

Press Release – April 2007

New report on the drinking habits of Kalgoorlie-Boulder residents released by KAAP

The Kalgoorlie Alcohol Action Project has just released a report on the drinking habits of local residents, their perceptions of the harms of excessive alcohol consumption and on local alcohol related interventions. The survey was carried out in the later half of 2006 as part of a 3.5 year whole of community initiative that seeks to prevent problematic alcohol use and remediate associated harm in a community, which historically has had high levels of both.

Project Coordinator Fredrik Welander said that the survey has revealed some unexpected findings particularly in relation to young women's drinking habits. "Based on previous studies from rural areas, we expected results to show that Kalgoorlie residents drink more than the state average, but we certainly didn't expect Kalgoorlie men to binge drink at almost twice the state average and more worryingly, for Kalgoorlie women to binge drink at almost three times the state average." Drinking at these levels can lead to a whole range of health and social problems in both the long term and short term he added.

The report also found that alcohol related violence, public drunkenness and drink driving were the three main alcohol related problems in the community and that these issues have got worse or much worse in the past year. "And this is clearly illustrated through the numerous public drunkenness and drunk driving incidents reported recently in the media".

Among the other findings of the survey were an overall lack of awareness on the harms of excess alcohol use among Kalgoorlie-Boulder residents as well as a lack of awareness of the interventions that are currently being operated in the community. "These results are disappointing because there are quite a few ongoing interventions in the community already but they are obviously not being promoted adequately" said Fredrik Welander.

On a positive note, the report found that there is community support for measures designed to reduce problems associated with excessive use of alcohol. "This is a very good outcome as it shows that the residents of Kalgoorlie-Boulder are keen to do something to reduce alcohol related harm in their community, however they are not too sure of what could be done, and this is where we come in and recommend interventions based on solid research".

The report also makes a number of recommendations to increase awareness of the issue and address some of the already existing alcohol

related problems in our community. These interventions will be carried out together with other local organisations, and will have the input of the community.

The complete report is available for download from the Kalgoorlie Alcohol Action Project website at www.ndri.curtin.edu.au/kaap, which also has a other information related to the project and their campaigns.

For further media information please contact:

Fredrik Welander, Project Coordinator, Kalgoorlie Alcohol Action Project
Tel: 08 9088 6042 Mobile: 0416 777 023