



# Supply Means Supply:

Measuring the Effectiveness of an Underage Drinking  
Intervention Targeting Secondary Supply  
Final Report

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# Centre for Health Initiatives

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### FINAL REPORT

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# Contents

Executive Summary .....	5
Project Overview .....	8
Phase 1. Consultation .....	10
Phase 2. Pre-Intervention Survey.....	11
Phase 3. Campaign Monitoring .....	17
Phase 4. Post-Intervention Survey.....	20
Phase 5. Post-Intervention Focus Groups.....	30
Phase 6. Conclusion and Recommendations.....	36
Appendix A: Pre Intervention Survey	
Appendix B: Pre Intervention Survey Results	
Appendix C: Campaign Monitoring via Mediacom	
Appendix D: Post- Intervention Survey	
Appendix E: Post- Intervention Survey Results	
Appendix F: Full Report on Focus Group Results	

## Executive Summary

NSW Police, funded by the Foundation of Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), rolled out the Supply Means Supply (SMS) Campaign in 10 Local Area Commands (LACs) in December 2010. The SMS campaign was designed to influence the attitudes and social norms associated with the supply of alcohol to underage drinkers (i.e. minors - those under 18 years of age), and thus contribute to reducing alcohol related harm to minors. The emphasis of the campaign was to reinforce the illegality of secondary supply<sup>1</sup> and detail the potential penalties for detections under the new NSW Liquor Act (2007). The Centre for Health Initiatives conducted an evaluation of the effectiveness of the SMS program in altering attitudes, behaviours and intentions to supply alcohol to minors, among parents and the community in three LACs.

This evaluation was conducted in six phases. Phase One involved consultation with key stakeholders in the campaign and discussion with each of the area commands regarding the best way to conduct the evaluation in each of the three trial LACs – Wollongong, Penrith and Dubbo.

Phase Two involved the conduct of a pre-intervention survey with community members from the three trial LACs in order to establish their baseline knowledge and attitudes regarding the supply of alcohol to minors. Less than one fifth of respondents (15%) said it was likely or very likely that they would provide alcohol to a 14 year old and only approximately one in twenty (6%) said it was likely or very likely they would provide alcohol to a 14 year old and their friend. More respondents were willing to provide alcohol for a 17 year old child or sibling, with 37% indicating that it was likely or very likely that in some circumstances they would provide alcohol to a 17 year old minor (or thought that their parents would provide alcohol in the case of the respondents under 18 years old). Similar to the 14 year old scenario, fewer respondents thought it was likely or very likely that they would provide alcohol to a 17 year old minor and their friend (25%). There were some social situations in which respondents were more likely to supply alcohol to both 14 and 17 year olds. For example, respondents were more likely to provide alcohol to a minor for a supervised party at home or a family dinner than they were for an unsupervised party at someone else's home or a sporting event. In all six scenarios provided, 18-24 year olds were more likely to provide alcohol to a sibling than adults were to their children, and the under 18 year olds surveyed were much more likely to believe that parents would supply them with alcohol than was indicated by the over 24 year olds. Most over 24 year olds and 18-24 year olds (but fewer minors) had seen some sort of information in the media about the laws regarding the supply of

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<sup>1</sup> Secondary supply refers to the illegal sale or supply of alcohol to people under the age of 18 years (minors). Unless you are a parent or guardian or have the authorisation of a parent or guardian, you cannot give or sell alcohol to a minor or buy alcohol on behalf of a minor.

alcohol to minors. Nevertheless there was still a great deal of confusion around the laws regarding the provision of alcohol to minors, particularly those relating to parents providing alcohol to their own children, as well as the penalties that apply for breaking the law.

Phase Three involved the monitoring of campaign activity. The SMS campaign was largely a multi-media media campaign, run over the Christmas and New Year period in 2009/2010. While the online component of the campaign ran for 11 weeks, the television, radio and newspaper ads ran for a total of 4 weeks (at different times in different locations and on different media). Police in the LACs concurrently distributed posters and tried to include 'an SMS component' to their other operations. Due to the timing of the roll out no school or other community activities were incorporated into the campaign.

In Phase Four a post-intervention survey was conducted in the same LACs as the pre-intervention survey to assess the knowledge and attitudes of the community after the SMS campaign with the aim of assessing its impact. There was a significant decrease in the number of respondents reporting that they would provide alcohol to 17 year olds (in all but one of the six scenarios), as well as for one of the scenarios involving a 17 year old and their friend. There was no significant change in attitudes towards the provision of alcohol to 14 year olds, but this may be due to the fact that very few respondents indicated that they were likely to provide alcohol to 14 year olds even before the intervention took place. There was no significant change in knowledge regarding the laws about the supply of alcohol to minors after the intervention, indicating that many are still confused about what the laws are. A large proportion of community members reported seeing SMS stickers being used to seal bags in bottle shops (nearly one quarter of the post-intervention respondents) and approximately 12% reported seeing some sort of Supply Means Supply message.

In Phase Five we conducted 20 focus groups with under 18 year olds, young adults and parents - in order to explore their knowledge and attitudes toward the provision of alcohol to minors in general, and the SMS campaign in particular. Findings of note include that parents and young adults provide alcohol to young people in the belief that they are allowing them to consume alcohol under controlled conditions which is less harmful than if minors consume alcohol unsupervised. Furthermore, participants felt that the SMS campaign message was largely ineffective as consequences promoted by the SMS campaigns (e.g. 'you will pay the price') were seen as vague and unenforceable. The tag line itself was also confusing; with people wondering what was actually meant by 'Supply Means Supply'. Participants remained unconvinced that the illegality of supply was a good enough reason to stop them from supplying alcohol to minors. In addition, most participants thought the ads would have been more effective had they shown some sort of explicit negative consequences to the minor or the adult providing alcohol. However this advice from participants should be interpreted with caution as previous research has shown that health campaigns which demonstrate negative consequences (particularly those that use fear), are generally unsuccessful in changing behaviour.

Phase Six involved the consolidation of all stages of the research and several recommendations were made for the future roll out of the SMS campaign. The recommendations emphasise that although this evaluation found few significant changes in knowledge and attitudes of those surveyed before and after the SMS campaign, the low level of exposure to the campaign makes any effects hard to detect and therefore these findings should not be taken to suggest that the campaign does not have the potential to have a significant impact if rolled out more intensively and extensively. Several recommendations are made for refinement, for example, future campaigns could provide more detailed information regarding the specific legalities of secondary supply as there was confusion around these laws, particularly relating to the provision of alcohol to minors by their parents and siblings, which did not improve after the intervention. Pre-testing of the message and tag lines would very likely also improve the impact on, and perceived relevance to, viewers. In terms of the implementation of the program, rolling SMS out in a less busy time for police and over a longer period might allow for further 'grass roots' activities and school level promotion of the campaign. A further suggestion to reduce the supply of alcohol to minors involves addressing the broader drinking culture and the social norms around alcohol consumption by working with other organisations who seek to tackle this issue.

## **Project Overview**

A significant factor contributing to underage drinking is the 'secondary supply' of alcohol to minors (i.e. the supply of alcohol to minors by persons other than licensees/staff employed by licensed premises, such as parents, siblings and older peers). In a recent survey of NSW students aged 12-17 years, parents were reported as the most common source of alcohol supply for those who had consumed alcohol in the past seven days (NSW Department of Health, 2007).

The NSW Police Force, in partnership with the Central Coast Health Promotion Unit, developed a community-based intervention to address the issue of secondary supply of alcohol to minors: 'Supply Means Supply' is a multi-faceted enforcement, education and advertising campaign for parents, carers and young people aimed at educating these populations about the issues surrounding secondary supply.

Success in the original 'Supply Means Supply' project on the Central Coast led to funding by FARE for a state-wide roll out of the program. In partnership with The Central Coast Health Promotion Unit, NSW Department of Health, NSW Department of Education and Training, licensed premises and Liquor Accords, the NSW Police Force trialled the 'Supply Means Supply' program in 10 LACs (Penrith/St Mary's; Orana-Dubbo; Harbourside; Wollongong; Eastern Beaches; Miranda/Sutherland; Hastings; Griffith; Richmond; and Goulburn) in late 2009.

The SMS campaign was designed to influence the attitudes and social norms associated with the supply of alcohol to underage drinkers, and thus contribute to reducing alcohol related harm to minors. The overarching emphasis of the campaign was to reinforce the illegality of secondary supply and detail the potential penalties for detections under the new NSW Liquor Act (2007). NSW Police partnered with the Centre for Health Initiatives to assess the effectiveness of the SMS program and to measure the effect of this program on parent's and young people's intention to supply alcohol to minors.

The aims of the evaluation were to:

- Identify knowledge, awareness and attitudes of parents and young people towards the supply of alcohol to minors before and after the 'Supply Means Supply' program.
- Explore the extent to which the program establishes illegality of secondary supply as a barrier to supply to minors and as such influences social norms around 'secondary supply'.
- Explore the effectiveness of specific aspects of the program (e.g. education, marketing and police enforcement) in altering the knowledge, attitudes and self reported behaviour of parents and young people.
- Provide program recommendations on the basis of consumer feedback.



The evaluation of the various aspects of the 'Supply Means Supply' program was conducted in three NSW Police LACs (Wollongong, Dubbo and Penrith) before the trial period and four months after the commencement of the program. The evaluation utilised a 'mixed-methods' research approach which included a before and after quantitative survey, monitoring during the campaign and post-intervention qualitative research via focus groups. The evaluation consisted of six phases in total:

Phase 1: Consultation regarding the implementation of the program in each LAC

Phase 2: Baseline surveys before the trial period

Phase 3: Monitoring of campaign activity

Phase 4: Post- intervention surveys – four months after program commencement

Phase 5: Qualitative research with teens and parents – focus groups following program commencement

Phase 6: Consolidation of findings and recommendations

## **Phase 1. Consultation**

Initial discussions with NSW Police representatives about the SMS evaluation commenced at the end of 2008. Due to several changes of staff at NSW Police the program was on hold for most of 2009; however by September 2009 it was decided by NSW Police that the SMS program would be rolled out over the Christmas/New Year period in 2009/2010. The evaluation program was then designed in consultation with Senior Program Officers (Drug and Alcohol) Lance Egan and Fiona Christian from the Drug and Alcohol Co-ordination Unit. This consultation allowed us to refine our research design, particularly our recruitment strategies in each area, as well as to ensure that our survey instrument covered the issues the SMS program sought to address. Consultation with the health promotion officers who had been involved in the original establishment and evaluation of the SMS program on the Central Coast was also undertaken. Email introductions were provided to a nominated contact person in each LAC who made themselves available to us and answered questions regarding survey and focus group recruitment as needed.

## **Phase 2. Pre-Intervention Survey**

A quantitative survey was designed to collect data on: the existing attitudes of community members towards underage drinking and the supply of alcohol to minors; perceived 'norms' concerning secondary supply; knowledge regarding the illegality of secondary supply; and knowledge of the potential penalties for detections under the new Liquor Act, as well as sources of this knowledge (full survey located in Appendix A).

### **Method**

The draft survey was pilot-tested with a convenience sample of experts in the field of alcohol research, resulting in minor modifications to the wording of some items. NSW Police representatives also reviewed the survey. In addition to questions regarding knowledge, attitudes, laws and sources of information, data was also collected regarding relevant socio-demographic variables.

### **Data Collection**

There were three primary target populations for this research – young people aged 18-24 (as suppliers of alcohol to siblings and friends); parents (as suppliers of alcohol to their children); and minors themselves.

Three local area commands (LACs) were chosen as a sample of the 10 trial areas in which the SMS program was rolled out – Wollongong, Penrith and Dubbo. These three LACs were chosen for the diverse nature of their populations (coastal, metropolitan and rural). Two methods of data collection were employed:

- Intercept surveys, where the participant is approached in person in a public location and asked to complete the survey for a small incentive (such as a coffee voucher), were conducted with under 18 year olds, 18-24 year olds and adult community members. Surveys of young people aged 12-17 years (target = 50 per LAC), were conducted in locations they often frequent (e.g. in malls, cinemas, beach promenades), while 18-24 year olds (target = 100 per LAC) and adult community members (parents and non-parents; target = 100 per LAC) were recruited in shopping areas near bottle shops.
- Online surveys of teens, parents/carers and young adults specifically recruited from trial LACs through advertisements on Facebook were conducted to increase representativeness of our sample (target = 100 per LAC).

The intercept surveys were conducted over 5 days in each LAC, from 25-29 November 2009. Each day two research assistants worked from 9-5pm (from 10-4pm on Sunday). The locations for data collection depended on the approval that could be arranged (at shopping malls etc) in the different LACs. In Wollongong, the data collection sites were Crown Street Mall (three days) and Figtree Westfield shopping centre (two days). In Penrith the data collection sites were outside the train station, the skateboard park, the swimming pool, the local shops (moving between these venues over

the first three days), and Glenmore Park Shopping Centre (the last two days). In Dubbo the data collection sites were Orana Mall, the cinema and the main street (moving between these venues over the five days). Fourteen CHI staff in total conducted the intercept surveys, with all staff attending training at CHI beforehand. Staff were instructed to invite passers-by to complete a health survey regarding the supply of alcohol to minors in return for a small incentive (either a packet of “snakes” lollies or a coffee voucher). If people agreed then they were asked their age and provided with a clipboard and survey to complete if they were in the appropriate age group. Staff wore CHI/University of Wollongong uniforms and carried identification at all times while conducting field work. Ethical approval for this method of data collection (and all other aspects of the study) had been granted by the University of Wollongong Human Research Ethics Committee. The number of people approached who agreed to complete the survey varied greatly from venue to venue. Crown Street Mall (Wollongong) had a high level of pedestrian activity, with people queuing to complete surveys and 100% of people who were approached agreed to participate. Dubbo was the most difficult location in which to recruit participants due to lower pedestrian activity. Approximately 50% of people who were invited to complete the survey in Dubbo agreed to participate. Staff were also instructed to provide a handout with a link to the online survey to people who expressed an interest in completing the survey but did not have time to do it on the spot.

### **Data Analysis**

Analysis of the data was undertaken using SPSS statistical package (Version 17) and the full results are presented in Appendix B.

### **Results**

During the pre-intervention data collection period, surveys were completed by 857 participants. Of these, 741 were paper surveys completed in person at one of the intercept survey locations, and the remaining 116 were completed online. Consistent with the target set, approximately one third of responses were from each of the LACs: Wollongong had 256 respondents (34.5%); Dubbo had 252 respondents (34.0%) and Penrith had 233 respondents (31.4%). Targets were met in all three LACs but there were a smaller number of online surveys completed than anticipated.

When interpreting the results of this survey, it must be taken into consideration that there were three different versions of the survey: one for minors (i.e. under the age of 18), one for young adults aged 18 to 24, and one for adults aged over 24. The wording of questions was altered in each survey to reflect this. For example, minors were asked: “when you were 14 years old, how likely do you think it is that your parents would purchase alcohol for you...” whereas young adults were asked, “if you had a 14 year old relative, how likely is it that you would purchase alcohol for them...” and adults were asked “if you had a 14 year old child, how likely is it that you would purchase alcohol for them...”. Results are first presented for all three age groups (and hence survey types) combined, with differences between these three groups examined subsequently.

## **Demographic Summary**

Respondents were reasonably evenly divided among the three target age groups (and therefore the three different survey versions), with the majority aged over 24 (40.3%), 30.0% aged between 18 and 24, and 29.6% under the age of 18. Survey respondents ranged in age from 10 to 80, with an average age of 27.8. Of those that completed the survey aimed at under 18 year olds, the average age was 15.2, and of those that completed the young adult (18-24) survey, the average age was 21.2, while of those who completed the adult survey (24+) the average age was 41.6.

Rather more females (553; 59.3%) than males (340; 36.5%) were surveyed (the gender of 4.2% was not disclosed), although this remained quite consistent across all three survey locations, with females accounting for 62.8%, 64.2% and 58.4% of the Wollongong, Penrith and Dubbo samples respectively. Notable variation was seen, however, between the age breakdowns within each of the three survey locations, with fewer 18 to 24 year old respondents in the Dubbo region than in other regions and, correspondingly, slightly more respondents under the age of 18. See Figure 2 in Appendix B.

Respondents in the oldest age group were much more likely to be female; they made up 72.0% of that age group, compared to 59.6% of 18 to 24 year olds and 56.8% of those under 18.

Of respondents who were willing to disclose their religion, over half were Christian (54.0%).

The majority of respondents stated that they lived with family (62.7%) or with a partner (18.4%), while a smaller proportion lived either with friends (7.6%), alone (7.3%) or on campus (1.2%). As might be expected, those aged under 18 were significantly more likely to live with their family (90.0%) than those aged 18 to 24 (55.5%) or over 24 (56.1%) (although the definition of 'family' would be different for an 18 year old to a 35 year old).

Students made up approximately half of all respondents (50.4%), including high school students (24.1%), university students (16.0%) and TAFE students (10.3%). Just over two-thirds of these students were full-time and 94.0% were domestic students.

The vast majority of respondents aged under 18 were students (92.3%), compared to just over half of the respondents aged 18 to 24 (54.0%) and less again of those aged over 24 (14.6%). In line with this, respondents aged 18 to 24 (83.7%) and over 24 (81.8%) were much more likely to be in the workforce than respondents aged under 18 (51.3%). Over 80% of the sample provided information regarding their personal annual income before tax, and increased age had a strong, positive relationship with annual pre-tax income. As shown in Figures 3a, 3b and 3c (Appendix B), 82% of respondents under the age of 18 earned less than \$6,000 per annum, while that figure reduced to less than one-third (28%) of 18 to 24 year olds and just 10% of those over 24 – more than half of whom earned more than \$35,000 per annum.

## **Situational Questions<sup>2</sup>**

### *Provision of Alcohol to 14 Year Olds*

Across the full range of situations, an overwhelming majority of respondents (78.8%) indicated that they were unlikely or very unlikely to provide alcohol to 14 year olds (or have it provided to them if they were 14), with just 14.0% stating that this is likely or very likely. When asked if they would supply alcohol to their 14 year old relative and a friend, even fewer people were willing to do this (or thought that their parents would do this) across all age groups, with just 6.4% of the entire sample stating that this is likely or very likely (Table 1 in Appendix B).

Certain social situations, however, appear to increase the likelihood that adults may purchase alcohol for 14 year olds. Table 3 in Appendix B shows the full breakdown by social situation, and this shows that provision of alcohol to underage youths is most likely at a supervised party at home or a family event, and much less likely at a sporting event or an unsupervised party at a friend's house.

The age of the respondent also had an impact on the perceived likelihood of an adult providing alcohol to a 14 year old minor. As might be expected, parents and older adults (i.e. those aged 24 and above) were much less likely to report that they would provide alcohol to a 14 year old relative compared to those in the 18-24 year old age group who often stated that this was likely. For example, nearly one third (33.1%) of 18-24 year olds stated they would be likely or very likely to buy alcohol for their 14 year old relative for a supervised party in their own home (compared to just 5.7% of over 24 year olds), 30.4% stated that they would purchase alcohol for them for a family event (compared to 6.0% of over 24 year olds) and over a quarter (25.7%) that they would buy alcohol for them to take to a supervised party at a friend's house (compared to 4.0% of over 24 year olds).

### *Provision of Alcohol to 17 Year Olds*

Compared to provision of alcohol to a 14 year old, increased numbers of respondents in each age group indicated that they would provide alcohol to a 17 year old relative, with 37.5% stating that this is likely to occur – almost a four-fold increase from the equivalent percentage for 14 year olds (see Table 2 in Appendix B).

Again, the age of the respondent appears to have had a significant impact upon such behavior. For example in the 18-24 year old age group, over two thirds of respondents (68.7%) indicated that they would be likely or very likely to buy alcohol for a 17 year old relative for a family event, 67.8% to purchase alcohol for a supervised party at their house and 62.0% to buy alcohol for a supervised house party at a friend's place. Although more over 24 year olds indicated that they would buy alcohol for a 17 year old than a 14 year old, they remained less likely to purchase alcohol for this purpose than those in the 18-24 age group. For example 28.6% of over 24 year olds reported that they would be likely or very likely to buy alcohol for a supervised party at their house, 23.9% for a family event

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<sup>2</sup>Full details and tables for this section are located in Appendix B.

and 23.9% for dinner at home.

Interestingly, a disproportionate number of minors (compared to over 24 year olds) felt that their parents were likely to provide alcohol for a family event (69.7%), or a supervised party in their own home (68.9%). If the party was not supervised and at a friend's house, 52.2% of respondents still believed that their parents would purchase alcohol for them. These findings were again apparent in Phase 4 and implications will be discussed with the post- intervention survey findings.

Provision of alcohol to a 17 year old and a friend was reported to be less likely but this decline was not as great as for the 14 year old and friend. Again, over 24 year olds remained less likely to report that they would provide alcohol to a 17 year old and their friend than respondents in the other two age groups.

### **Knowledge of Laws and Penalties Related to the Supply of Alcohol to Minors**

#### *Knowledge of the Laws*

The vast majority (approximately 90%) of respondents across all age groups knew that it is illegal for people under the age of 18 years to buy alcohol. Similar numbers of adults (younger and older) knew that it is illegal to buy alcohol for someone who is under 18 years of age, however significantly fewer minors knew that this is illegal (77.2%). There was much uncertainty, however, surrounding the legality of a parent purchasing alcohol for their underage children to consume at home. Twenty percent of underage respondents and 18% of those aged 18-24 years believed that this is legal (which is correct), compared to just 6% of those aged 24 and over. In general, respondents incorrectly believed that there are penalties for parents purchasing alcohol for their children under the age of 18. For example, 61.4% of over 24 year olds stated they knew it was illegal to purchase alcohol for their children to consume in the home. On average, one in eight respondents stated that they did not know the law in regards to parents buying alcohol for their children to consume at home.

#### *Knowledge of the Penalties*

With regard to specific penalties, 73.6% of respondents stated correctly that there are penalties for providing alcohol to other young people under the age of 18 and only 2.9% stated that there are not, however there was a large amount of uncertainty, and the remaining 23.5% indicated that they were not sure. When asked what the penalties actually are, over half (496; 57.9%) indicated that they did not know, while 42.1% (n=361) thought that they knew. Most commonly, the penalty was thought to be a fine (321; 88.9% of these respondents), although other penalties commonly mentioned were jail or imprisonment (56; 15.5%) and criminal charges or a criminal record (18; 5.0%) (in reality fines of \$1,100-\$11,000 can apply or jail time of up to 12 months). When asked which government act this falls under, 772 respondents (90.1%) stated that they did not know.

### **Exposure to Information about Supply of Alcohol to Persons Under 18**

The under-18 age group seemed to be the least informed, with only just over two-thirds (68.6%) having seen or heard information about providing alcohol to minors. This was closely followed by over 24 year olds, of whom 71.4% had seen some sort of information. Almost four fifths (78.4%) of the 18-24 year old age group reported having seen or heard information about providing alcohol. Television was the most commonly reported source of information. These findings are discussed more thoroughly in the post-intervention survey results.

### **Summary**

Our survey of young people, parents and community members regarding their knowledge of, and attitudes to, the secondary supply of alcohol to minors found that a significant number of adults, aged both aged 18-24 years and over 24 years, were prepared to provide alcohol to underage relatives in a number of circumstances both at their home and to attend parties, although the 18-24 year olds were more likely to provide alcohol to minors than over 24 year olds. Both adults over 24 year olds and 18-24 year olds were less likely to provide alcohol to an underage relative if they were aged 14 (compared with age 17) or if they were accompanied by a friend. Most adults (but fewer minors) had seen some sort of information in the media regarding the supply of alcohol to minors. Nevertheless, there was still a great deal of confusion around the laws regarding the provision of alcohol to minors, particularly those relating to provision of alcohol to children by their parents.



### **Phase 3. Campaign Monitoring**

The SMS campaign officially ran from 13 December 2009 to 6 March 2010. The campaign had several components which varied slightly between each LAC depending on the different media available in each town.

#### **Media Campaign**

The main focus of the SMS program rolled out by NSW Police was a multi-media campaign. While the program evaluation conducted by CHI did not have the budget to conduct a full media campaign activity analysis, the NSW Government's media company, Mediacom, was responsible for the dissemination and monitoring of the media campaign materials and their final report for the television and online campaign can be found in Appendix C. Below is a summary of the media coverage provided across the three LACs included in the evaluation.

#### **Television Advertisements**

NSW Police developed four "Supply means Supply" advertisements, three of which can be viewed online at: [http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/community\\_issues/alcohol/supply\\_means\\_supply](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/community_issues/alcohol/supply_means_supply)

According to Mediacom these advertisements were screened on Prime (i.e. local Channel 7) and WIN (i.e. local Channel 9) in two blocks, 20 December 2009–2 January 2010 and 17 January 2010-30 January 2010. These advertisements therefore aired in the LACs of Dubbo and Wollongong, but not Penrith, as the advertisements did not air on Sydney metropolitan television. Mediacom reported 'achieving their aims' in terms of TARPS (target audience rating points) and this information is located in Appendix C.

#### **Radio Advertisements**

The radio advertisements consisted of a 15 second "Supply Means Supply" audio grab, also available for listening at: [http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/community\\_issues/alcohol/supply\\_means\\_supply](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/community_issues/alcohol/supply_means_supply)

The radio advertisements were also scheduled to run in two blocks, 13 December 2009 – 2 January 2010 and 24 January 2010 – 30 January 2010. ATN radio in Sydney (i.e. available in Penrith trial LAC in the evaluation but not Wollongong or Dubbo) had 13 radio stations and played the ad after traffic reports. Wollongong had radio ad coverage on i98 and WAVE FM and Dubbo had radio coverage on 2DU and ZooFM.

#### **Print Media**

Newspaper advertisements were published in *Penrith Press*, *Dubbo Daily Liberal* and *Illawarra Mercury* during the weeks commencing 20 December 2009, 27 December 2009 and 24 January 2010, except for the *Penrith Press* which was not published until 3 January 2010 due to the Christmas break. Street press such as *Sydney Star Observer* / *3D World* / *Drum* / *The Brag* also ran advertisements and are distributed throughout the Sydney Metro area and in some regional record stores.

## **Online**

Internet advertising was state wide and targeted the 18-24 year old age group. Advertisements were published during the period 13 December 2009–6 March 2010. Appendix C contains detailed information on websites, banners, click throughs and visits to websites, as well as images for online advertisement placement. However, in summary, Mediacom reported that the campaign delivered over 17 million impressions (i.e. the SMS ad appeared on a computer screen 17,877,497 times) and these made over one million unique impressions (i.e. appeared on 1,742,536 different people's computer screens). This resulted on 7,175 click throughs (the number of people who were interested enough to click on the ad to read or view more) giving a very low click through rate of 0.04%, suggesting a fairly low impact online campaign. In addition, Mediacom reported 5,507 expansions (where a banner expands on mouse roll over) and a better expansion rate of 0.07%. For this reason Mediacom recommended the use of more of banners that expand on rollover rather than click in future campaigns.

## **Posters**

Posters were supplied to each Trial Command for distribution to licensed premises and other suitable premises in their area. In addition, in-store advertising was planned for BWS Liquor stores that had digital screens, although none of these stores were located in the evaluation LACs.

## **Police Activities within each LAC**

Contact was made with the person/s responsible for the roll out of the SMS program in each of the three evaluation LACs. In each case this was either the licensing co-ordinator or the youth liaison officer (or both). Activities undertaken in the LACs are detailed below and their feedback is included regarding the campaign as it was conducted in their LAC.

## **Posters**

Police in all three LACs described conducting 'walk throughs' of licensed premises such as clubs, pubs and bottle shops and distributing posters in these venues. Some of the officers involved reported that many licensees were not interested in displaying the SMS posters, possibly due to the large number of posters they are already provided with. This was confirmed by another officer, who felt that they had no impact due the large amount of posters already on display. One officer suggested that a better location for such posters would be sporting venues.

## **Including SMS as a Component of Some Police Operations**

Police in all three LACs reported looking for offences related to the supply of alcohol to minors during other police operations across the campaign period, but not running any operations specifically targeting the supply of alcohol to minors alone. Wollongong and Penrith reported no arrests; however Dubbo reported one arrest of a young man supplying alcohol to his underage girlfriend. The feedback regarding these operations from the police primarily related to the time period during which the campaign was rolled out. The campaign was rolled out across the Christmas and New Year period

which coincided with many other operations and the officers reported not having enough time, resources or consultation/information to engage fully in the SMS campaign.

### **Other Activities**

One LAC (Wollongong) reported that they had sticker tape which said "Supply Means Supply" printed up, in keeping with the original SMS campaign on the Central Coast. This sticker tape was distributed to bottle shops in the area (with the help of the local Community Drug Action Team, or CDAT) and was being used to seal bags of alcohol sold in bottle shops. Anecdotally, the local CDAT reported that this tape had been very popular and that they were therefore planning a second run. The idea for this had come from SMS fridge stickers, which were also distributed to some LACs for use in bottle shops, although the other two LACS in this evaluation did not report distributing these stickers.

### **Summary**

The SMS campaign conducted by NSW Police ran from 13 December to 6 March. However the majority of the print, radio and television media activity was concentrated in the December/January period for a maximum of 4 weeks, with only the online component running for the full time frame. While the LACs were aware of the campaign and distributed posters to bottle shops and licensed premises, their involvement was limited due to the concurrent operations being run (e.g. for drink driving) over the holiday season and the lack of lead time and consultation prior to the implementation of the campaign. Also worth mentioning was the lack of involvement of schools (which was originally a focus of the SMS campaign), due to the roll out occurring in the holiday period as well as lack of time and resources.

## **Phase 4. Post-Intervention Survey<sup>3</sup>**

In Phase 4 (post SMS campaign) the surveys used in Phase 2 were re-administered to establish post-intervention knowledge and attitudes of community members. In addition, a survey question (12 c) was added to establish campaign exposure and awareness of campaign activity and recall of messages (see Appendix D for additional question). This section outlines results from this survey.

### **Method**

The recruitment strategy for Phase 4 was identical to that reported for Phase 2 (described earlier), using intercept and online surveys. Six of the same staff who conducted the pre-intervention intercept surveys also conducted the post-intervention intercept surveys and five new staff were recruited and trained. The surveys were conducted on 21-22 March 2010 and 26-28 March 2010 (in order to incorporate two weekends as the pre-intervention data collection identified that data collection sites were busier on weekends). During the post-intervention data collection period, surveys were completed by 932 participants. Of these, 870 were paper surveys completed in person at one of the three survey locations, and the remaining 62 were completed online. Wollongong was the best represented LAC, with 337 respondents (36.2%), while just fewer than one-third of respondents were from Dubbo (280; 30.0%) and Penrith (n = 265; 28.4%). For 50 of the respondents, all of whom completed the survey online, location of residence was not reported. Considering that there were 857 respondents for the pre-intervention survey, this gives an overall sample size of 1,789.

### **Results - Comparing Pre-Intervention and Post-Intervention Survey**

Almost all of the trends identified and examined in the pre-intervention survey analysis phase were again evident in the data collected post-intervention. In fact, there were undeniable similarities between responses from those surveyed before and after the 'SMS' campaign, with few statistically significant differences observed in responses from these two surveys. This report will therefore focus on examining in more detail the major findings seen in both sets of data, and will only describe and discuss the comparison between the two sets of data collected when there was a notable (i.e. statistically significant) change between the pre-intervention and post-intervention survey data.

### **Situational Questions**

#### *Provision of Alcohol to 14 Year Olds*

Across the full range of situations, an overwhelming majority of respondents (79.0%) indicated that they were unlikely or very unlikely to provide alcohol to 14 year olds (or have it provided to them if they were 14). Corresponding to this, only 12.8% of respondents indicated that provision of alcohol to a 14 year old in any situation was likely or very likely, while the remaining 8.2% of responses ("neither likely nor unlikely") indicated a level of uncertainty regarding the outcome of such a situation.

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<sup>3</sup> Full details and tables for this section are located in Appendix E

With the added condition that alcohol is being purchased for a 14 year old child or relative plus their friend, respondents seemed even more hesitant to purchase alcohol for this purpose or, in the case of the underage respondents, even less confident that their parents would purchase it for them.

Regardless of the situation (for a family event, a friend's house party and so on), a maximum of 6.4% of respondents stated that they would be likely or very likely to purchase alcohol or have it purchased for them in this instance, while 5.5% were unsure and a considerable 88.1% reported they would be unlikely or very unlikely purchase alcohol for a minor (or have it purchased for them).

An example of the large similarities between pre-intervention and post-intervention data can be seen by examining Table 1 below (where no differences are significantly significant). It must be noted, however, that significant differences are very hard to detect when percentages are low (i.e. for likely / very likely), as in this table. That is, the majority of this sample reported, before and after the intervention, that provision of alcohol to 14 years was not likely. This ceiling effect effectively reduces the likelihood of any notable increase.

**Table 1 Likelihood of Provision of Alcohol to 14 Year Olds**

	Pre-Intervention		Post-Intervention	
	For a 14 Year Old (%)	For a 14 Year Old & Friend (%)	For a 14 Year Old (%)	For a 14 Year Old & Friend (%)
Very Likely	4.9	2.3	4.8	2.2
Likely	9.1	4.1	8.1	4.2
Neither Likely or Unlikely	7.2	5.3	8.2	5.5
Unlikely	16.7	15.7	15.3	13.7
Very Unlikely	62.1	72.6	63.7	74.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Provision of Alcohol to 17 Year Olds*

The following question was asked to determine the likelihood of respondents buying alcohol for a 17 year old minor (i.e. one year younger than the legal drinking age in Australia), or whether they thought that parents would buy alcohol for them if they were 17. Results indicated much greater willingness to buy alcohol for a minor in this instance, although just over half of respondents (54.0%) indicated that they would still be unlikely or even very unlikely to purchase alcohol for this purpose. There was a greater element of uncertainty than for the previous questions relating to 14 year olds, with 14.2% of respondents indicating that purchasing of alcohol in this situation was neither likely nor unlikely.

Results reveal that, again, respondents were less likely to purchase alcohol or have it purchased for them if it was for a friend as well as the minor. In this scenario, nearly two-thirds of respondents would be unlikely or very unlikely to purchase alcohol or have it purchased for them, while 22.4% would still be likely to purchase it and 12.3% unsure.

**Table 2 Likelihood of Provision of Alcohol to 17 Year Olds**

	Pre-Intervention		Post-Intervention	
	For a 17 Year Old (%)	For a 17 Year Old & Friend (%)	For a 17 Year Old (%)	For a 17 Year Old & Friend (%)
Very Likely	13.5	8.0	11.5	7.6
Likely	24.0	16.7	20.3	14.8
Neither Likely or Unlikely	11.3	10.5	14.2	12.3
Unlikely	16.1	17.1	15.9	15.0
Very Unlikely	35.2	47.7	38.0	50.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Importantly, in this instance respondents to the post-intervention survey were less likely than respondents to the pre-intervention survey to state that they would be (very) likely to provide alcohol to a 17 year old ( $t=2.53$ ;  $p<0.02$ ). This distinction held true in all but one of the social situations (unsupervised friend’s house party) where those surveyed before and after the SMS intervention did not significantly differ.

The same can be said in the case of provision of alcohol to a 17 year old plus their friend, but in this instance only in one of the social situations was a notable change evident: those surveyed in the later survey period were less often likely to provide alcohol in this situation (a family event) but rather than confidently stating that they would not, they tended to be more uncertain as to whether they would. These results provide evidence to suggest that the SMS campaign may have had a positive impact on the perceived likelihood of adults providing alcohol to 17 year old minors. Regardless of whether this is the case, we can certainly conclude that adults are much less likely to purchase alcohol for a 14 year old child or relative than a 17 year old child or relative, and that they are also much less likely to purchase alcohol for their underage child or relative if it is for their friend as well. This may suggest that as minors near the legal drinking age, the likelihood of their parents buying alcohol for them increases significantly, despite the fact that they are still not of a legal drinking age. Furthermore, it seems evident that adults are much more willing to agree to this when it is only for their child or, in the case of young adults, when it is only for their underage relative. It may therefore be the case that parents see it as their own decision (that is, whether they purchase and provide alcohol to their underage child), and so perhaps that they are less likely to make this decision when it involves someone else’s child.

**The Impact of Different Social Situations and Locations**

Responses were then examined by social situation, regardless of the age of the minor the alcohol was potentially being purchased for, or whether it was for them and a friend. The situation where the most respondents indicated that they would possibly purchase alcohol for minors was for a party at

their own home (23.0% likely or very likely), followed by for a family event (21.6%), and for dinner at home (20.9%). Presuming that the family event is held in the family home, the common theme among these three are that they are all held in the home of the person purchasing the alcohol, possibly indicating that an important consideration when deciding whether to purchase alcohol for minors is *where* that alcohol will be consumed. This is reinforced by the observation that the three locations where the smallest proportion of respondents indicated the possibility of alcohol being purchased for minors were a sporting event, or an unsupervised or supervised party at a friend's house.

The perceived likelihood of purchasing alcohol for minors for different social situations was then examined separately based on whether it was for a 14 year old or a 17 year old, and it is interesting to note that similar trends were evident. Specifically, home parties and family events were seen as the social situations in which adults were most likely to purchase alcohol for minors, regardless of whether the minor was 14 or 17 years old. Conversely, regardless of age, sporting events and unsupervised friend's house parties were consistently seen as the least likely for which adults would purchase alcohol for minors, perhaps indicating an overarching belief that these are the least appropriate of these scenarios for underage children to be consuming alcohol. This pattern was observed both in the pre-intervention and post-intervention data.

### **The Impact of Parental Supervision**

In the previous section it was suggested that the physical location where alcohol is to be consumed could have an impact on the parent's decision as to whether or not to purchase alcohol for their child. It is possible; however, that this is just a confounding factor and that this decision is in fact more heavily influenced by whether a responsible adult will be *present* when they consume the alcohol.

Questions were asked about the purchase of alcohol for consumption by a minor at a friend's party where there was parent supervision as well as for a friend's party where there was no parent supervision. It was also specified in the survey that the "party in your home" was supervised. In addition, it is reasonable to presume that two additional situations are supervised: "family event" and "dinner at home". Responses from these can therefore be used to give some indication of the impact of parental supervision on the willingness and likelihood of adults to purchase alcohol for minors. (Please note that responses for a sporting event have been excluded given that it could be equally perceived by respondents as being a supervised or an unsupervised situation.)

As might be expected, adults were far less likely (or perceived by their children as being less likely) to provide alcohol for underage children if it was intended for an unsupervised event. This holds true regardless of whether the child in question is 14 or 17 (see Appendix D for details).

### **The Impact of Respondent Age**

While still being indicative of the attitudes of the general population to which these issues relate, it is possible that the results described above are somewhat skewed, given that they report on the results

of surveys completed by both adults and minors combined. The following analysis aims to determine whether there are any significant differences in the perceptions of these two groups, specifically regarding the likelihood of adults providing alcohol to 14 or 17 year olds, with or without their friends. The following table shows the likelihood of adults purchasing alcohol for a 14 year old relative or child from the point of view of both the adult and the children, regardless of situation.

**Table 3 Likelihood of Provision of Alcohol to 14 Year Olds: The Impact of Respondent Age**

	For a 14 Year Old		For a 14 Year Old & Friend	
	Respondents Under 18 (%)	Respondents Over 18 (%)	Respondents Under 18 (%)	Respondents Over 18 (%)
Very Likely	8.2	3.3	4.5	1.3
Likely	10.5	7.0	6.9	3.1
Neither Likely or Unlikely	10.4	7.3	8.1	4.4
Unlikely	16.6	14.8	14.9	13.2
Very Unlikely	54.3	67.6	65.7	78.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It is clear that a significant discrepancy exists between perceived likelihood of alcohol purchase from the point of view of children and adults, given that nearly 20% of underage respondents believed that this was likely or very likely, compared to just over 10% of adult respondents who agreed that this may occur. This corresponds to a significantly larger proportion of adults who say that this is very unlikely (67.6% compared to 54.3% of underage respondents).

This discrepancy was also seen when examining the likelihood of adults purchasing alcohol for a 14 year old child or relative and their friend, with adults much less likely to believe that this is likely or very likely. Interestingly, though, regardless of the age of respondents, this sample generally agreed that the purchase of alcohol for minors is much less likely if it is for friends as well as the child or relative of the purchasing adult.

Likewise, the following table shows that there is inconsistency regarding the perceived likelihood of parents or relatives purchasing alcohol for children when they are 17, with nearly 40% of underage respondents believing that this may occur, compared to less than 30% of adults who believed that it would. It also confirms that both young people under the age of 18 and adults aged over 18 believe that adults are more likely to purchase alcohol for a 17 year old than a 14 year old given that 'likely' and 'very likely' percentages have risen uniformly from the previous table to this one.



**Table 4 Likelihood of Provision of Alcohol to 17 Year Olds: The Impact of Respondent Age**

	For a 17 Year Old		For a 17 Year Old & Friend	
	Respondents Under 18 (%)	Respondents Over 18 (%)	Respondents Under 18 (%)	Respondents Over 18 (%)
Very Likely	18.5	8.7	13.4	5.2
Likely	20.7	20.1	19.0	13.1
Neither Likely or Unlikely	16.3	13.3	15.8	10.9
Unlikely	14.5	16.5	13.0	15.9
Very Unlikely	30.0	41.4	38.9	54.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

These results confirm the findings from above: that adults are much more likely to purchase alcohol for children or relatives who are closer to the legal drinking age, but that regardless of the age of the minor, this purchase is less likely to occur if the alcohol is for friends of the minor as well. These results do provide a new insight, however: that there is a major contradiction between adult's and youth's perceptions regarding the likelihood of alcohol being purchased for under 18 year olds. There are three possible explanations for this discrepancy: respondents under 18 over-estimate the likelihood of alcohol being purchased for them; adults under-estimate the likelihood of them doing so; or responses to these questions are prone to social desirability bias, whereby respondents are answering these questions as they think 'society' would expect them to. Responses such as this could indicate at least that members of the community realise that this may not be the correct decision to make in such an instance, which is of course a starting point towards responsible (and indeed legal) behaviour.

It must be noted, however, that perhaps this 'discrepancy' does not exist at all, and rather that there was natural variation in those surveyed, given that the adults and minors who completed this survey were not matched. That is, it is possible that in general the parents of the children surveyed in this study were in fact more likely to provide alcohol to their children than the adults who were actually surveyed – although with over 1,700 respondents this is extremely unlikely.

### **Knowledge of Laws and Penalties Related to the Supply of Alcohol to Minors**

#### *Knowledge of the Laws*

In NSW the law states that a person must not sell liquor to a minor or supply liquor to a minor on licensed premises and, unless you are a parent or guardian or have the authorisation of a parent or guardian, you cannot give or sell alcohol to a minor or buy alcohol on behalf of a minor.

When asked whether it is legal for someone who is under the age of 18 to purchase alcohol, 799 respondents (87.8%) correctly stated that they *knew* it was illegal. A further 3.6% stated that they *thought* it was illegal, and only 3 respondents were unsure. In a slightly disquieting finding, however, 69 respondents (7.6%) incorrectly stated that they knew it was *legal*, and furthermore, 44 of these 69

respondents were over the age of 18. In addition, 10.2% of respondents were of the belief that it is legal for someone over the age of 18 to purchase alcohol for someone under the age of 18, although again the vast majority correctly indicated that they thought or knew that it was illegal (88.4%). Respondents in the main had good knowledge about the law when it came to shop owners selling alcohol to underage customers: 91.7% of those surveyed knew that this is illegal, while 7.7% thought / knew that it is legal and just 0.7% were unsure. However those surveyed were generally much less sure about the law when it came to shop owners selling alcohol to someone over the age of 18 *if they suspect* that it will be consumed by persons under the age of 18. While the vast majority did believe that it was illegal (78.8%), they were generally not as confident, with 17.6% *thinking* that it was illegal and just 61.2% *knowing* that it is. In line with this, a much larger proportion of the group were unsure (7.4%).

Knowledge became even more blurry when asked whether it is legal for a parent to purchase alcohol for their children to consume at home, with roughly half stating with confidence that this is illegal and 18.1% only 'thinking' that it is. On the other hand, 23.5% of respondents thought or knew that it is legal for parents to do so (in NSW a parent may legally provide alcohol to their child at home for consumption under their supervision).

Finally, respondents were asked about the law relating to the purchase of alcohol by a parent for their children to consume away from home. Over two-thirds (73.6%) stated that they knew this was illegal and 14.3% thought that it was illegal (in NSW a person under the age of 18 years is guilty of an offence if they possess or consume any liquor in a public place, unless they establish that they were under the supervision of a responsible adult, in addition the parent may be breaking the law if their child is supplying that alcohol to other minors when they take alcohol away from the home).

*Knowledge of the Penalties for Adults Purchasing Alcohol for Family Members Under the Age of 18*  
Many of those surveyed were confident that there are penalties for adults purchasing alcohol for family members under the age of 18, with 72.4% (n=642) of respondents stating that there are penalties and only 3.4% stating that there are not (the remaining 24.2% indicated that they were not sure). Despite this, however, there was a fair level of uncertainty as to exactly *what* those penalties are. Over half (481; 51.6%) indicated that they did not know what penalties exist, while the remaining 48.4% (n=451) thought they had some idea, and were then asked to state what they believe the penalties are. Overwhelmingly, the most common response was that there are fines (414; 91.8% of these respondents), although estimates of the value of this fine ranged from \$300 to \$50,000 (according to the Supply Means Supply website, the actual fines range from \$1,100 - \$11,000). The only other penalties mentioned by a significant number of respondents were jail or imprisonment (116; 25.7%) (up to 12 months jail sentence can apply) and criminal charges or a criminal record (35; 7.8%).

A greater number of respondents under the age of 18 (7.1%) than respondents over the age of 18 (1.9%) believed that there are no penalties in this instance.

When asked which government act this falls under (it is the NSW Liquor Act 2007), 828 respondents (88.8%) stated that they did not know. The remaining 11.2% (n=104) believed that they knew, and the most common responses were the Liquor Act / Alcohol Act / Alcoholic Beverages Act or similar (4.1%), followed by Supply of Liquor Act / Supply of Alcohol to Minors (2.8%) and NSW Liquor Act / NSW Laws (1.2%).

*Knowledge of Penalties for Adults Purchasing Alcohol for Other People Under the Age of 18*

Respondents were more likely to believe that there are penalties for adults who provide alcohol to a person under the age of 18 if that person is not a family member. Of those who answered this question, 697 (79.4%) believed that there are penalties for such an offence (an increase of seven percentage points from above), while just 3.0% believed that there are not (17.7% admitted that they did not know). Despite the fact that more respondents believed that there was a penalty that applied in this instance, fewer could name the penalty, with just 340 (36.4%) attempting to state the penalties that apply, and 592 (63.6%) unable to do so. Extremely similar responses were observed to the stated penalties for providing alcohol to family members under the age of 18 discussed above, indicating that many adults believe that – in a legal sense – there is no difference between providing alcohol to a minor that is a family member and providing alcohol to a minor that is not.

**Exposure to Information about Supply of Alcohol to Persons Under 18**

Over two-thirds (n=660; 70.8%) of all respondents reported having seen or heard information about providing alcohol to people under the age of 18 (a slight decrease from the 71.1% of the pre-intervention sample who had seen or heard such information). Of these, almost half (n=312; 47.3%) had seen or heard information from more than one source (given that respondents were able to cite several sources of this information). Most had seen this information on TV (n=539), while other common sources were the radio (235), newspapers (218) and from family or friends (215).

Respondents were then asked to describe the information that they saw, read, or heard, and based on these open-ended descriptions it appears likely that 12.0% (n=112) of the sample had directly been exposed to the SMS campaign (see Table 5 below). Not all of these 112 participants specifically recalled the “Supply Means Supply” tagline, but recalled seeing information relaying that, for example, “it is illegal to supply alcohol to minors, and that you will pay the price” or “(in the ad) a dad gives his son's friend alcohol at a cricket game ... which is illegal” – clearly indicating that they had seen the SMS campaign and appeared to have understood the message being conveyed. In addition, 39.9% had been exposed to some other campaign (e.g., “Don’t turn a night out into a nightmare”) which, it is important to note, could also have included some who had seen some component of the SMS campaign but *did not* accurately describe the location or message of the campaign element that they saw.

Prior to the NSW Police SMS campaign launch, significantly more respondents (57.3%, compared to

39.9% after the SMS campaign) stated that they *had not* been exposed to any information about the supply of alcohol to persons under 18. Interestingly, 3.7% of those surveyed prior to the SMS campaign launch recalled the key information conveyed in the SMS campaign, perhaps indicating that they had been exposed to this campaign in its initial phase on the Central Coast, or as it had been adapted by some local CDATs (Community Drug and Alcohol Teams) subsequent to the police roll out.

**Table 5: What or where was this information seen, heard, or read?**

	Pre-Intervention		Post-Intervention	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Not exposed to any information	491	57.3	372	39.9
Exposed to another campaign (or an unspecified ad)	166	19.4	291	31.2
<b>Exposed to SMS campaign</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>12.0</b>
Learnt through observations or life experiences	39	4.6	52	5.6
Exposed to unspecified information	28	3.3	42	4.5
Exposed to information at work, school, in the media or in a training course	75	8.8	42	4.5
Exposed to information at a licensed premise	26	3.0	21	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>932</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It is also encouraging to note that of the 932 people surveyed after the intervention, 219 reported seeing stickers on bottle shop packaging, one of the components of the SMS campaign described by one LAC. Interestingly people in all three LACs reported seeing them – 88 in Wollongong, whose officers reported using stickers, and 67 in Dubbo and 56 in Penrith, where stickers were not reported as part of the SMS campaign. This exposure in all three LACs could be due to response error, travel on the part of survey respondents or because stickers were actually used in all three LACS but not noted by the officers for the evaluation. Common examples of ‘other sources’ of information cited were schools, workplaces, nightclubs, bottle shops and responsible service of alcohol courses. Slightly more respondents reported seeing information about the supply of alcohol to minors on television after the SMS program had been run (up from 75.5% to 77.0%) and more respondents also reported hearing information on the radio after the campaign (up from 31.9% to 33.3%). While encouraging, these numbers were not statistically significant.

In both the pre- and post-intervention surveys, older respondents were significantly more likely to report having been exposed to such information ( $p=0.036$ ), with less than two-thirds (65.8%) of all respondents under the age of 18 having seen or heard information about providing alcohol to people younger than 18. This figure increased to 73.5% of 18-24 year olds, and increased again to 80.3% of

respondents over the age of 24.

### **Summary**

Overall the post-intervention survey results were remarkably similar to the pre-intervention survey results with a few small exceptions. There was some reduction in the proportion of people who said they were likely or very likely to provide alcohol to a 17 year old in five of the six situations. When analysed more closely, several factors seemed to influence people's likelihood of providing alcohol to minors. Social situation had some bearing on people's intention to provide alcohol to both 14 and 17 year olds. Situations where there was potentially no adult supervision (sporting events, unsupervised parties at other people's houses) decreased the likelihood of the respondents providing alcohol to minors. Also, respondents were less likely to provide alcohol to an underage relative or sibling AND their friend. Adults aged over 24 were less likely in general than 18-24 year olds to provide alcohol to an underage child/sibling, and under 18 year olds were much more likely to state that their parents would provide them with alcohol than the over 24 year olds in the survey were. With regard to knowledge levels regarding laws and penalties, there was no change in this from before to after the SMS campaign, and only a small proportion (12%) of respondents could recall information regarding the SMS campaign post-intervention.

## **Phase 5. Post-Intervention Focus Groups**

### **Method**

Focus groups were conducted in Phase 5 to examine knowledge, awareness and attitudes of young people, young adults and parents/carers towards the supply of alcohol to minors and to the media components of the SMS program. A total of five focus groups were held in each of the three trial LACs (under 18s  $n=1$ ; young adults  $n=2$ ; parents/carers  $n=2$ ). Five subsequent focus groups were conducted in Wollongong to supplement smaller focus group numbers in the under 18 and 18-24 year age groups. A total of 39 parents and carers, 44 18-24 year olds and 14 under 18 year olds participated in the focus groups across the three LACs.

Participants were recruited via information they provided on their survey (they were asked to provide their details if they wanted to participate in future research), through friendship networks and snowballing techniques. All participants received either a \$20 voucher (under 18s) or a \$40 voucher (over 18s) as a thank you for their time.

A discussion guide was used in order to ensure topics such as the participants' attitudes and behavioural responses, as well as key issues of acceptability, believability, relevance and impact of the media components of the SMS program were all covered in conversation. The focus group transcripts were analysed and coded using the NVivo software program. The full report of the focus group findings is provided as Appendix F.

### **Focus Group Findings**

#### **Knowledge about the Supply of Alcohol to Minors**

The parents, young adults and young people under 18 years old interviewed knew that there were laws about the supply of alcohol to people under the age of 18. However upon further questioning it was apparent that there was a great deal of confusion around exactly what the laws were and particularly how they were related to parents, with comments such as the one below common:

*They don't allow underage drinking on the streets or anything but when you're in a family environment your dad says 'son do you want a glass of wine'? Sure dad, thank-you. That's fine but I think it gets a bit hazy when you add strangers on your property, I don't know, I'm not really sure. (Parent, Wollongong)*

With regard to the source of their knowledge about these laws, a few parents and young adults had seen the Supply Means Supply ads, while others reported seeing signs in bottle shops. Several young adults had learnt about alcohol and the laws about provision to minors in their Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) course, while the under 18 year olds reported that their information usually came from either school or their parents.

### **Attitudes to the Supply of Alcohol to Minors**

Parents overwhelmingly stated that they would not be comfortable providing or supplying alcohol to a minor who was not their own child:

*It's a trust between parents that the boys are at my home, you know, so I take that quite seriously. (Parent, Penrith)*

The under 18 year old participants reinforced this, saying that their parent would not provide alcohol for their friends. On the other hand, the majority of parents did not believe that the provision of alcohol to their own children who were under 18 was a black and white issue, with many agreeing that it was better for young people to drink under supervision than "on the streets" alone:

*They get curious. It's better to have a controlled situation where they have a sip, rather than go and get it off their mate. (Parent, Dubbo)*

Parents said that while they reluctantly provided small amounts of alcohol to their children, they did so in order to prevent them going off and getting "loaded" without their knowledge:

*It's probably better if they can sit around and have a beer where you can see them rather than sculling half a bottle of spirits in the shed and coming out and then being violently ill and blind drunk. (Parent, Wollongong)*

This is an interesting position that they put themselves in as there is no evidence to suggest that children who drink alcohol with their parents are less likely to drink it away from home and, in fact evidence suggests just the opposite, although only one of the parents recognised this:

*You might give them one or two glasses of wine and that's OK at a party because everyone's doing it, have one or two, but you don't see what they're drinking when you're not there. So you might give them a glass or two of wine, they might get a bottle of vodka. Because you said it's OK to drink the consequences are very much on you as on anyone else. (Parent, Wollongong)*

The young adults were divided as to whether they would provide alcohol to their siblings and/or their friend. Some said they would not, but most would and many had, with stories of their experiences highlighting the difficulties they can get into:

*My younger sister absolutely scared the living daylights out of me, shit, I had no idea what to do with them and they were vomiting. (Young adult, 18-24, Penrith).*

### **Believability of the SMS Ads**

All of the focus group participants were played the TV and radio ads and then asked to comment on them. Some of the parents and the young adults said that the TV ads were believable as they were realistic and familiar scenarios, particularly the skate park scenario:

*That's really common at skate parks. In every skate park, you see teenagers hanging around, sometimes drinking. That is a very common example. That's what happens in suburbs. My kids are not allowed to go to the skate park because of this. (Parent, Penrith)*

However the large majority of the under 18 year olds and many of the young adults interviewed felt the ads were not believable, as they took them very literally. They commented that things such as the age of the offender, the time of day and the type of party were unrealistic:

*It's not what a party would look like. At an under 18s party with alcohol, they're not just sitting around quietly and look like they haven't drunk. As soon as the kids get to the party, they're sculling and just drink as much as they can. (Under 18, Penrith)*

In addition many of the young people (under and over 18 years old) commented on what they thought was low budget, poor quality acting and directing:

*It takes your mind off what's actually being said when you look at the body language or what they're doing, rather than what they're saying. It was too cheesy to get past. (Young adult, 18-24, Penrith)*

Parents, however, did not seem to be as concerned by the production of the ad itself.

### **Impact of the Message**

A small number of participants felt that the ad provided them with information about something they did not already know, although most participants felt they already had the information that the ad was providing. With regard to communication of the message itself, people preferred the radio ad as it told them specifically how much the fine was. Similarly many preferred the "skate park" ad as there is a siren and the police arrive at the end, again giving them a clear idea of the consequences:

*It's a good visual. It reminds you that the police could be around the corner. When I hear a siren, I automatically feel like I've done something bad even if I haven't, so as soon as I hear a police siren I get conscious. It reminds you that you can be in a lot of trouble. (Parent, Penrith)*

Many participants felt that the message "you will pay the price" provided confusing information, particularly in what they already thought were ambiguous situations:

*That [party] was one of those ambiguous situations - a home situation. We don't know what the laws are. The voiceover says: "you will pay the price", but I don't know what the consequences are, I don't know what the laws around this kind of scenario are. I don't know what they're talking about. (Young adult, 18-24, Wollongong)*

One of the strongest themes of the focus groups was that all participants felt that these ads would have had more impact if they had shown what the consequences were to the minor rather than the penalty to the adult doing the supplying:



*"I think about the things that could happen and the effects on my sibling. Those things stand out more to you (like those nightmare ads of him walking across the road, and smashing into a table and getting into a fight). Those things are more in your face than saying: 'it's illegal, bad me'. Those things are more real, more tangible; you can see they could happen." (Young adult, 18-24, Wollongong)*

While this was mentioned by several of the participants it should also be noted that it has been well established in the health behaviour change literature that, contrary to popular opinion, the use of fear in media campaigns designed to elicit behaviour change, particularly for young people, is not generally a successful tactic. An important element of successful communication campaigns - particularly fear campaigns - is the provision of an efficacy message which counteracts the fear and provides an achievable alternative behaviour.

### **Acceptability of the Message**

The participants' ideas about message acceptability were both variable and contradictory. Although most participants indicated that they felt the laws were reasonable and appropriate, many thought the ads described situations that, while realistic, showed how difficult it is to enforce laws relating to alcohol supply to minors. At sports games and house parties, participants felt that police were unlikely to be aware of or able to penalise the suppliers. Even being out on the street presents a difficult situation to enforce:

*I've never heard of anyone actually being fined or getting in trouble for buying alcohol for a minor. How are you going to get fined? Is there going to be a police officer within 5 feet of the bottle shop? (Parent, Wollongong)*

So while the participants indicated that the message may be reasonable, they were questioning its ability to be enforced. Some participants went further to suggest that the message the ads were sending was actually unacceptable, as the ads were in fact demonstrating that minors can "get away" with underage drinking, and some saw the ads as more of a "how to" manual:

*This (the bottle shop) ad actually shows that you can get away with it. (Young adult, 18-24, Dubbo)*

In particular the "party" ad was criticised for demonstrating that alcohol supply at an underage party lacked consequences and was unenforceable.

### **Relevance of the Message**

The focus group participants on the whole did not find the message particularly relevant to themselves. None of the parents in these focus groups stated that they were providing alcohol to young people inappropriately (not necessarily illegally) and so rather than comment on the relevance of the message to themselves, they expressed concern over the suppliers as "undesirables": individuals who are heavy drinkers, or as parents with low regard for their children, people who they did not identify with:

*I think the people who are providing access to alcohol are actually heavy drinkers.  
(Parent, Penrith)*

A further part of this distancing themselves from the role of supplier was describing their anger at “people like that” – the adults who provided alcohol in some of these circumstances. For example in the “skate” ad:

*My reaction to the ad is doesn't that idiot realise what he's done? He is the one I am angry with, not so much that the kids ask him. (Parent, Penrith)*

While these ads elicited a reaction from these parents and raised their awareness that adults (other than themselves) are supplying their children with alcohol, and therefore the campaign goal has in part been achieved, the message that the supply of alcohol to minors is illegal did not appear to seem relevant to them, even though nearly all of them revealed that they felt it was okay for them, in some circumstances (some which are not legal), to supply their children with alcohol.

Young adults were more aware of the role they played in the supply of alcohol to minors (as seen by their descriptions of experiences of supplying alcohol in different situations). However while they recognised the ads as targeting them, they were more philosophical about alcohol use in society and several argued that they did not see themselves as part of the problem, but rather felt it was a cultural and social issue:

*Cricket is so ingrained in the Australian psyche and so is beer drinking. (Young adult, 18-24, Wollongong)*

Similarly under 18s felt that while the ads were targeting adults, the supply of alcohol to minors was culturally acceptable and adults therefore did not see the message as particularly relevant to them:

*They know it's illegal but they're not going to get caught and no harm will be done. I don't think it's so much of a grey area, so it's an acceptable break of law. (Minor, Wollongong)*

## **Summary**

The focus group findings support the survey results and reveal a large amount of confusion regarding the laws around the supply of alcohol to minors, particularly by parents to their children. While focus group participants largely agreed that the laws were reasonable and that they would not provide alcohol to minors under most circumstances, parents said they provide alcohol to their own children in the belief that allowing them to consume alcohol under controlled conditions is less harmful than if minors consume alcohol unsupervised. With regard to the message itself, while some parents felt the ads raised an important issue and provided them with an opening for discussion with their children, most participants (particularly young adults and minors) felt that the campaign messages (i.e. ‘you will pay the price’) were vague and unenforceable. The tag line itself was also seen as confusing; with people wondering what was actually meant by ‘Supply Means Supply’. Participants did not think that

the illegality of supply of alcohol to minors on its own was a good enough reason to prevent people from continuing to do so. Most participants thought the ads would have been more effective had they shown some sort of explicit negative consequences to the minor of the adult providing alcohol, and if they had been more clear about what the law and the penalties were.

## **Phase 6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The evaluation of the SMS program was designed to achieve four aims and these are addressed below.

### **1) Identify knowledge, awareness and attitudes of parents and young people towards the supply of alcohol to minors before and after the 'Supply Means Supply' program**

The results of the surveys conducted before the SMS program indicated that very few people were willing to provide alcohol to a 14 year old, although more respondents were willing to provide alcohol for a 17 year old child or sibling. In all situations posed, if asked about providing alcohol to a child or sibling AND their friend, respondents were much less likely to report that they would provide alcohol. Social situations such as a supervised party at home or a family dinner were occasions where it was more likely that adults were likely to provide minor with alcohol, as opposed to an unsupervised party at someone else's home. In all scenarios, 18-24 year olds were more likely to provide alcohol to a sibling than over 24 year olds were to their children, and the under 18 year olds surveyed were much more likely to believe that parents would supply them with alcohol than was indicated by the over 24 year olds.

Most over 24 year olds and 18-24 year olds (but fewer minors) had seen some sort of information in the media on the laws regarding the supply of alcohol to minors, with television being the most common source. In spite of this, there was still a great deal of confusion around the laws regarding the provision of alcohol to minors, particularly those relating to parents and their children. Respondents generally knew that it is illegal to purchase alcohol for minors and 62% thought there was some kind of penalty, however more than half of the respondents did not know what the penalty was, and the vast majority could not name the government act it fell under. Also of note is that the majority of over 24 year olds incorrectly believed that providing their child alcohol in their own home was illegal.

Focus groups were useful for providing us with information about people's attitudes toward the supply of alcohol to minors. Many parents chose to provide alcohol to their own children because they believed that the supervised consumption of alcohol by minors that they are responsible for is less likely to lead to irresponsible and unsupervised drinking. This is interesting in light of the above information, that over two thirds of parents believed that it is illegal to provide alcohol to their child in their own home. Even though the parents surveyed believed they are behaving illegally, parents in general did not think that these ads were relevant to them as they believed they were targeting 'irresponsible' parents and heavy drinkers, rather than parents who are trying to do the best they can. This view was summed up by one of the parents: 'there should be leniency for parents because we know our children best' (Parent, Wollongong – Appendix F).

Surveys conducted after the SMS program had been rolled out found almost no change in attitudes and knowledge levels in the community, with a few exceptions. Respondents after the SMS campaign were significantly less likely to say they would provide alcohol to a 17 year old in all situations except one (an unsupervised party at a friend's house, where pre-survey levels were already lower). While there was no change in the respondents' attitudes towards the provision of alcohol to 14 year olds, we note that very few respondents thought that that was acceptable even before the intervention. There was no change in knowledge levels of the population after the SMS program had run, with a large number of people still expressing uncertainty regarding the laws and penalties.

**2) Explore the extent to which the program establishes illegality of secondary supply as a barrier to supply to minors and as such influences social norms around 'secondary supply'**

Focus groups were used to explore the concept of secondary supply and to establish whether it was a barrier to supply of alcohol to minors. While one or two participants indicated that as a result of the campaign they now knew there was a law where they didn't before, the overwhelming majority of participants stated that the campaign did not deter them from giving alcohol to young people for, while it might be illegal, they believed that it was still socially acceptable. Even if it was not socially acceptable, it was seen as at the very least unenforceable, and the ads served to reinforce this. The ads had little relevance to, or impact on, the focus group participants and some thought that, if anything, the ads emphasised how common the behaviour (of supply to minors) was and how unlikely it was that someone would get caught supplying alcohol to a minor. As such it seems unlikely that the SMS campaign alone influenced social norms around 'secondary supply'.

**3) Explore the effectiveness of specific aspects of the program (e.g. education, marketing and police enforcement) in altering the knowledge, attitudes and self reported behaviour of parents and young people**

None of the survey or focus group participants reported seeing an increased police presence regarding SMS and no school education was conducted due to the timing and short duration of the program, therefore it is not possible to comment on the specific aspects of the campaign other than the mass media campaign. With regard to the mass media campaign, while there was no increased reporting of seeing information about the supply of alcohol to minors in the media after the SMS program, small (non-significant) increases in the number of people who heard about the supply of alcohol to minors via the medium of television and radio are encouraging, as is the small change in attitude regarding the provision of alcohol to 17 year olds in some circumstances. It is also worth noting that the online media report indicates that the online SMS advertisements appeared over 17 million times to more than one million people however only a very small proportion clicked on or rolled over the ad for more information.

#### 4) Provide program recommendations on the basis of consumer feedback

The knowledge questions in the survey show there is confusion around what the existing laws are and support a need to provide information more clearly about the specific legalities of secondary supply. Similarly, the focus groups revealed that while most people knew there are laws about the supply of alcohol to minors, there was a great deal of confusion when it came to the details, particularly regarding the supply of alcohol to their child or sibling, which was a primary goal of the program.

The lack of change in knowledge between the pre-and post intervention groups, and between those who reported seeing the campaign and those who did not, indicates that the SMS campaign did not achieve its goal of increasing community knowledge regarding the laws about the supply of alcohol to minors. However only 12% of respondents probably or definitely saw the SMS campaign, so any apparent lack of effect is more likely to be an effect of low levels of penetration, as the intervention was brief and not very intense, and does not indicate the campaign itself was ineffective. However we also know (from the focus groups) that the ads didn't give people the information they wanted/needed about what the laws are and what the penalties are.

**Recommendation 1: In future the campaign should aim for a longer duration and higher intensity to increase community exposure to the message.**

**Recommendation 2: In future the campaign message needs to provide more information about the laws and penalties.**

An encouraging finding was that adults, aged both over 24 years old and 18-24, surveyed after the SMS program were significantly less likely to report being willing to purchase alcohol for a 17 year old for all but one of the situations they were presented with. This suggests that the program had some impact on the attitudes of the community towards the provision of alcohol to minors. It is more difficult to say which part of the campaign was successful due to the inability to measure exact exposure and compare knowledge and attitudes as a direct result of exposure. As the level of knowledge of the community did not change with the campaign it is more likely that these ads changed people's attitudes through increasing the profile of underage drinking in general, rather than due to a specific focus on the laws.

Feedback from the LACs suggested that such a campaign may have been easier to roll out outside of peak holiday time. In addition, increased lead time would allow for some level of school involvement which would allow this campaign to have the multi-level involvement that was initially planned. Given that the campaign was underpowered, the small change that was seen in some of the attitude questions after the campaign had run is indeed encouraging, and it appears likely that if it were run in

its full form, the potential for positive change is even greater.

**Recommendation 3: In future the campaign should be run during the school term, and include school based education components.**

**Recommendation 4: In future the campaign should be run at a time when officers are less involved in other holiday operations, and sufficient consultation be undertaken to ensure the integration of SMS into police enforcement activities.**

Parents in the focus groups reported providing alcohol to their own children because they believed that the supervised consumption of alcohol by minors for who they are responsible for is less likely to lead to irresponsible and unsupervised drinking. While this behaviour is not recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council, this is not technically a legal issue as parents are permitted to provide alcohol to their children under certain circumstances. Additionally the campaign does NOT want to be seen to be telling parents how to bring up their own children (as this will lead to reactance). However a focus on the illegality of providing alcohol to other people's children and siblings as well as an emphasis on the unintended consequences of their provision of alcohol to their children (such as their children giving the alcohol they supply them with to other children) would be a reasonable approach.

**Recommendation 5: Be specific about which aspects of supply are illegal and emphasise how provision of alcohol to their child could result in the supply of alcohol to other minors.**

The ads were seen by some of the focus group participants as unrealistic and/or showing how pointless/unenforceable the laws are. Furthermore some focus group participants suggested that the tag lines themselves were confusing and they were unsure what 'Supply Means Supply' actually meant, or what was meant by 'You Will Pay the Price'. Some participants, particularly 18-24 year olds, suggested that what would stop them providing alcohol to minors was seeing the consequences of their actions. Such suggestions should be considered with great caution; as described in the body of the report, campaign appeals based on fear and consequences, particularly for young people, are notoriously unsuccessful. Therefore any change to campaign tactics along these lines would need to be carefully pre-tested.

**Recommendation 6: Need to develop and pre-test future campaign materials in order to ensure the message is clear and that the right message is being conveyed.**

The social acceptability of alcohol generally, and its connection to sport and celebration in particular, was thought by the participants to contribute to the normalisation of alcohol consumption, even for those under the age of 18. Therefore while it is not legally acceptable to provide minors with alcohol, it seems to be culturally and socially acceptable, and many community members seemed to believe

that this makes the law less important than other laws (such as speeding, for example). This culture of acceptability is an ongoing challenge to this campaign (or any related activity).

**Recommendation 7:** While it is beyond the scope of police activity to change cultural/social norms around alcohol consumption, it is essential that they recognise them and work with other organisations who are trying to change these norms.

There was a large discrepancy between how likely the adults said they were to provide alcohol to their children, and what the minors thought their parents were likely to provide them with. There are several possible explanations for this and while it is beyond the scope of the SMS campaign to address this, it is a finding that warrants further investigation.

**Recommendation 8:** There is a need for future research into actual and stated levels of alcohol provision by parents to their children. Such research should include assessment of the motivation for provision and then provide guidance for future message development.

This evaluation found few significant changes in knowledge and attitudes of those surveyed before and after the campaign. The low level of exposure to the campaign, as well as the low click through rates and short timeframe all indicate a low level of penetration of the campaign itself, which make any effects of the campaign hard to detect.

**Recommendation 9:** The findings of this report should be utilised to refine the campaign. However, the lack of significant effect should not be taken to suggest that the campaign does not have the potential to have a significant impact if it were rolled out more intensively and extensively.



