships and collaborations to amplify alcohol harm-prevention strategies and programs.

Assess

Review evidence and resources

Review the [Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol](#) and evidence on the health impacts of alcohol, including in pregnancy and while breastfeeding, and FASD. Review evidence on alcohol and children, and parental influences on children and young people's alcohol use.

Review alcohol awareness campaigns for ideas, messages and resources that can be used or adapted for the program, including:

- The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education's national [Every Moment Matters alcohol and pregnancy campaign](#)

- Alcohol Think Again's [One Drink alcohol and pregnancy campaign](#) in Western Australia (Mental Health Commission and Cancer Council Western Australia)
- The Alcohol and Drug Foundation's national [You Haven't Been Drinking Alone campaign](#) on role modelling of alcohol consumption by parents and carers during COVID-19 lockdowns.

See the [Recommended Resources](#) section for further resources and communications materials that can be used or adapted for the program.

Quick Note

Every Moment Matters alcohol and pregnancy campaign

The [Every Moment Matters alcohol and pregnancy campaign](#) is a national campaign developed by the Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education, and endorsed and funded by the Australian Government Department of Health. The campaign aims to support Australians to stop drinking alcohol from the moment they start trying to get pregnant, and throughout all stages of pregnancy and while breastfeeding. The campaign launched in November 2021 and will run until July 2024.

The [Every Moment Matters website](#) includes a range of information and resources on alcohol, pregnancy, breastfeeding and FASD.

Engage local community members to inform the campaign

Consider surveying, engaging or conducting focus groups with local people to support key stages in the development of the action.

Including local perspectives can assist in:

- informing campaign objectives
 - understanding community awareness of the Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol in relation to pregnancy, breastfeeding and children
 - understanding community awareness of FASD
 - understanding alcohol use or intentions to use alcohol when pregnant, planning pregnancy or breastfeeding
 - understanding alcohol use in general (e.g. frequency and volume per week/month) and alcohol use at home when children are present
 - identifying if there is a need for support with alcohol
- testing and refining messages and strategies for the program
 - gaining feedback to ensure the approach is culturally safe, inclusive and relevant
 - collecting baseline data for evaluation of the program.

When asking about these topics, it is critical to choose engagement strategies that are sensitive to the information being collected. They should be offered in a safe and supportive environment without judgement. Be prepared to offer relevant support and information if the questions raise any difficulties or distress.

Assess council policies and processes

Identify and review relevant council strategic policies and plans that support the delivery of alcohol awareness and education programs, such as whether there are alcohol harm-reduction objectives in council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Investigate opportunities in council's budget process or grants programs to seek funding for the campaign.

Design

Design alcohol awareness messages, materials and resources

Ensure messages are informed by and consistent with values-based messaging advice. Base messages on attitudes and behaviours the program is aiming to encourage. For example:

- 'All children and families should be supported to be healthy and well'
- 'Staying alcohol-free while you are pregnant or trying to get pregnant will help keep you and your baby healthy'
- 'Avoiding alcohol or drinking at low levels at home helps kids learn healthy alcohol behaviours'.

See VicHealth's [values-based messaging for health promotion guide](#) for more information, and [register for updates](#) to keep informed about this work.

Design alcohol awareness materials and resources, such as:

- posters
- fact sheets
- flyers
- website content
- short videos
- newsletter and email templates
- social media tiles and templates
- content for seminars, workshops, and antenatal and parenting programs.

Deliver

Deliver the alcohol awareness program, following the program plan

Publish information resources on the council website, and communicate messages via council social media, local media and other channels. The council website should set out information about where families and individuals can find support with alcohol. This should include support services offered by council, and specialised alcohol support and FASD-informed services. See the [Recommended Resources](#) section.

Disseminate alcohol awareness messages and materials to stakeholders and local services, including maternal and child health services, early childhood services and council facilities. Encourage them to publish the information on their websites and share messages via their social media channels, email and newsletters.

Work with council's communications team to identify ongoing opportunities to promote the alcohol awareness messages, including in local media and via local champions.



Review and embed

Monitor and evaluate impact and reach

Conduct a follow-up survey of target groups following delivery of the program, using the same measures as for the Assess stage. Compare with baseline results from the Assess stage survey and identify any improvements or changes.

Seek feedback on any alcohol seminars, or on alcohol messages in antenatal and parenting programs provided to people in the target groups. Review feedback and implement changes to improve the content of these seminars and programs.

Share results

Share and publish key results from the program via the council website and social media.

Share results with council leadership to encourage funding and support for sustained delivery of alcohol awareness and education programs.

Embed

Work with council's budget processes to secure ongoing commitment and annual allocation of resources to deliver local alcohol awareness and education programs. Seek to embed objectives and programs on alcohol awareness and support for families and children in relevant council policies.



Recommended alcohol support resources

- Alcohol and Drug Foundation's national [You Haven't Been Drinking Alone](#) campaign
- [Alcohol Think Again website](#), including [information and evidence on alcohol sipping and children](#)
- Alcohol Think Again's [One Drink alcohol and pregnancy campaign](#) in Western Australia
- [Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol](#)
- [Every Moment Matters website](#), including [resources for health professionals](#) and [resources for people who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy](#)
- [Growing Up in Australia report chapter on parental influences on adolescents' alcohol use](#)
- The Alcohol and Drug Foundation's [Path2Help](#) tool is designed to help people find alcohol and other drug information and support tailored to their needs.
- The [Women's Alcohol and Drug Service](#) provides services to women with complex substance-use dependence, and care of infants exposed to alcohol and drugs in pregnancy.

See the following websites for lists of alcohol support services:

- [Australian Government Department of Health](#)
- [Every Moment Matters](#)
- [Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education](#)
- [Turning Point](#)
- [Victorian Government Department of Health](#).

For general guidance, see [The Art of Community Alcohol Management: What local government can do to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm](#) (VicHealth and Alcohol and Drug Foundation guide).

Recommended FASD resources

- [Every Moment Matters fact sheet on FASD](#)
- [FASD Hub](#)
- [NOFASD Australia website](#)



Ambitious:

Reduce the consumption and promotion of alcohol products on council-owned land

Many community organisations, groups, clubs who use council-owned/run public spaces and venues have sponsorship arrangements.

Many community organisations, groups, clubs who use council-owned/run public spaces and venues have sponsorship arrangements.

This activity involves implementing '[Step Up: Healthy sponsorships at council run events](#)' PLUS the phasing-out of alcohol and unhealthy food and drink advertising on council-owned and operated public spaces such as sporting grounds and council land. When a council-owned facility is leased, licensed or hired, the applicant tenant must abide by conditions set by the council in regard to alcohol supply and advertising.

There are 3 key phases required to complete this implementation action:

- develop an alcohol policy for leases
- encourage sports clubs to join ADF's Good Sports Program
- develop a policy for phasing out alcohol advertising on council-owned or run assets and spaces.



How-to guide to:

Reduce the consumption and promotion of alcohol products on council-owned land

Develop an alcohol policy for leases

Develop a policy for facilities that council leases or licences to the public that covers alcohol product consumption and supports alcohol-free or low-risk drinking practices.

The policy might take the form of minimum requirements reinforced via property leases, checklists or an alcohol management plan modelled on those used by council's events team. Elements of an alcohol management plan could include:

- where events/activities predominantly involve those aged under 18 years (e.g. junior presentation night), they must be alcohol-free
- where alcohol is to be available, served, sold or supplied, provide a full range of non-alcoholic alternatives and low strength alcohol options. Free water is to be available at licensed premises at all times

- ensure alcoholic products are served in standard-sized drink portions
- no activities or promotions that encourage rapid consumption of alcohol products (e.g. discounted drink prices, happy hours, drinking competitions).
- ensure that the supply and availability of alcohol does not occur at or within the direct view of family and children. This includes council buildings such as community centres, where principal activities involve participation of families and children, or other sensitive community land use activities.

Crossover opportunity ↻

Refer to sample action 1 (p.17) in [‘The Art of Community Alcohol Management: What local government can do to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm’](#).

Encourage sports clubs to join ADF’s Good Sports Program

Community sport plays an important role in community wellbeing, and participation in sport is an important protective factor for alcohol and other drug use and to build mental health resilience. The Good Sports program provides initiatives and support for sports clubs to create family-friendly environments through strengthening positive social practices reducing the impact of alcohol in sports environments.

Councils should strongly encourage sporting clubs that lease council facilities and serve alcohol to become members of the ADF’s [Good Sports Program](#).

Develop a policy for prohibiting alcohol advertising on council-owned or managed land, such as sponsorship signs on sporting ovals

Refer to sample action 4 (p.18) in [‘The Art of Community Alcohol Management: What local government can do to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm’](#) guide and (LGA Tool 1: [sample policy](#)) for alcohol product availability, sponsorship and advertising on council-owned land.

Crossover opportunity ↻

Refer to guidance on developing a [‘Healthy Sponsorships’ policy](#) in [‘Step Up: Reduce the consumption and promotion of alcohol products at council-run festivals and events’](#) action in this module.



Extra implementation support resources

Alcohol and Drug Foundation



Celebrating more than 60 years of service to the community, the ADF is Australia's leading organisation committed to inspiring positive change and delivering evidence-based approaches to minimise alcohol and drug harm. <https://community.adf.org.au/>

'The Art of Community Alcohol Management: What local government can do to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm' Guide

This guide has been developed by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) and VicHealth to explore what Victorian local governments can do to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm, creating safer and healthier communities in their municipalities. In addition to the information referred to in the intervention section, this guide also has a suite of tools and templates that will support your council to deliver alcohol-harm prevention actions. The guide is available at [Local Gov guide & tools | Community Hub \(adf.org.au\)](https://community.adf.org.au/local-gov-guide)

Local Drug Action Teams

The [Local Drug Action Team \(LDAT\)](https://community.adf.org.au/ldat-program/) provides a key opportunity to engage community to work together to strengthen factors found to protect young people from the risk of both alcohol and other drug harm and mental health issues. LDATs are supported by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation to develop a tailored Community Action Plan addressing alcohol and other drug issues in their community, with opportunities to apply for further funding to support the delivery of their activities. As a council, supporting an LDAT in your community by leading a team or partnering with an existing one is a great way to support increased program delivery in your community.

Find out more: <https://community.adf.org.au/ldat-program/>

The Good Sport Program



With over 10,000 Good Sports clubs and growing, the Good Sports Program impacts approximately 2.5 million Australians. The Good Sports program has a strong track record in reducing alcohol and drug related harm and building protective factors within sports clubs.

Find out more: <https://goodsports.com.au/>

Community of Practice

A Community of Practice will be provided to fast-track councils working through the health promotion modules, giving them the opportunity to share with, learn from and support each other through implementation.

Together, councils with expert partners and young people will share experiences and insights about the suggested activities within the stretch modules. They will also look at topics related to the VicHealth Local Government Partnership more broadly and the development and adoption of Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans 2021–25.

Council staff interested in finding out more about participating in the Communities of Practice and the VicHealth Local Government Partnership health promotion modules can get in touch with our team at lgp@vichealth.vic.gov.au.





Template

Healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events

(can be adapted to apply to just alcohol)

Policy objective

This policy aims to reduce the negative health and social impacts of unhealthy food and alcohol marketing to children and young people by not accepting sponsorships from unhealthy food and alcohol companies for council-run events.

Policy rationale

Council has a responsibility to provide for the health and wellbeing of its municipal community. Children and young people in our community deserve to grow up in an environment that supports their healthy growth and development and protects them from marketing of harmful products. Children and young people are targets of marketing because of their own spending ability, their influence on parent spending, and because it fosters their lifelong brand loyalty¹.

Alcohol and unhealthy food brands seek sponsorship arrangements with community events where children and young people socialise, play, learn and create. This allows brands to promote harmful products to children and young people and increase product sales. And it works – research shows that marketing unhealthy food to children results in them preferring, buying more and eating more unhealthy food².

Similarly, exposure to alcohol marketing in teenagers is linked to an earlier onset of drinking for non-drinkers and increased drinking among those already drinking³.

This policy will reduce children and young people's exposure to harmful products such as unhealthy food and alcohol, and contribute to protecting their health, safety and wellbeing. Furthermore, this policy aligns with the objectives outlined in the [Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan/Council Plan] to support the health and wellbeing of our community including [list relevant objectives here, (e.g. reduced obesity rates, promote healthy eating, reduced harm from alcohol, improved mental wellbeing, increased community safety)].

Policy scope

This policy applies to unhealthy food and alcohol brand/company sponsorship (harmful sponsorship) of [specify types of events, for example, it may apply to all council-run events (including festivals, exhibitions, markets, music concerts) or only those events that are targeted primarily towards families, young people or children (may not include certain exhibitions or music concerts targeting those aged over 18 years)]. It does not include vendor retail relationships (e.g. sale of food or alcohol at events where the vendor could advertise at point-of-sale (immediate service area) only).

1. Story M & French S. Food Advertising and Marketing Directed at Children and Adolescents in the US. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*. 2004. 1(1), p.3. doi:10.1186/1479-5868-1-3

2. Cairns G, Angus K & Hastings G. The extent, nature and effects of food promotion to children: A review of the evidence to December 2008. 2009. World Health Organization: Geneva, Switzerland.

3. Anderson P, de Bruijn A, Angus, K et al. Impact of Alcohol Advertising and Media Exposure on Adolescent Alcohol Use: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*. 2009. 44(3), 229-243. doi:10.1093/alcalc/agn115

Increasing Alcohol Harm Prevention at a Local Level

VicHealth Local Government Partnership – Stretch Module

Policy scope *cont.*

Sponsorship is where companies support an event financially in exchange for brand exposure and promotion to attendees.

[Choose from broad or limited definition below or devise your own]

[Example of broad definition]

Council will assess the potential harm of all food and beverage industries seeking to sponsor council events using **[insert description of your risk or principles-based approach to decision-making outlined in the ‘sponsor’ approval process section of the module]**.

In the case of alcohol, this includes brands shown on alcohol products, brewers, wineries, alcohol industry-funded foundations (Drinkwise), retailers (bottle shops) and on-premise providers (pubs, clubs).

[Example of limited definition]

Harmful sponsorship is defined as marketing activities by food, beverage and alcohol industries associated with the most harm and whose sole or predominate activity is the sale of alcohol or unhealthy food and drink. This includes: **[include from list or determine own]**

- **Alcohol producers (brands that produce alcohol products), alcohol industry-funded foundations (Drinkwise) and retailers (bottle shops). This would not include on-premise providers (pubs, clubs) or broader retailers who also sell alcohol (supermarket chains).**
- **All types of confectionery (including lollies and chocolate), processed food brands (cereals) and sugar-sweetened drink (including soft drinks, sports drinks, fruit drinks with less than 99% fruit, cordials and energy drinks) brands and fast food/chain food businesses⁴. This does not include local businesses (such as a pizza shop).**

Policy scope *cont.*

[Outline your council’s administrative process for assessing and approving sponsors, including the key decision-makers]

[If council is using a limited definition of harmful sponsorship in the policy scope]

Where potential sponsors meet the definition of a harmful sponsor (as defined in the policy scope), Council will not enter into a sponsorship arrangement with them.

[If council is using a broad definition of harmful sponsorship in the policy scope]

Where potential sponsors meet the definition of harmful sponsorship, the Council’s risk assessment is applied and Council will not enter into a sponsorship arrangement with a high-risk sponsor.

[Outline if there are other types of sponsorships that council will proactively seek, which may include a focus on healthy, local, ethical or other business types]

4. A chain food business (fast food outlet) is food premises that sells at least one standard food item (ready-to-eat that is standardised for size and content) available in at least 2 chain food premises. A chain food business has 20 or more outlets in Victoria, or 50 or more outlets nationally, including at least one outlet in Victoria.



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VicHealth acknowledges the Traditional
Custodians of the land. We pay our respects
to all Elders past, present and future.



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