

# Media Release

6<sup>th</sup> August 2018

## Knox community prioritise reducing alcohol supply to teens

Communities across Victoria are concerned about teenage alcohol consumption, with research showing that young people are more likely to develop social, cognitive and emotional issues if they use alcohol before they turn 18.

In communities where it is hard for adolescents to obtain alcohol, there is less teenage alcohol use and fewer alcohol-related injuries, assaults and deaths. These communities also have higher rates of school completion.

These statistics are behind the decision of the Knox community to participate in the national Smart Generation Program coordinated by Deakin University. The program aims to enable young people across Australia to become a 'smarter generation' by reducing high rates of underage drinking.

*"We're pleased to be implementing the Smart Generation in our community," said Deb Cocks, Coordinator of Communities That Care Knox (auspiced by EACH). "This component of the project involves monitoring alcohol sales in sports clubs, and our recent research shows that while some staff and volunteers are complying with the law, others clubs need to be more vigilant in their responsible service of alcohol. Sporting clubs are such a valuable presence in the community. Their care for young people is important and ensuring young people are supported to make positive healthy decisions by creating a protective club environment, especially when it comes to alcohol, is priceless"*

The program involves young people aged 18-22, but who look underage, going into local sports clubs to attempt to purchase alcohol without a valid ID.

*"Given that nearly 40% of all adolescents, aged 15-24 years old, are involved in community sport it is important to make sure that alcohol is not available to youth in these clubs," said John Toumbourou, Chair in Health Psychology at Deakin University.*

The research showed that of the sports clubs visited in Knox, over 80% did not ask for ID from a young person attempting to buy alcohol.

*"As part of this program, we sent letters to all club Presidents, either congratulating them for not selling alcohol to a young person, or*



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*reminding them of the law and of best-practice in the service of alcohol. The Knox community want clubs to not sell alcohol to underage youth. Hence the clubs need to improve in following responsible service of alcohol regulations,"* said Professor Toumbourou.

The Smart Generation Program is being implemented in a number of communities across Australia, with the intention to educate both teenagers and adults on the risks of consuming alcohol from a young age in a bid to reduce youth consumption rates.

In addition to monitoring alcohol sales in sports clubs, the program also monitors alcohol sales in bottle shops and runs a school-based education program to educate both students and parents.

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For more information or an interview on the recent research and the Smart Generation Implementation in Knox and Maroondah, please contact Deborah Cocks, Communities that Care Coordinator at EACH on 03 9757 6297 or via [deborah.cocks@each.com.au](mailto:deborah.cocks@each.com.au).

For more information on The Smart Generation project, please contact Professor John Toumbourou, Chair in Health Psychology at Deakin University on 0400 502 938.

Learn more about Communities that Care Knox at [www.each.com.au/ctcknox](http://www.each.com.au/ctcknox).

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Founded on the vision that everyone is entitled to good health, we're one of the nation's leading health and community services providers, offering a broad range of services for over 40 years. Our services include Community Health, Mental Health, NDIS, Counselling, Support for Older Australians and Family Services.

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