# Rites, rights, and responsibilities: An investigation of young people's views on alcohol and rites of passage

## Researchers

1. Ms Janine Bendit
2. Dr Victoria Clay

## Summary

This pilot project examines alternative 'Rites of Passage' which have the potential to be developed into formal transition points between childhood and adulthood. Because there are no longer any formalised rites of passage, young people have adopted other processes to signify their passage to adulthood. Arguably the major de facto rite of passage is the consumption of alcohol with its attendant problems of binge drinking, risk taking, drink driving, and other antisocial behaviours. Responsible consumption is a learned behaviour. The project team organised a series of focus groups among secondary students (14 to 17 years) and held small group interviews (18 to 28 years).

## Outcomes

There was general agreement that becoming an adult is a gradual process and that turning 18 only celebrates the practical and legal changes in a young person's life. This time of change is usually marked through the recognition of turning 18 by family and friends; alcohol usually plays a part in this celebration. The results of the study were independently assessed.

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