



## Media Release

# Local Alcohol & Other Drug Action Plan Survey

Mitchell Community Health Services recently ran an online and print survey for parents and youth to gather information about alcohol and other drugs issues in the area.

The survey ran from 24<sup>th</sup> September to the 19<sup>th</sup> November in the Mitchell and Murrindindi Shires and has elicited some very interesting results. In total, 97 surveys were returned. There were 54 Parent Surveys and 43 Youth Surveys returned, with 48% from the Mitchell shire, 39% from the Murrindindi Shire.

Project officer, Sarah Every, said "Our results were very interesting and we would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the survey. We would also like to thank all the shops and organisations that generously helped us to promote the survey and distribute hard copies".

The results showed that parents felt the biggest issue facing the general community, and youth specifically, was the excessive consumption of alcohol. Similarly, nearly half of youth felt that excessive drinking of alcohol was a problem in the community.

The majority of parents and young people reported that boredom and lack of recreational opportunities influenced excessive drinking.

From the Parent Survey, 73.8% respondents stated that their child has been offered alcohol in the last 12 months and 63.4% felt that it would be easy for their teenager to access alcohol. The Youth Survey indicated that nearly all respondents (91.7%) have had the chance to use alcohol in the last 12 months.

Interestingly, 31.1% of parents say that they drink in front of their teenagers during recreational activities and special occasions. Also, the Youth Survey found that 41.7% of respondents received their first taste of alcohol from their parents reported as usually just a sip. These initial drinks occurred anywhere between the ages of five to 19.

To help address the problem, 69.9% of parents feel that the more employment opportunities for young people would help the situation, and similarly, 54.1% youth also think that more employment opportunities would help. However, 51.4% of youths surveyed also feel that a youth friendly gym and more accessible public transport to shopping centres would help address the problem.

Mitchell CHS will continue to consult the community to help develop a plan that would best suit the needs of the local community. In the coming months, focus groups will run, as well as other methods, to provide individuals with an opportunity to have input into this plan.

Again, Mitchell CHS thank all involved and hope to see further participation with this plan in the future.