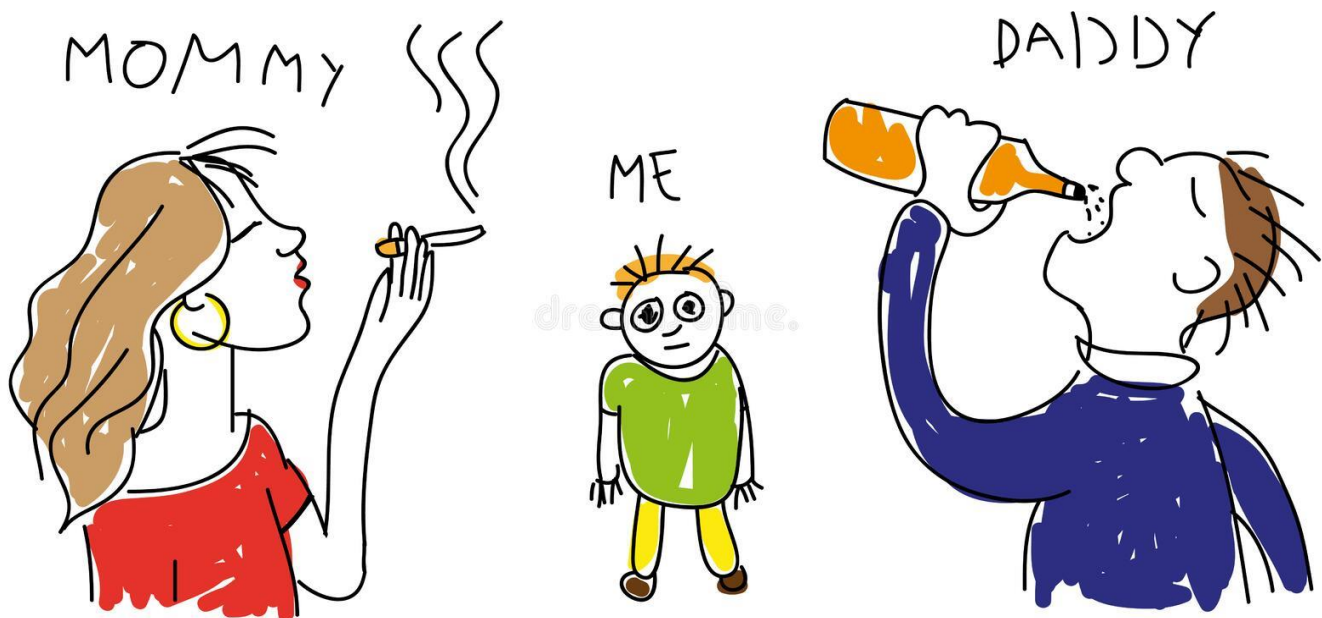


Can Community Leadership Support The Planet Youth Trial?



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Executive Summary

The Limestone Coast Leadership Program is in its third year in 2021.

A major part of the Leadership Program is to work on a Community Action Project (CAP). Participants were put into groups to work together as a team, identify and investigate problems and exercise leadership by applying skills learnt through the program. Each Project topic was based around a complex issue that is faced by the communities in the Limestone Coast.

This CAP focuses on the question **“Can Community Leadership Support the Planet Youth Trial?”**

As a group, we worked together to identify key stakeholders who would help us understand profoundly the complexity of Substance Misuse particularly in the Limestone Coast and the work that is currently being conducted around the issue.

The work within our group was based around the following areas:

1. Understanding the Planet Youth Trial
2. Collecting information and data through various community engagements
3. Form recommendations on how to implement the Planet Youth Program

We conducted face to face interviews with key stakeholders including leaders of local Councils and Substance Misuse Limestone Coast to give us their insight on the issue around substance misuse amongst youth in the Limestone Coast. We used Social Media to collect data from parents on what they think about the issue of substance misuse in youth.

Following the collection of the data, it has become very evident of the main contributing factors:

- A dominant drinking culture
- Connection (or lack of) within families and communities
- Taking responsibility for our youth and the issue
- Education around Substance Misuse
- Making support as transparent and easily accessible as possible

The most concerning substance abuse, although bad, is not in fact hard drugs. It is something found in nearly every home and consumed in front of our children - alcohol.

Alcohol in our society is the most accepted and normalised drug and is in fact the only one that a dependent person can die from when suddenly withdrawn from consumption.

Although various projects and initiatives are in place to support the collection of data and education of the adolescence, our research and stakeholder interviews have shown that there are a lot more opportunities for our communities on how to implement the Planet Youth Trial such as:

- Schools to implement evidence based alcohol and other drug education for students
- Parental education programs
- Parents to spend more time with their children during leisure time
- Sporting and social clubs to mentor their young members
- Councils to provide information of activity groups and so acting as a connecting platform for young people with the same interests

Substance Misuse in young people is a very serious problem and it is everybody's responsibility to educate, guide and support people through this very important phase in their lives.

The Challenge

The question was to determine if the Planet Youth Trial could be implemented on the Limestone Coast. While attempting to face this question during the initial stages of the CAP, it quickly became clear that this topic is far more complex than first assumed. It was new to us focusing on how the community can help implement the Planet Youth Trial, while applying the tools of adaptive leadership that we've learnt during the last 8 months rather than trying to solve only the technical issues.

*"The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking.
It cannot be changed without changing our thinking."*

- Albert Einstein

The biggest challenge to face is the cultural aspect about the topic, especially the consumption of alcohol. It is seen as very normal to drink. To drink regularly, to drink early in the day, to drink while visiting family activities or sporting clubs, etc.

Understanding the Planet Youth Trial

Substance misuse is a global issue and there have been several approaches that various countries have tried to reduce the substance misuse amongst youth. One of them is the Planet Youth Trial which began in Iceland in 1999.

In 2019, The Limestone Coast was one of five sites selected for the Planet Youth Trial by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation, with the program coordinated by local drug action team Substance Misuse Limestone Coast (SMLC).

What is the Planet Youth Trial you ask?

Planet Youth is an international evidence-based primary prevention model, developed by the Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis (ICSRA) at Reykjavik University. It was initially developed to reduce substance use rates amongst young people.

Risk and protective factors play an important role in young people's lives. Risk factors can contribute to a young person starting misuse substances, while protective factors prevent them from doing so. Being young is in itself a risk factor - young people are in a constant struggle to establish their identities.

Planet Youth collects information from the whole youth population. It is a snapshot of what is happening in our youths lives so that we can help prevent their decline into a life of substance abuse where it then turns into treatment rather than prevention. The trial is currently aimed at year 10 students. It is such a fantastic opportunity to discover what the contributing factors are that drive our youth into substance abuse. Who better to ask than those who are directly in that phase of their lives. Planet Youth surveys in the Limestone Coast were conducted in 2019 with further surveys to come in 2021.

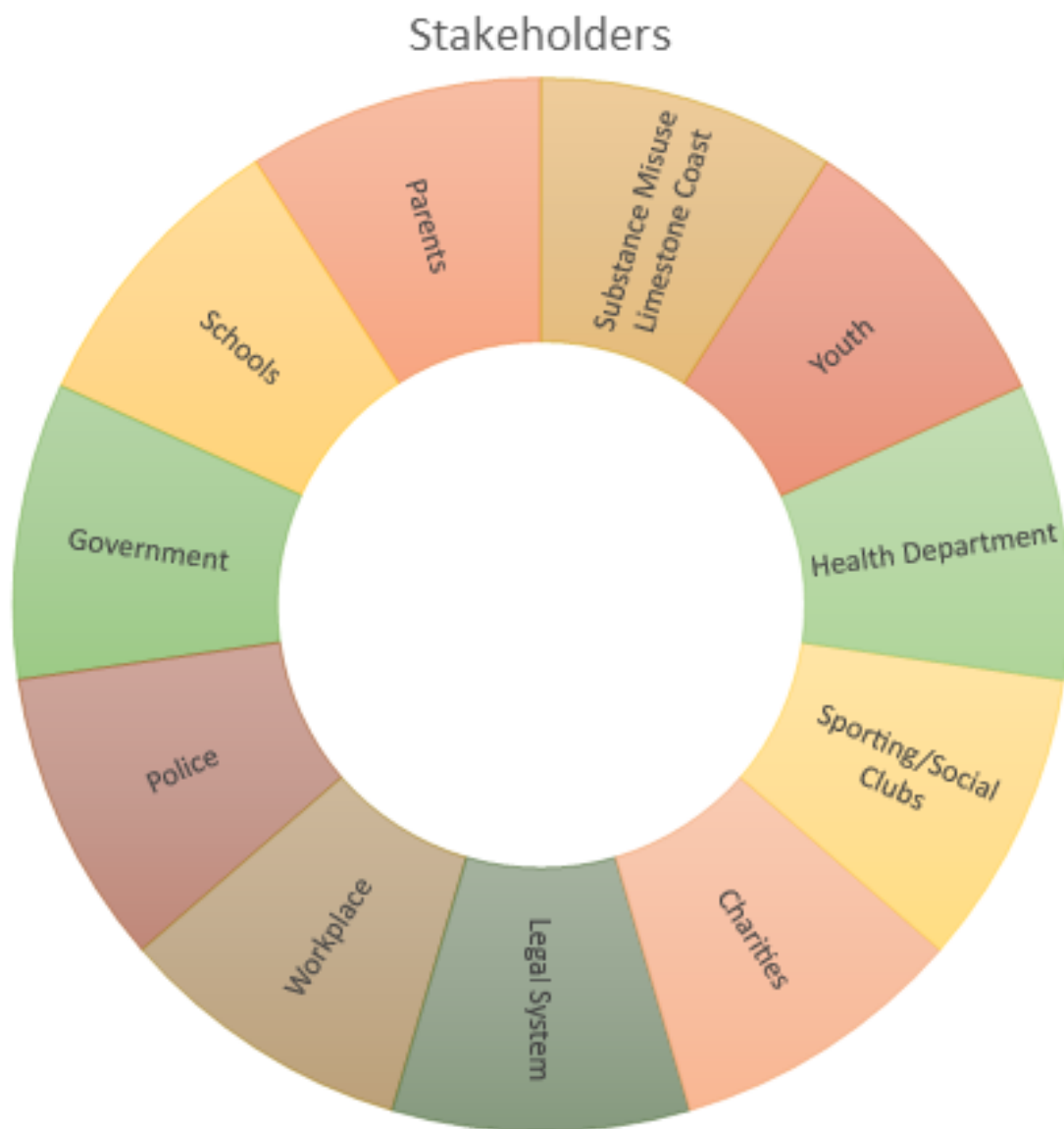
Read more about the program on their website - [Planet Youth | Substance Misuse Limestone Coast \(smlc.org.au\)](https://planetyouth.org.au/substance-misuse-limestone-coast)

Methodology

Our Vision

That all young people live in a healthy, safe environment, connected to their family, supported by their community and free of substance misuse or supported to escape it.

Identification of Stakeholders



A range of stakeholders with an interest in the topic were identified. This report will focus on three Stakeholders where potential positive outcomes could stem from - Parents, Community Groups and Schools. Sophie Bouchier from Substance Misuse Limestone Coast was always available to us and she was a very big help during the whole process. Sophie has undertaken a lot of work already to identify the extent of this problem in our local government areas.

Integrated Quadrant Thinking

<p>Psychological lens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good outcomes for children Youth to stay in the area Bright Future Safety Reputation Loss of Identity Experience of resistance Feel Uncontrollable Feel disconnected 	<p>Behavioural Lens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of resources Attitudes Financial Loss Insufficient Facilities Teamwork Longevity of the trial Education Accountability
<p>Cultural lens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They don't know about the problem Drinking is normalised Exposure starts early "it's not my problem" (deflect responsibilities) Peer Pressure Parents exposure young people to it 	<p>System Lens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Loss of income No Framework Manpower (Human Resources)

Stakeholder Engagement and Findings

Stakeholder Interviews

After identifying stakeholders, developing questions for the interviews was the next step in the process.

Interviews were conducted with:

- Sophie Bouchier - Limestone Coast Substance Misuse
- Gemma Winterborn - Manager Community Centre Millicent
- Des Noll - Mayor Wattle Range Council
- Richard Sage - Mayor District Council of Grant
- Trevor Smart - CEO Naracoorte Lucindale Council
- Joel Munro - Principal Sunrise Christian School, Naracoorte

Key Findings from Interviews:

Question	Finding
Do you know about the Planet Youth Trial?	Yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 2019 the Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) invited Limestone Coast Substance Misuse to coordinate the Planet Youth Trial in the Limestone Coast• Limestone Coast Local Government Association organised Planet Youth presentation From this, a committee was formed, and funding was also sourced from the Federal Government with administration and support from the LCLGA
What opportunities do you see to reduce the resources, emotional and social damage done by substance misuse?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better promotion for support/help opportunities• Education for students and parents• Parents to play important roles in their children's lives• Clubs to take responsibility for their young members• Parents and community members to act as role models• Communication and cooperation between stakeholders• Councils to support the clear and concise health promotion messaging for societal change

<p>What problems with substance abuse have you observed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People end up in prison • Not enough funding to face the issue • Suicides • Lack of education • Cost from alcohol related harm is estimated to exceed \$15.3 billion • For illegal drugs it exceeds \$8.2 billion <p>Every year in Australia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5552+ people die from alcohol related injuries, illness and accidents • 144,000 people are hospitalised due to alcohol • 3000+ people die from drug related deaths (higher than the road toll)
<p>How can communities contribute to implementing the Planet Youth Trial?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools to implement evidence based alcohol and other drug (AOD) education for secondary students • Parents to play important roles in monitoring their children's leisure time, into family time and more supervised activities in the community • Parents to become more involved in their children's structured activities with more volunteering to supervise sport and other structured leisure activities • Clubs to mentor their young members during structured time • Parents to implement rules around screen time and be role models with their own screen use • Parents getting to know their child's friends' parents • Parents making commitments in not allowing teenage children to drink alcohol anywhere at any time • Parents and leisure clubs being a collective voice for communicating about the importance of not allowing children to drink alcohol anywhere at any time • Councils to support the clear and concise health promotion messaging for societal change • Community members support the clear and concise health promotion messaging for societal change and not encouraging alcohol use for minors

Parents

Parents of school aged children were asked to participate in a survey to find out more about their opinion/knowledge on the topic. 25 parents completed the survey.

The key findings are:

- 94% do not know about the Planet Youth Trial
- 24% talk about substance misuse at home frequently
- 96% have not offered their children substances
- 92% drink alcohol around their children
- 84% wish sporting clubs would take more responsibility with their role in educating the youth about substances
- 92% support the display of substance education material in the community
- 68% think that there is a culture of drinking
- 48% do not know where to get help/support from

See the full results of the survey in [Appendix 1.](#)

Schools

Schools are one of the main players in educating our children whilst working alongside parents to help empower them.

The Planet Youth Trial is effectively working with schools on the Limestone Coast to gather the information from the youth in year 10. It's a great snapshot and is a vital tool to gauge where to direct resources.

Schools participating and undertaking the Planet Youth Surveys are:

- Grant High School Mount Gambier
- Mount Gambier High School
- Allendale East Area School
- St Martin's Lutheran College (Mount Gambier)
- Millicent High School
- Kangaroo Inn Area School (Beachport)
- Kingston Community School
- Keith High School
- Bordertown High School
- Naracoorte High School
- Penola High School

Currently Lucindale Area School Leadership Team have declined the offer to participate. This makes them the only Government Secondary School that won't be participating. Reasons unknown.

Results of the survey show that parents would be very supportive of education in schools starting at an age appropriate level of year 4 or 5. Also increased education material in schools and parental education events would be widely accepted. Substance misuse is a topic that needs to be regularly and positively reinforced from many directions, with schools being one of those.

Local Community Groups

Did you know 43% (9.0 million) of Australians aged 14 and over have used an illicit drug in their life and 16% (3.4 million) had used it in the last 12 months. In fact, 12.7% of people aged 16-24 are estimated to have a substance use disorder, with higher rates among young men than young women. (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2021). Drug use among young people remains concerning as these age groups are susceptible to permanent damage from alcohol and other drug use as their brains are still developing, which makes them a vulnerable population.

The influence that our community groups have on our youth is severely underestimated. It is vital that the culture in these clubs is of responsible consumption of substances, particularly alcohol and to promote a positive and responsible attitude towards the consumption of alcohol and that harder substances are strongly discouraged.

There are currently clubs that do not allow alcohol consumption until a certain time or some not at all. This is an amazing example to show that alcohol is not needed to enjoy yourselves, but that a responsible amount can be consumed at the conclusion of the events without going overboard. It will only strengthen the connection between community groups and families if they share the same values.

From the survey results, it's clear there is a strong community desire for our clubs to have a heavier hand in the education and responsibility of setting the appropriate example for our children.

Conclusion

We are all stakeholders in this! When it comes to raising children, the old saying “it takes a village to raise a child” is still very much a true statement. Education and assistance in awareness from and within all of us will make a positive impact on the dependence of substances in our communities. Ultimately, everyone is responsible to ensure our youth are raised in an environment that nurtures, supports and connects with them.

The fact of living in a culture based around drinking alcohol is very concerning and hard to address. Alcohol is the highest abused substance and is the cause of more deaths than other drugs, yet in our society it is the most accepted and normalised. It is in most households and is a legal substance to consume, giving the impression that it is safe to do so. In the appropriate levels it is, however, education on how our bodies become dependent on it is an elementary part of prevention. Not only education around the effects of alcohol on the brains and bodies, but to help educate on the relationship we should foster with alcohol. This is a major cultural shift and will take a lot of little steps to inflict change. Also making resources - Substance Misuse Limestone Coast, Alcohol and Drug Foundation, etc. available, transparent, and public for affected people is a major step in the progress of supporting substance dependent individuals. People need to know where to get help from if they need such.

“The opposite of addiction is not sobriety. It is connection.”

- Johann Hari

The most important tool to focus on and work with to prevent substance misuse in our youth is connection.

The founding connections that any human makes begins at home from their childhood and shapes how they see any relationships in the future, either in a positive or negative light. Parents need to CONNECT with their children, in a way that THEY want to connect. It has been a constant theme throughout all of the research we have conducted over the last few months, that substance abuse is prevalent where connections are lacking. And it doesn't have to be a connection to a person, it is our youth needing a purpose. At home, it is having a common thread that binds the family together.

How can community help implement the Planet Youth Trial?- Recommendations

School Surveys

It would be highly beneficial to reach a slightly younger demographic, late primary to early high school students. This is the age where if their energies are channelled into positive connections, even more of our youth may be prevented from entering the world of substance abuse. Conducting the Planet Youth Trial survey at a younger age group, possibly year 8 as well as the year 10 may help to track if any changes implemented in the community have been effective.

Evidence based Drug Education Program

A drug education program that is taught by qualified substance educators that would then educate all staff at the schools how to pass on the information. This way, a uniformed message is portrayed no matter what school your children attend, and if they change schools, they will still receive the information. Children are exposed to these substances much younger than historically, and in many different ways. This needs to be reflected in the education material provided.

Availability of Education/Information/Support Material

Australia is home for many people of different nationalities, cultures and languages. Provide flyer, education and information material in different languages. (The Australian Migrant Resource Centre in Naracoorte)

Cultural norms that discourage substance misuse

Family atmosphere - Challenge sporting clubs and groups to encourage a better family friendly atmosphere that is not centred on making money from alcohol, but that is centred on the activity and being a part of a group - to fuel the connection to the club and families. Perhaps other revenue streams could be devised so that the sale of alcohol is not the future of our clubs.

Limitations of offerings - Lets challenge clubs and groups to limit the serving of “fun” alcohol until after at least 9.30pm. Children love jelly, of course they would want to consume a jelly shot - not appropriate at all for children to be exposed to.

Volunteers - Is a club that you are involved in struggling for volunteers? Do you think it needs a culture “health check”? Help make our clubs a group of likeminded people that everyone wants to be a part of.

Standard Drinks - All clubs and groups, if they hold a liquor license, should display information that highlights what a standard drink looks like.

Alcohol free benefits - Support those who choose to not consume alcohol. Possibly reduced cost of alcohol free drinks, or charge more for alcoholic drinks. Offer a wider range of alcohol free options that are appealing.

Organized Leisure Time Activities

Allocate community funding to different structured and supervised leisure time activities other than sport. This may include music bands, gaming clubs and coding clubs. Allows for a bigger net to catch all adolescents interests not just sport.

Parent Support Network

Parents are the most influential people in their children's lives, it starts with them. Positive influence can steer our youth to a really bright future that isn't dependent on substances. How do parents communicate with their children?? Let's create support systems and resources to help parents on how to be adaptive and how to help them understand how to connect to our youth. Let's create an App to hold their hand 24/7 with information, tips and tools to guide them.

Council Support

All LCLGA councils to dedicate a page on their websites to list all groups and clubs in their local council areas. This would create a central point for those who may be looking to make connections with likeminded people and to show people what groups are available that they may not have been aware of. After all, the opposite to addiction is connection.

“Save a Mate” - Australian Red Cross Program

Save a Mate, Australian Red Cross Program that is available in Adelaide to be made available on the Limestone Coast. “Save a Mate” has the purpose to promote the health and wellbeing of young people by providing education, service and support on key current and emerging health issues, particularly those related to alcohol and other drug use and mental health. “Save a Mate” works with young people to provide education workshops, volunteer opportunities, alcohol and other drug emergency first aid information and health promotion initiatives. It seeks to increase the ability of young people to look after themselves and to provide support to friends in need.

“Stepping Stones” - by Family Drug Support

Family Drug Support are holding their course “Stepping Stones” for family and friends supporting people with drug and/or alcohol problems. It is the winner of “Excellence in Prevention and Community Education” national annual drug and alcohol awards and will be held in Mount Gambier over 4 days on 13th-14th November and 27th-28th November 2021 (9.30am-4.00pm) at UniSA. The course was scheduled in August but was postponed until November due to low uptake in numbers. Registration for the course is required.

Find more info at [STEPPING STONES COURSES | Meetings and Events \(fds.org.au\)](https://www.fds.org.au/stepping-stones-courses)

or get in contact with: Sophie Bouchier (SMLC) 0429 342 175 or
Sally (FDS Course Leader) 0490 536 989

Email: sophiebourchier@smlc.com.au or
sally@fds.ngo.org.au

Where to get help from?- Contact Details

We would like to publish a few contact details of institutions where to reach out for help.

Sophie Bouchier
Substance Misuse Limestone Coast Inc.
Level 1/9 Bay Road
Mount Gambier Sa 5290
Phone (08) 8723 7310
[Home | Substance Misuse Limestone Coast \(smlc.org.au\)](http://smlc.org.au)
Email: sophiebouchier@smlc.com.au
Monday-Friday: 9am-5pm

Family Drug Support Australia
Support Line: 1300 368 186 (available 24 hours 7 days a week)
Or for information call FDS national head office: (02) 4782 9222
[Family Drug Support - Contact Us \(fds.org.au\)](http://fds.org.au)

Alcohol and Drug Foundation
South Australia
2/15 Fullarton Road,
Kent Town SA 5067
Phone: 0410 415 848
Drug Info & Advice Line 1300 85 85 84
<https://adf.org.au>

Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia (DASSA)
Alcohol and Drug Information Service
Phone: 1300 13 1340 (8.30 am to 10.00 pm every day)
[Services and clinics | SA Health](#)

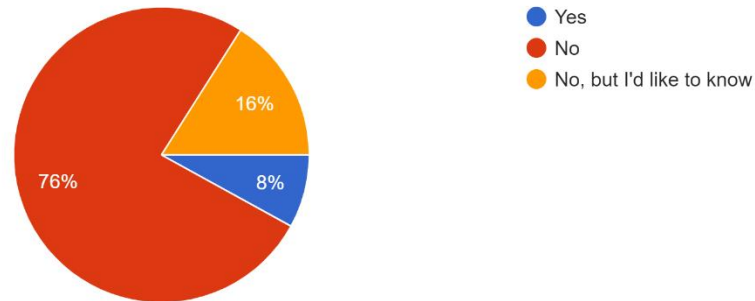
References

- Parent survey conducted in July 2021 by Samantha, Kathrin, Nathaniel and Vincent
- Sophie Bouchier - Substance Misuse Limestone Coast Inc.
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Planet Youth Survey Data
- Planet Youth Strategy & Implementation Framework
- Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis (ICSRA) at Reykjavik University
- A Participatory Handbook for Youth Drug Prevention Programs (unodc.org)
- Alcohol and Drug Foundation
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Appendix 1- Results Parent Survey

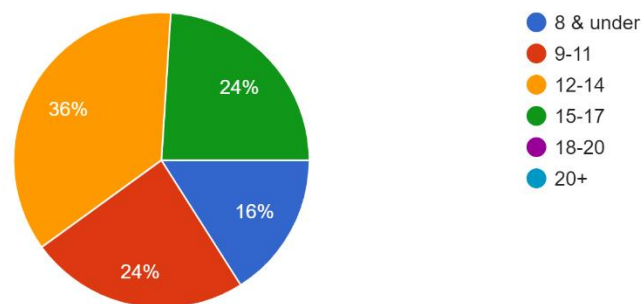
Do you know about the Planet Youth Trial

25 responses



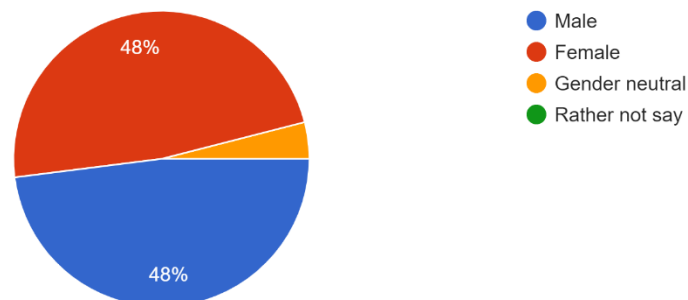
With one child in mind, how old is your child?

25 responses



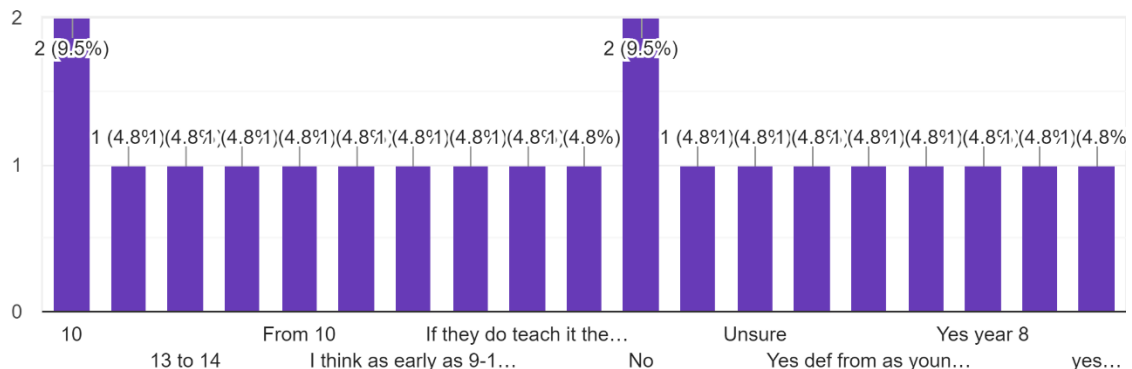
Thinking about your child, what gender are they?

25 responses



If your school offers education around substance misuse, do you think it needs to be taught earlier? If yes, from what age?

21 responses



Do you think your school offers enough education around substance misuse? If no, what would you like to see done differently?

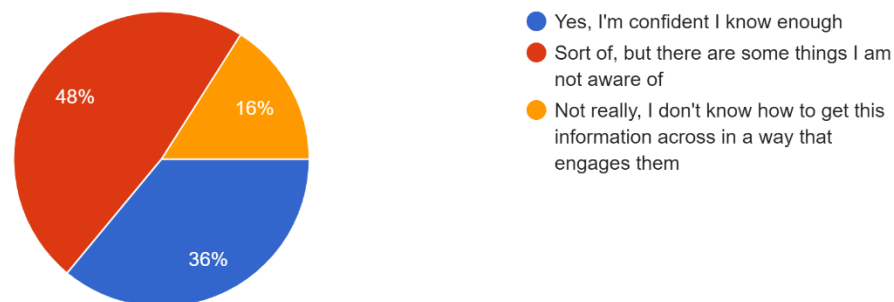
- No. Teach children ways to say no or avoid
- No kids reflected that they were told drugs were bad but not educated about them or told why or explained the effects
- I don't believe so. Substance abuse education should be introduced and educated to children as young as 10
- No - they only learnt what drugs are from us
- Not sure as we never hear anything
- I have no idea, but I think it is only for year 11/12 students (17-18 yrs old)
- At the age of this child, I would think it would be inappropriate to teach but when they reach their teens it should be heavily involved in school
- Not really sure. At this stage he's seen people in Mt Gambier off the planet and not impressed
- I think there could more, especially about the damage it does to your brain and body
- I am unsure, as the school doesn't communicate clearly about what exactly they teach. My child has not mentioned the topic though
- Minimal that I know of however some info is better than nothing
- Yes
- I'm worried about my child being exposed to those sorts of topics, but I do think they're necessary. I'd like to see it taught, but in a sensitive manner
- Yes - age appropriate information
- Unsure; because of child's age yet to reach that stage in school
- No. While it's important for parents to educate their children, kids living in homes with substance abuse need the education and they would not be getting it at home. I'd like to see perhaps a seminar once a term perhaps? I realise schools already have enough they are trying to fit in though
- This certainly not something that has been discussed about what they have learnt or discussed during the day
- No

If your school offers education around substance misuse, do you think it needs to be taught earlier? If yes, from what age?

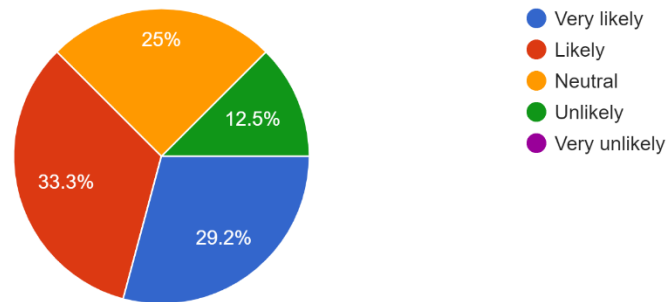
- Yes, from year 4
- 12
- Yes, from 10
- I think as early as 9-10 is a good age for understanding substance abuse
- If they do teach it they should teach or talk about it yearly
- 7-8
- yes - before they get to high school and enter the land of peer pressure
- 13-14
- I think parents should have the strongest influence
- Should be offered from year 3 (at this age children mimic adults behaviour and can think that alcohol is 'cool' if they see other adults engaging with it)
- Yes def from as young as 10-12
- Yes, year 8
- I don't think it should be taught too young, around 14/15 mark would be my limit
- No
- Middle primary
- Year 7/8

Do you think you know enough about substance misuse to educate your child at home?

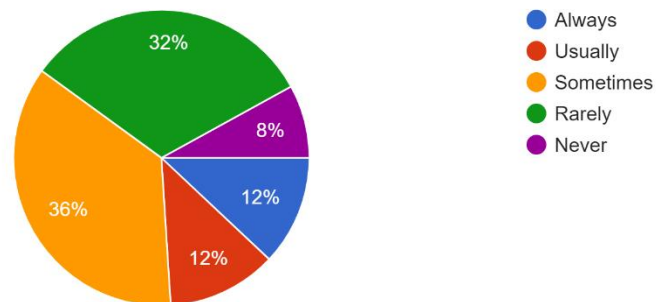
25 responses



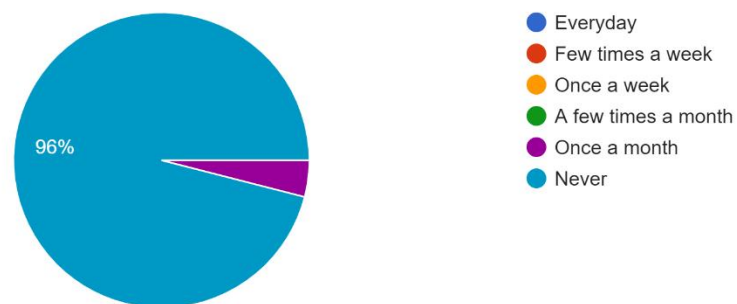
How likely would you attend 'parent information meetings' if they were offered?
24 responses



Do you talk about substance misuse at home?
25 responses

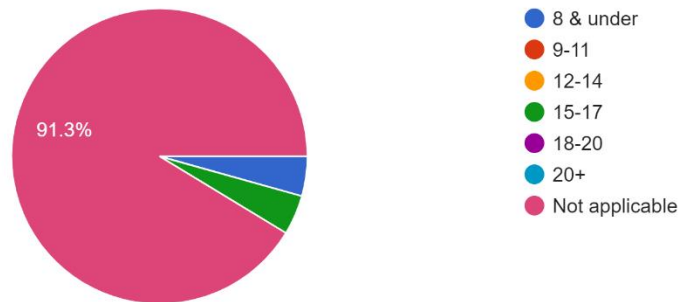


Have you ever offered your child alcohol or another substance?
25 responses



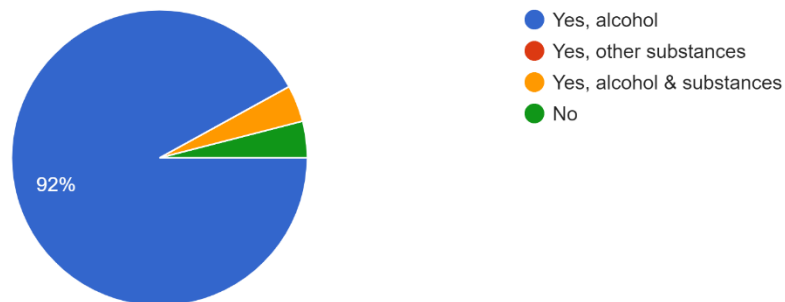
If you have offered them a substance, how old were they the first time?

23 responses



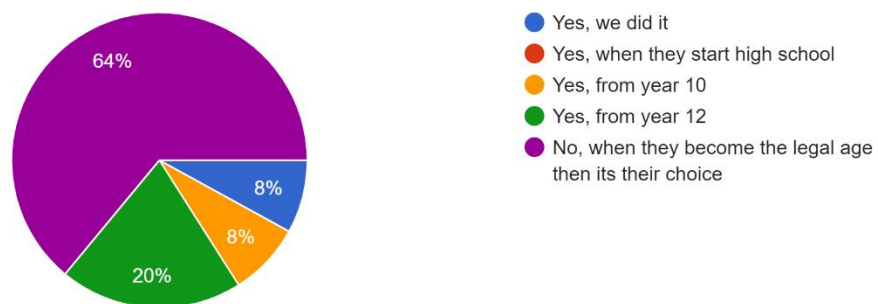
Do you drink or take substances around your children?

25 responses



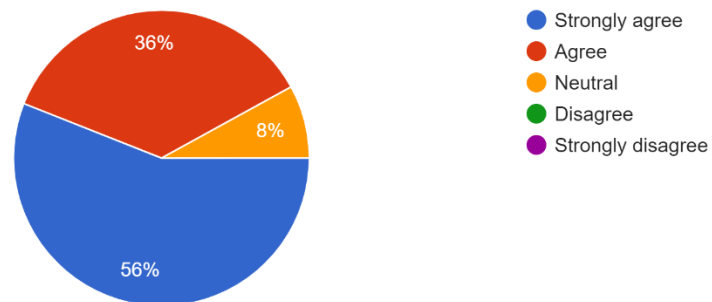
Do you think its a youths 'right of passage' to try substances at a young age?

25 responses



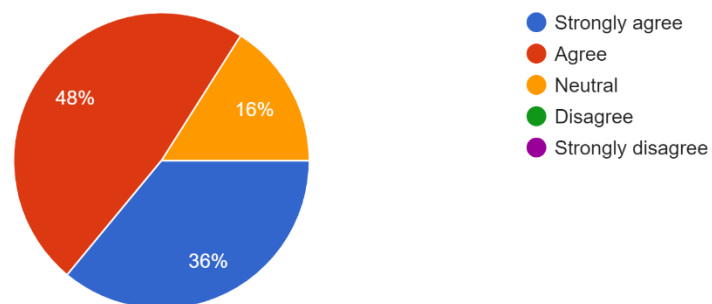
Would you support substance education material displayed in our groups, clubs & schools in the community?

25 responses



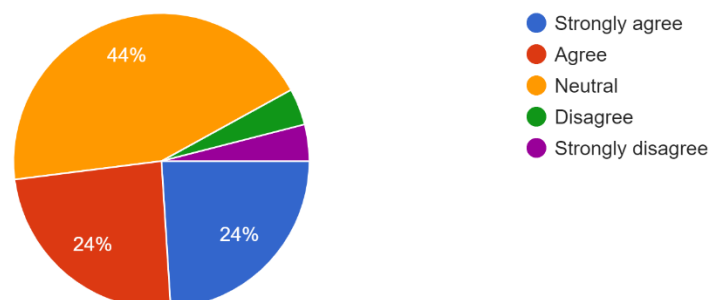
Do you think our clubs and sporting groups need to be more responsible with their role in educating our children around substances?

25 responses

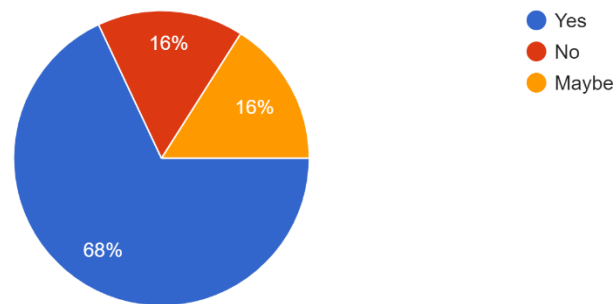


Thinking about community groups, do you feel the times or areas in which alcohol should be served, should be reduced/limited?

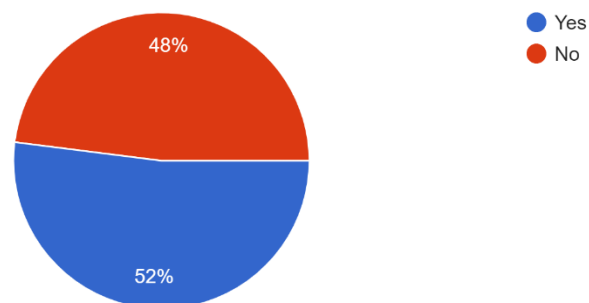
25 responses



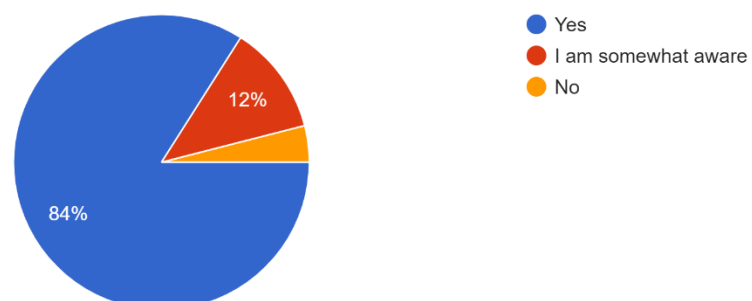
Do you think we have a community that has its foundations based on the culture of drinking?
25 responses



Do you know who to talk to or where to get help, if you think your child has a problem with substance misuse on the Limestone Coast?
25 responses

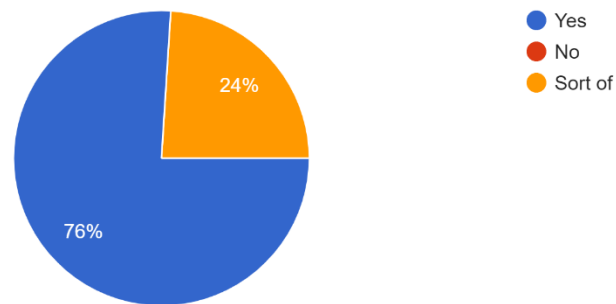


Do you know what your child is doing when they are not at home?
25 responses



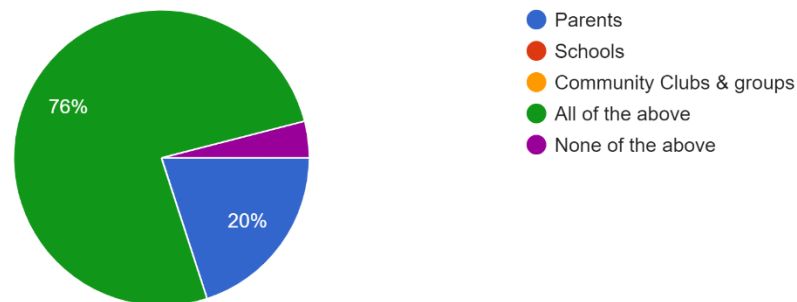
Do you know your child's friends and their families?

25 responses



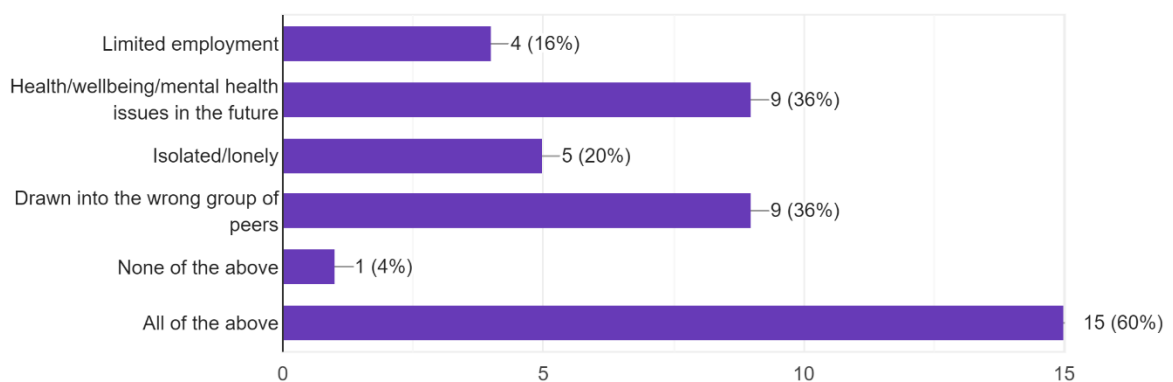
Ultimately, who's responsibility is it to educate your children about substance misuse?

25 responses



Are you concerned by any of the risks below, following substance misuse?

25 responses



In what council area does your child attend school?
25 responses

