

Media Release

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New projects to challenge risky drinking cultures

Health promotion foundation VicHealth will provide almost \$1 million in funding to four creative new projects to help reduce risky drinking across Victoria.

The projects, funded under [VicHealth's Alcohol Culture Change initiative](#), will look to change alcohol drinking cultures in a range of groups, including residential college university students, construction workers, and baby-boomer and generation X drinkers in regional and rural areas.

Successful projects include:

- A mobile phone intervention project and social media campaign targeting university students living on campus led by Victoria University
- A peer support program driven by friends, families and peers of gen-x and baby-boomer heavy drinkers in regional and rural Victoria, led by Hello Sunday Morning
- A campaign to create a culture of support and encouragement to reduce risky drinking among lesbian, bisexual and queer middle-aged women living in regional areas, led by the Victorian AIDS Council
- An industry-led program targeting construction workers, led by Better Life Group.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said the new projects aimed to increase social support for low-risk drinking and reduce the impact of alcohol on the health and wellbeing of Victorians.

"Reducing the social acceptability of risky drinking is key to changing the drinking culture in Victoria," Ms Rechter said.

"We know that one-size doesn't fit all – Victoria is a diverse state with many drinking cultures. These new projects will target groups of people most likely to drink at risky levels, including students living on campus and construction workers."

Ms Rechter said although youth drinking was often in the spotlight it was becoming increasingly common for middle-aged and older Victorians to drink at risky levels.

"Sadly generation X and baby boomers are more likely to end up in hospital than their younger peers as a result of their excess alcohol use," she said.

"Most of these new projects will target older drinkers, providing them with social support to reduce their alcohol consumption.

"This initiative is about people socially supporting one another to reduce high risk drinking, resulting in reduced harm for themselves, their family and friends, those in the vicinity and the broader community."

For more information, go to: www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/programs-and-projects/alcohol-culture-change-initiative.

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