

adolescent health promotion. In 2006 he received the award for International Collaborative Research from the Society for Prevention Research in recognition of his work with the longitudinal International Youth Development Study, a 5 year VicHealth-funded research program focusing on healthy youth development.

**Geoff Munro,**

Director of the Community Alcohol Action Network at the Australian Drug Foundation, will facilitate the workshop. CAAN mobilises community action on key environmental factors that encourage unsafe drinking, especially how alcohol is marketed and distributed. The role of local government is a major interest for CAAN and is frequently reported on in its weekly e-bulletin *GrogWatch*.



## **4. Suggested Actions for Stakeholders**

### **Stakeholder Forums**

Some jurisdictions currently have in place local stakeholder groups that respond to issues related to licensed venues. In addition many local areas have liquor accords with local licensed venues. These partnerships are valuable in understanding the impact of licensed premises and developing strategies to respond.

### **Awareness Raising**

Local government and other stakeholders can play a role in raising the awareness of the impacts of intoxication amongst licensees encompassing financial benefits and social outcomes. Messages about personal responsibility could also be better conveyed to the general community.

### **Guidelines**

A central agency could produce information for the local government sector to assist councils to consider the health, social and economic impacts of licensed venues and packaged liquor outlets. These guidelines could also incorporate recommended monitoring and enforcement measures. A complementary set of guidelines, or a code of conduct, could be developed for licensed venues.

## **5. Outcomes**

These principles and suggested actions will be discussed and progressed by the Local Government Drug Issues Forum. Key priorities will be provided to the Municipal Association of Victoria Board of Management for endorsement and then distributed to all councils for consideration.

### **The Presenters**

**Michael Livingston**, a Research Fellow in the AERF Centre for Alcohol Policy Research at Turning Point Drug and Alcohol Centre, will present on increasing alcohol outlet density. This issue has become an increasing focus for policymakers and researchers and reflects attempts by local and state governments to retain control of licensing policy in the face of national pressure to liberalise licensing regulation. Michael will review recent advances in both Australian and international evidence linking outlet density to harm.

**Dr John Wiggers**, Director of Population Health at Hunter New England Health, and a Senior Lecturer at the University of Newcastle, led the development of an intersectoral initiative between police and health practitioners – the Alcohol Linking program – to reduce the incidence of assault, drink-driving, and domestic violence. John will describe the elements of the program, which has been rolled out in communities across NSW, and the evaluation results.

**Dr John Toumbourou**, Professor and Chair in Health Psychology at Deakin University and a Senior Research Fellow at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, is known for his work on drug abuse prevention and treatment, and the role of community, family and peer groups in

Police, WorkSafe, fire authorities, licensees and local health and youth workers. There may also be scope to establish strategic partnerships to address these issues at the State level which could include Victoria Police, the Department of Justice, the Department of Human Services, Department of Victorian Communities, VicRoads, research institutions and the Municipal Association of Victoria.

### **Integrated Approach**

Alcohol issues require an integrated approach which incorporates licensing, monitoring, and enforcement. This approach must also consider the health, social and economic impacts of alcohol related harms. An integrated approach will also link closely to the collaborative approach.

## **3. Priority Issues**

### **Local Government Planning Powers**

There is scope for the impact of licensed premises, including packaged liquor outlets, to be more thoroughly considered through local government planning processes. Local and State Government policies on liquor licensing approvals processes must be appropriately integrated to ensure that decisions are robust. This issue requires further consideration in partnership with planning stakeholders.



### **Training**

Current training mechanisms such as Responsible Service of Alcohol certification could include issues related to alcohol related harms and their community impacts to a greater degree. It may also be appropriate to develop training packages for local government planners in relation to the density impact of licensed premises and the impact of different forms of liquor licences.

### **Outlet Density and Licence Type**

Further research is required to determine the impacts of liquor outlet density in Australia, and Victoria more specifically, mirroring existing research in other jurisdictions. In addition, research should identify the type of licensed premises which are of greatest concern from a harm perspective in relation to alcohol outlet density. This could in turn better inform local government planning processes and potentially lead to 'caps' being placed on liquor outlets and licensed venues where there is already a high density of outlets.

## Alcohol After Dark Forum – 16 May 2007

### 1. Introduction

The Victorian Safe Communities Network (VSCN) hosted a forum titled *Alcohol After Dark: the critical issues* in May 2007 in partnership with the Local Government Drug Issues Forum (LGDIF) and the City of Melbourne. The forum examined the key local issues of alcohol consumption and related harms, and the problems these cause in entertainment precincts. Forum attendees included drug and alcohol workers, local government officers, emergency services and law enforcement representatives.



The first forum session featured three speakers: Michael Livingston, AERF Centre for Alcohol Policy Research and Turning Point Drug and Alcohol Centre; Dr John Wiggers, Hunter New England Health and the University of Newcastle; and Dr John Toumbourou, Deakin University and Murdoch Children's Research Institute. These presentations provided important background information on the impact of excess alcohol consumption and existing research in this field. A summary of the speakers' backgrounds follows this summary.

The second session, facilitated by Geoff Munro from the Australian Drug Foundation, consisted of a workshop focussing on a hypothetical scenario set in a mixed-use precinct, including residential areas and commercial/entertainment activities. Participants were divided into a number of working groups which examined the following themes:

- Planning and liquor licensing enforcement;
- Anti-social behaviours and binge drinking;
- Incident and emergency response;
- Management of licensed venues;
- Community amenity and noise issues;
- Alcohol promotion; and
- Density of alcohol outlets.

Each group was invited to present the key issues that they had identified in the discussion. These issues and priorities were grouped and divided into key principles, priority issues, and suggested actions for responding to local alcohol issues as listed below.

### 2. Key Principles

#### Collaborative Approach

In order to address the wide range of impacts of alcohol consumption in the community, a collaborative partnership approach is required involving all stakeholders at the local level. Stakeholders include municipal councils, Victoria