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### ***No Excuse Needed* – campaign to tackle binge drinking in young people**

The Victorian Coalition Government, together with VicHealth, is set to challenge a pervasive alcohol culture with a new \$1.9 million campaign that aims to empower young Victorians to make responsible decisions about their drinking.

Minister for Mental Health Mary Wooldridge and VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter today officially launched the Government funded campaign, which features colourful characters Snake-eye Stevie and Marathon Millie and will appear across the state on billboards, bus and tram stops, cinema, radio and online.

The *No Excuse Needed* campaign coincides with the release of a snapshot of Victoria's drinking culture which reveals many young people feel peer pressure to drink, but most don't start a night out intending to get drunk.

A survey of almost 1,400 Victorians aged 16 years and over found that the majority (61 per cent) of young people do not drink to get drunk.

Ms Wooldridge said while we know that most young Victorians don't intend to get drunk, we also know that some are still drinking at harmful levels.

"Young Victorians need to know that getting drunk isn't necessarily what others their age are doing and they shouldn't feel like they have to make excuses if they don't want to keep drinking," Ms Wooldridge said.

"Young people consulted during the campaign's development labeled it 'refreshing' and 'empowering', and not typical of traditional campaigns which tend to condemn young people's behaviour.

"*No Excuse Needed* aims to motivate young people to think about why they make up excuses, but also question if and why they put pressure on others to drink. By taking this approach, we are seeking to reduce the importance alcohol plays in young Victorians' lives," Ms Wooldridge said.

Ms Rechter said there's no doubt we need to challenge the harmful culture of drinking which takes a heavy toll on our community and is putting young people at risk.

"We were surprised to find there is quite a difference between what young people think their peers' drinking habits are versus what the reality is," Ms Rechter said.

The *No Excuse Needed* campaign challenges the notion that you need an excuse to say no to another drink.

"The truth is that the majority of young people in Victoria don't intend to drink too much when they head out for the evening, but may feel pressure to go beyond their limits. We

want young Victorians to know that it's normal and quite acceptable to enjoy socialising while drinking moderately," Ms Rechter said.

*No Excuse Needed* is part of a broader \$2.6 million Victorian Government campaign to change the alcohol culture. It commenced last summer, asking young people to *Name that Point* and is part of the of the Coalition's whole-of-government *Reducing the alcohol and drug toll: Victoria's plan 2013-2017*.

Watch the campaign ads at [www.noexcuseneeded.com.au](http://www.noexcuseneeded.com.au)

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Please download the [report](#) for more information.

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