



SUBMISSION- INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE IMPACT
OF LIQUOR LAW REFORMS

April 4 2016

Wake Up Foundation Ltd.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wake Up Foundation Ltd. strongly supports the review of the impact of liquor law reforms. It is our view that the laws have been implemented for a sustained period and there is ample data available from various stakeholders to make an informed decision regarding the effectiveness of the laws in place.

Wake Up Foundation understands that there must be some regulations in place to protect the public. However, Wake Up maintains that there must be an equilibrium between the laws to protect the public and the civil rights of all people to enjoy a vibrant, engaging nightlife culture.

Wake Up's viewpoint is that safety can be greatly improved if young people are educated on safe partying in their adolescent years before they begin attending nightlife precincts at age 18.

Wake Up Foundation: The Organisation

Wake Up is a not for profit organisation run by young people, that educates students in their final four years of high school about safe partying. Wake Up implements '*peer to peer*' education, with young ambassadors (aged 20-26) presenting to students. 95% of students that have attended presentations have indicated that the presentation has '*helped with future choices.*' In 2015 Wake Up visited over 10,100 students. In 2015, Wake Up achieved a 100% re-book rate, with every school from 2014 re-booking for 2015.

The main issues covered are violence, alcohol misuse, drugs and sexual assault:

Violence – Presenters use personal experiences to share the long-term effects of violence and discuss the culture of violence in Australia. Wake Up advocates a change in attitudes towards violence and individual responsibility, rather than measures such as lockouts.

Alcohol Misuse – Wake Up understands that when teenagers turn 18, they will have access to alcohol, for this reason, young people need to know how to drink safely and responsibly. Presenters teach students what a standard drink *is* and discuss the harms of alcohol misuse. Students are taught the symptoms of alcohol poisoning and how to respond to emergency situations.

Drugs – Australians are the highest users of recreational drugs in the world, which creates a culture where young people feel *everyone* is doing drugs; this then fuels peer pressure to try drugs for the first time. Wake Up challenges this because statistics show that a very small minority of young people (aged 14-17 years old) have actually tried drugs. Presenters also address the risks involved with drug taking and strategies to overcome peer pressure.

Sexual Assault – Presenters use personal experiences to address the issue of sexual assault amongst nightlife culture. Sexual assault is one of the most under-reported crimes, so discussion of this issue helps remove the stigma associated with being a victim of sexual assault. Wake Up acknowledges that sexual assault happens to both males and females.

Feedback from students further highlights the effectiveness of the presentations: the most common feedback received indicates improved knowledge, improved personal motivation for safety and gratitude for attending the presentation. (This data is collated from student feedback forms which filled out by students post presentations).

Wake Up is a leading safe partying program in Sydney and the leading *peer to peer* safe partying program in NSW.

Youth-Led for Young People

Wake Up is an organisation run by and for young people. It is often felt that the voice of young people is lost in the discussion of the liquor laws. This submission is to ensure the views of young people are represented.

Safe Partying Education

Education is critical for adolescent development and our philosophy is that education about safe partying should be compulsory for students across Australia.

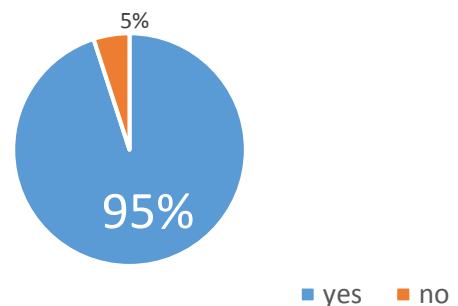
A survey conducted by the Queensland Government showed that the public rank education and penalties and enforcement as top priorities – in contrast, lockouts came in sixth. (Queensland Government (2014) *National Alcohol Related Violence Survey Results Summary*.) Our 100% re-book rate in 2015 shows how teachers and decision makers appreciate the effectiveness of our presentations and the need for students to be educated on such issues.

When asked *'Did this presentation make you think about your future choices?'* students often report that they feel more equipped to deal with situations on nights out:

e.g. *'Yes and it made me realise I have more choices.'* - student in Year 11, Gilroy College, Castle Hill.

e.g. *'Yes it has made me re-think about my actions in a situation of myself or my friends taking drugs or alcohol.'* – student in Year 11, Oxford Falls Grammar School, Oxford Falls.

Did this presentation make you think about your choices?



Community groups such as Liquor Accords are sponsoring Wake Up presentations to promote safe partying for young people before they start going out and entering licenced venues. 15% of Wake Up presentations in 2015 were sponsored by local Liquor Accords. Wake Up presentations are often community driven with members from local areas interested in being involved and supporting safe partying methods.

Peer to Peer Education

'Young people would prefer the negative consequences of being drunk than the social exclusion associated with staying sober.' (NCETA: 2008) Young people care a lot about what their peers think of them. When making decisions about risk taking behaviour on nights out they question how their peers will react before contemplating the long term effects (if contemplating the effects at all). We recognise this and are strong advocates for peer to peer education.

Peer to peer education is delivered by presenters aged in their early-mid twenties who directly connect with the students on a personal level. Our presenters use techniques to brainstorm and break down theories about peer pressure allowing students to think 'for themselves' without the fear of judgement from their peers. Student feedback often highlights the positive connection

between the presenters and the individual- e.g. *'I really liked how open and relatable you made it feel. Very engaging.'*- student in Year 10, St Benedicts Catholic College, Camden.

'Young people would benefit from the knowledge that all their peers do not drink to drunkenness and that the sober night out experience can be equally rewarding.' (Anne Fox: 2015) Presenters at Wake Up give students best practice options for making smarter decisions on nights out, which can include refraining from alcohol all together on a night out.

Presenters do not tell students what to do regarding risk taking behaviour. Instead, presenters share personal stories about situations they have experienced and ask the students to make their own opinions on what 'they would have done'. Student feedback regularly highlights the impact of personal stories- e.g. *'really liked the personal experiences and the fact they didn't talk down to us.'* – student in Year 12, Monte Sant' Angelo College, North Sydney.

Wake Up also maintain that through 'positive education' techniques rather than scare tactics, students feel empowered to make decisions best for themselves, and know how to strategise in emergency situations.

High School Syllabus

Wake Up presentations directly link with the BOSTES PDHPE Stages 4, 5 and 6 syllabus. Presentations focus on the ongoing well-being of young people, and can therefore be used to supplement and complement existing school programs.

Programs that haven proven successful in educating and connecting with students should be supported by the government to participate in all high schools across Sydney. Safe partying education should not include scare tactics and should target peer groups in order to encourage individuals to make smarter decisions.

Many schools see the importance of safe partying education and strive to add it into their programs for students. However, there are many more schools that are not adequately engaging in programs outside of their standard PDHPE syllabus guidelines.

CONCLUSION

This report concludes that it is essential to consider the effectiveness of education programs when reviewing and updating the liquor laws.

Wake Up concludes it is essential to review the liquor laws and their effectiveness to make an informed decision regarding the success in enabling a safer nightlife culture.

Education is vital for developing adolescents and emphasis needs to be placed on safe partying education programs similar to and including the presentations by the Wake Up Foundation.

Contact: *Georgina Prior - Managing Director* *Wake Up Foundation Ltd.*



References

National Alcohol Related Violence Survey Results Summary (2014): Queensland Government

Understanding behaviour in the Australian and New Zealand night-time economies (2015): Dr. Anne Fox Anthropologist

Young People and Alcohol: The Role of Cultural Influences (2008): National Centre on Education and Training in Addiction (NCETA)

Student feedback forms (2015-2016): Wake Up Foundation