



Media Release

NEW NATIONAL RESOURCE FOR COMMUNITIES LAUNCHED TO HELP REDUCE ALCOHOL RELATED HARM

10 April 2014: Cringe the Binge has launched its new Community Action Pack ahead of the 2014 National Youth Week celebrations, to help communities across Australia address alcohol-related harms.

The new comprehensive on-line resource kit, unveiled in Byron Bay today, arrives amid growing concerns about the negative effects of binge drinking on young Australians, with communities hungry for information, advice and strategies to address the problem.

Di Mahoney, National Co-ordinator of Cringe the Binge (a Byron Youth Service initiative), says that as awareness of the personal, social, and economic costs of alcohol related harm increases, local communities are eager to take the lead in advocating for action on alcohol.

“Residents are adding up the cost of alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour in their towns. They see the drain on their local police, health and emergency services, they want the issue addressed, but too often lack the resources or knowledge on how to effectively tackle the problem,” Ms Mahoney said.

Ms Mahoney says communities want to address the effects of binge drinking; the violence, the sexual assaults and STI’s, the accidents, the brain damage, the mental health issues, the chronic illnesses as well as the financial costs.

“When I was Director of Byron Youth Service, the question most often asked was ‘What can we do to address the alcohol problem in our town?’ Many people felt that the issue was too big to tackle and were overwhelmed. Others were reluctant to speak out about alcohol for fear of causing conflict in Byron, a small town with an economic dependence on tourism,” said Ms Mahoney.

In response to the call from the community and with the support of a *2013 Good Practice Grant* from the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), Cringe the Binge developed the Community Action Pack.

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn said he is encouraged to see Cringe the Binge successfully develop a much needed and innovative resource.

“Alcohol impacts negatively on too many lives. We need to be working together as a community to reduce these harms, and community projects such as Cringe the Binge’s new Community Action Pack, will go some way towards achieving this goal,” Mr Thorn said.

The Community Action Pack advocates a community development approach and provides a step by step road map for local communities navigating the complexities of addressing alcohol related harm and promotes an inclusive and strategic approach to addressing local issues.

It includes a Binge on Life Activity Kit outlining how to organise a range of alcohol free activities that appeal to young people. There is also a set of easy to read information sheets on the many facets of the problem including such topics such as *Alcohol and Youth Mental Health*, *Alcohol and Advertising*, and *Secondary Supply Laws*.

The Pack also includes a range of information including how to organise and run a local *Action on Alcohol* group, how to complain about alcohol advertising and object to liquor licences, and even guides for young people and parents on how to run a safe party.

The Community Action Pack also offers secondary school teachers, a resource that includes activities and discussions to educate young people about alcohol related harms.

The Pack can be downloaded at www.cringethebinge.com.au.

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Cringe the Binge, is a grass-roots initiative of Byron Youth Service that aims to reverse youth binge drinking by supporting individual and community action. We promote discussion amongst young people, parents, teachers, community partners, share the latest information & research about the issue, support & promote alcohol free events & activities - and encourage young people to Binge on Life NOT Booze!

Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) is an independent, charitable organisation working to prevent the harmful use of alcohol in Australia. Through its national grants program and commissioned research, FARE has established itself as a leading voice on alcohol and other drugs issues. FARE works with community groups, all levels of government, police, emergency workers, research institutions and the private sector to address alcohol-related problems. For further information visit FARE's website: www.fare.org.au