

I would like to add my support to the passing of this bill.

In my previous roles as Youth Development Officer, Southern Midlands; Youth Health Officer, Central Highlands (Dept Health & Human Services); Drug and Alcohol Youth Worker, Hobart Council; and with my current position with the Kingborough Council as a Community Development Officer – Youth, I have worked with Youth over a very large geographical area of Tasmania.

Abuse of alcohol amongst youth causes tremendous problems in Tasmania, as I know it does everywhere.

As part of my roles, I have had the opportunity to talk with police and emergency workers on many occasions. There are numerous situations where youth have been involved in motor vehicle accidents and alcohol has been involved. In fact in accidents causing serious injury and death in the area of the Southern Midlands Council, alcohol was involved in 90% of cases. Also only 1% of the accidents have been attributed to lack of experience/ poor skills, even though much emphasis and money has been poured into *the absolute need* for these young drivers to do more hours before they receive their provisional licenses. If TV advertising of alcohol ads were banned (similar to smoking) I have no doubt that there would be a reduction in underage drinking, alcohol abuse and accidents involving alcohol.

Another aspect of this is that alcohol consumption is such an ingrained part of our society, for instance some of early workers were paid with rum! This together with our ingrained antiauthoritarian attitudes (Eureka Stockade, Ned Kelly and Waltzing Matilda are held up as icons and thumb their noses at law and order) that is going to take a lot of positive reinforcement to change these attitudes and encourage young people in particular to do the right thing in looking after themselves, each other and their community.

Another closely related issue is the internet and that some undertaking may be included in this bill. I believe there needs to be tighter controls on the information that is available and obtainable to young people through the internet. Thousands of videos are available on a daily basis of young people drinking excessively, and acting irresponsibly, often violently. These images are absorbed so readily that they become seen as “normal behavior”.

I don't mind having a drink every now and then myself, I am not saying we become a dry nation but we must work extremely hard in reversing the growing trend that it is ok to ‘write yourself off’ and/or make a fool of yourself.

We must do all we can to discourage our future generations to destroy themselves.

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