

National Council support for alcohol campaign

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The Australian National Council on Drugs, the peak non-government advisory body to Government on drug policy established by the Prime Minister in March 1998, has lent its considerable support to the National Alcohol Campaign.

Chairman of the Council, Major Brian Watters, stated "Far too often the media focus on illicit drugs like heroin and cocaine and pay little attention to the many problems caused by alcohol. The Council has been very impressed with the work being done by the Federal Government in educating the community on alcohol".

Major Watters added - "At our recent meeting in Sydney, Council members gave their strong support to this campaign which targets parents, youth and families. We all must realize the importance of communicating openly and honestly with our children if we are to reduce the problems created by alcohol misuse. Of course governments, schools and health services can have an impact but in many cases problems can be prevented if families have the courage and understanding to talk."

Professor Margaret Hamilton, an Executive member of the Council and Chair of the expert reference group overseeing the development of the campaign, stated - "The campaign deliberately promotes the idea of making choices. There are consequences of the choices we make about our drinking behaviour. A lot of effort has gone into finding out what young people think about drinking, and what messages might work for them. Some of the ads will be too "fast" for some of us; but the young people get them! Adults can ask them to explain - conversations about alcohol can be interesting... and scary. The campaign recognises that the negative consequence of alcohol use can be different for adults and youth but that both can reduce the risks if they think about the choices they make."

Mr Gino Vumbaca, Executive Officer for the Council added that - "the Council has for some time now recognised and advised on the important role of parents and the family in reducing drug and alcohol use. This campaign provides a good platform for families to get involved in talking to their kids about what is unfortunately, an all too common teenage problem."

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