

# School leavers' celebrations: Tips for celebrating students

This information is based on surveys with 402 young people who went to *Leavers* at a popular Western Australian celebration site. As heavier drinkers are more likely to go to events such as *Leavers*, this information does not represent what the 'average' young person in Western Australia does.

## Other leavers probably aren't drinking as much as you think

Although heavy drinking was commonplace, most young people overestimated what other leavers were drinking. The heaviest drinkers may attract the most attention, but they don't necessarily represent the 'average leaver'.

## Drinking can lead to unexpected results

During the celebrations, 87% of surveyed leavers reported at least one negative consequence they said was due to alcohol or other drug use. For example, 58% reported a blackout, 67% a hangover, 45% an emotional outburst, 41% an accident or injury, 21% had sex they later regretted, and 14% had unprotected sex.

## Caffeine is also a drug

Remember, alcohol and caffeine are both drugs. Caffeine might be consumed in energy drinks, soft drinks, coffee or pills. Leavers who used caffeine in combination with alcohol were at greater risk of accidents or injuries, emotional outbursts, heated arguments and hangovers. Caffeine 'masks' the feeling of being drunk, and is associated with the consumption of greater quantities of alcohol, and greater experience of harms.

## Further information

You can access general drug and alcohol information at [www.alcoholthinkagain.com.au](http://www.alcoholthinkagain.com.au) or the **Alcohol and Drug Information Service** on **(08) 9442 5000** or **1800 198 024**.

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## Tips for enjoying *Leavers* and other events

The national guidelines recommend that it is safest for young people not to drink at all. However, if you do decide to drink, here are some tips that might help reduce the risk of you or your mates experiencing negative outcomes:



- Remember to look after your mates: it is possible to overdose on alcohol – if you are concerned, call for help – you may save their life.
- Don't avoid calling for an ambulance because you're afraid of what the police may do. Everyone's concern is the safety of the individual.
- Don't drive a car if you are intoxicated, and don't get in a car with an intoxicated driver.
- Drink water. Alcohol is the worst way to quench your thirst – it makes you more dehydrated – and be sure to eat a full meal before drinking.
- Try to stay away from groups that look like they want to pick a fight. If someone says something insulting to you, try not to look like you've taken offence, and walk away.
- What you do at *Leavers* doesn't necessarily stay at *Leavers*. Be aware that somebody might post pictures or a video of you online. If you later regret what you did, do you want everybody to know about it?
- Don't leave your drink unattended.
- Drink at your own pace. If you try to keep up with someone else, you might start to feel sick a lot more quickly than them. Everybody has a different 'tolerance' to alcohol.
- Check to see if any agencies will be roving about at your *Leavers* – it's good to know who is around if you need help.
- Before you go to *Leavers*, talk with your friends and parents about other ways you can keep safe (you might not remember to talk about this stuff once you're at *Leavers*).
- Bring activities to *Leavers* that you and your friends enjoy – such as games to play on the beach or a games console – and attend events that have been set up. If you don't plan other things to do, you'll get bored eventually.



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