

**Submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry:  
The potential for developing opportunities for schools to become a focus  
for promoting health community living**

21 July 2009

Ms Karen Ellingford  
Executive Officer  
Education and Training Committee  
Parliament House  
Spring Street  
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Dear Ms Ellingford

**Re: Parliamentary Inquiry into the potential for developing opportunities for schools to become a focus for promoting health community living**

On behalf of the Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia (ADCA) I wish to thank you for your invitation to make a submission to the Education and Training Committee.

At present, ADCA does not have an ongoing schools-based education program and therefore would be unable to sufficiently address the terms of reference of the Inquiry. However, I would like to take this opportunity to offer ADCA's endorsement of two initiatives that use schools as a setting to educate the community about alcohol and other drugs issues.

The first is ADCA's own initiative, Drug Action Week (DAW), a week-long annual campaign aimed at raising awareness about the harms caused by alcohol and other drugs in Australian communities. ADCA facilitates the registration of activities as well as providing promotional and information resources to activity coordinators. Schools play a significant role as the hosts of a large number of activities including information forums for parents, sporting events, and library displays.

In 2009, over 640 DAW activities were registered and ADCA estimates that almost half of those took place in schools. Pleasingly, there was a high level of participation in rural areas, particularly in Victoria where some 106 activities were held in total. Throughout the week, ADCA representatives visited schools, delivering presentations about the dangers of alcohol in line with the DAW theme, Alcohol is a drug – **TOO!**

ADCA looks forward to the ongoing participation of schools and plans to target high schools with a call to action prior to DAW 2010. Ideally, the information delivered to school students during the DAW initiative would be made available to students on an ongoing basis through the curriculum and school-based wellbeing services.

For this reason, ADCA supports the pilot program being run in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) that places nurses in high schools with the dual purpose of providing non-clinical advice to students as well as advising teachers about curriculum content. Modeled on a Queensland initiative, the program was launched in the ACT earlier this year and ADCA was pleased to work alongside the school nurses during DAW 2009.

ADCA believes that this program is an important contribution to the ongoing effort to educate school-aged children about safe practices and promote healthy communities.

ADCA believes that both DAW and the school-based nurse program provide opportunities for schools to promote healthy community living within the school environment and the committee would be well advised to consider the incorporation of these initiatives into the model for health promotion in Victorian schools.

ADCA would be pleased to expand on any of the above and the contact officer in this instance is Ms Sophie Turnbull, available on (02) 6215 9808 or at [sophie.turnbull@adca.org.au](mailto:sophie.turnbull@adca.org.au).

I look forward to seeing the outcomes of the Inquiry upon its completion.

Yours sincerely

**David Templeman**

**21 July 2009**