# The schoolies experience: The role of expectancies, gender roles, and social norms of recent school leavers

## Researchers

1. Professor Sandra Jones, Centre for Health Initiatives, University of Wollongong
2. Ms Laura Robinson, Centre for Health Initiatives, University of Wollongong
3. Mr Lance Barrie, Centre for Health Initiatives, University of Wollongong

## Summary

The aim of this project is to gain an insight into the alcohol expectancies, perceived social norms and changing gender roles of school leavers and to use this data to develop evidence-based interventions to reduce alcohol-related harms among this group.

The researchers undertook a comprehensive literature review of previously published research before designing a quantitative survey. The focus of the survey was on drinking attitudes and behaviours, drinking expectancies, perceived social norms, and gender roles. The draft survey was pilot-tested before being given to 512 young people who attended Schoolies week activities on the Gold Coast in 2010. Two weeks after the initial survey, the researchers conducted 34 follow-up interviews.

## Outcomes

The survey found that 94.9% of the individuals surveyed had tried alcohol at some point in their lives. Of those who were under the legal drinking age, only two of 95 had not had a full serve of alcohol prior to attending Schoolies week. Many young people (86.7%) expected to drink more than five alcoholic beverages per night; some (73.3%) expected their consumption would reach ten alcoholic beverages per night, while only 28.1% expected to experience a hangover. A large proportion of individuals surveyed expected to “hook up” with someone while at Schoolies.

There were significant differences in the expectancies of males and females, with more than 40% of males expecting to have sex with multiple partners, compared with only 12% of females. Males were also more likely to expect to have unprotected sex (27.7% compared with 16%) and to expect to have sex with a partner they don’t know well (66.3% compared with 18.3%). Gender differences were not evident in the majority of drinking behaviour expectancies.

[view the report](/wp-content/uploads/The-Schoolies-Experience_Final-Report.pdf)