

Media Release

20 March 2017

New grants to drive change in Gen X and baby-boomer drinking cultures

Health promotion foundation VicHealth is calling for new ideas to tackle risky drinking cultures in middle-aged Victorians as part of its \$1.06 million [Alcohol Culture Change Initiative: open funding round](#).

Recent research has revealed middle-aged and older Australians are increasingly likely to drink at risky levels. As a result, VicHealth is seeking funding applications for projects targeting middle-aged and older generations of drinkers – groups that have been overshadowed by a traditional focus on youth drinking.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said despite positive changes to youth drinking culture, too many middle-aged and older Victorians continued to drink at risky levels.

“Although there have been positive changes in youth drinking culture, we are seeing increases in risky drinking in people aged 40 years and older,” Ms Rechter said.

“Sadly generation X and Baby boomers are more likely to end up in the emergency room as a result of alcohol. So we’re looking for new approaches that prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm among older adults.

“We know that one-size doesn’t fit all – Victoria is a diverse state with many drinking cultures. VicHealth is calling for ideas on tackling risky drinking cultures within sports bars, the construction industry, and regional and rural areas,” she said.

Applications are encouraged from a diverse range of organisations, including those that have not traditionally delivered alcohol harm reduction interventions. These may include rural organisations, music industry, digital or gaming (eg video game or app designers), alcohol and drug sectors, bloggers, radio, pub and club owners, arts, sports clubs, social entrepreneurs, researchers and a wide range of other organisations.

VicHealth has identified alcohol culture change as a complimentary approach to legislation to reduce harm from alcohol. Alcohol culture underpins the way people drink including the formal and informal rules, social norms, attitudes and beliefs around what is and what isn’t socially acceptable for a group of people before, during and after drinking.

Ms Rechter said reducing the social acceptability of risky drinking is key to changing the drinking culture in Victoria and Australia.

“Our vision is to see people socially supporting one another to reduce high risk drinking, resulting in reduced harm for the individual, their family, people in the vicinity and the broader community,” she said.

“VicHealth is committed to reducing the impact alcohol has on the health and wellbeing of Victorians. Our 10-year goal is to see 200,000 more Victorians drinking less alcohol by 2023.”

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VicHealth today released its final funding round of the [Alcohol Culture Change Initiative](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/alcoholculturegrants). Up to six projects will trial targeted and tailored efforts – over 24 months – that reach those most in need, where binge drinking and risk of alcohol-related harm is greatest. For more information, go to:

www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/alcoholculturegrants

Note to editors:

The new grant round provides a pool of \$1.06 million to organisations or to deliver projects, ideas or products that change risky drinking cultures.

This funding round is the final round of the Alcohol Culture Change Initiative with funding available in two categories.

1. Middle and older age risky drinking cultures - VicHealth will prioritise proposals that target the three identified middle and older-aged subpopulations of risky drinkers:
 - Sports bar drinking culture
 - Construction industry drinking culture
 - Drinking culture in rural and remote settings
2. Other risky drinking cultures - VicHealth also invites applicants to identify specific drinking cultures that will provide a setting or target for intervention. There are no age restrictions on this category.

For more information, go to: www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/alcoholculturegrants

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