

Question on Notice
No. 576
Asked on 17 April 2008

MRS LAVARCH asked the Minister for Health (Mr ROBERTSON)-

QUESTION:

Will he advise what measures are being taken to discourage underage drinking?

ANSWER:

I am greatly concerned about the impact of alcohol on the health of Queenslanders, particularly among teenagers and young people who are increasingly drinking in a harmful manner.

Queensland Health is committed to preventing and delaying the onset of drinking, and minimising harm for young people who have already started drinking. This is being achieved through investment in alcohol and other drug prevention programs which seek to increase protective factors, reduce risk factors and build resiliency, resulting in positive outcomes for individuals, families and the community.

A range of prevention programs that aim to prevent underage drinking are implemented by Queensland Health under the Government's *Queensland Drug Strategy*. These include:

- mass media campaigns, such as the *Young Women and Alcohol Campaign*, to support and encourage the choice not to drink, raise awareness and understanding of the harms of intoxication and promote drinking within low-risk guidelines;
- school-based programs to help build young people's resiliency and refusal skills such as the School Based Youth Health Nurse Program which provides prevention and support for students;
- the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P), which is one of the first steps in reducing risk factors for drug use;
- community-based prevention programs including the *Good Sports* program which encourages sporting clubs to adopt responsible alcohol management practices, and provides safe environments for players and families; and
- the delivery of District-based Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Services which focus on health promotion, prevention and treatment services for alcohol misuse.

Queensland Health also supports and contributes to the implementation of the *Queensland School Drug Education Strategy* involving community and school responses to alcohol and other drug use, and constructive interventions with students involved in drug use at school.

Other Government initiatives such as Schoolies harm minimisation strategies, mental health promotion programs, the Indigenous 'Partnerships Queensland' strategy, and Education Queensland initiatives, also significantly contribute to preventing and discouraging underage drinking. The Treasurer also has significant responsibility for restricting and regulating access and availability of alcohol by young people through his administration of the Liquor Act.

It is also important to remember that our efforts in helping adults to drink responsibly play an important role in re-orienting young people's views of drinking, and sending positive messages about the choice not to drink, or to drink at low-risk levels.

In addition, Queensland Health's activities that support healthy, cohesive, and strong communities contribute to shaping the development of young people, encouraging them to make healthy and positive life choices.