# Social Norms Analysis Project (SNAP) research report

## Researchers

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## Summary

This project was carried out in conjunction with a range of project partners including the Tasmanian Police, the Tasmanian Department of Education and Health, and Human Services Tasmania. The project aims to reduce risky drinking and alcohol-related harm among young people in four rural Tasmanian communities.

The Social Norms Analysis Project (SNAP) was the first major Australian trial of the social norms approach to addressing risky drinking and alcohol-related harm among young people. Unlike some other forms of alcohol health promotion, social norms interventions do not seek to increase knowledge of the negative consequences of alcohol consumption, nor do they attempt to increase young people’s capacity to resist peer group pressure. Instead, they focus on how young people’s perceptions of their peers’ behaviours and attitudes influence their own behaviour.

Social norms interventions are based on the research evidence that many young people have an inaccurate idea of how frequently and heavily their peers consume alcohol and that they base their decisions and actions on what they believe most of their peers are doing. In addition, the social norms interventions hypothesise that young people will be less likely to conform to a ‘false norm’ if repeatedly exposed to the ‘true norm’.

## Outcomes

Some key results from SNAP include statistically significant declines in the mean perceived frequency of students’ friends consuming alcohol and getting drunk. The students involved in the trial questioned their assumptions about what is ‘normal’ alcohol consumption among their peers. It was found that contrary to the dominant image of ‘bingeing teens,’ a sizeable proportion of students either don’t drink alcohol at all, or do so in ways that are not considered harmful to themselves or to others.

This project was successful in not only achieving positive outcomes in the target sites but also in raising awareness about social norms as an alternative prevention model. The project received significant amount of local, national, and international recognition.

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