

Victorian Health Promotion Foundation

Development of the VicHealth Alcohol Cultures Framework



Drinking culture

Tabloids

Melbourne needs to change its culture of drinking to excess news.com.au 2011

Which countries have the worst drinking cultures? The Guardian 2016
 From savouring flavours in France to binge drinking in Australia - readers talk about the alcohol culture where they live

Opinion: Lockout laws won't work due to Australian drinking culture

Drinking culture unacceptable, says NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell The Age 2013
Lisa Davies, Sam Nicholls
 Published: September 10, 2013 - 6:37PM

February 12, 2016 5:12pm
 Robert Cavallucci The Herald Sun 2016

Australia's binge drinking culture puts mental health at risk, experts warn Nine News 2016
By Kellie Scott
 Updated 30 Mar 2016, 9:54am

We need to wake up and stop celebrating Australia's drinking culture news.com.au 2012

James Horwill denies there is a drinking culture within Wallabies camp The Age 2013

©VicHealth



Drinking culture 'Big Alcohol'



Understanding Behaviour in the Australian and New Zealand Night Time Economies: An anthropological study – Anne Fox

“ it is the wider culture that determines the drinking behaviour, not the drinking ”

Community Investment

Without a positive drinking culture – where people drink for the right reasons and are sociable without causing harm to themselves or others – we will not achieve long-term, sustainable growth. We invest in initiatives that improve drinking behaviour and attitudes and in targeted intervention with at-risk groups. This includes two major partnerships in Australia and New Zealand:

A POSITIVE DRINKING CULTURE

A Positive Drinking Culture

Without a positive drinking culture – where people drink for the right reasons and are sociable without causing harm to themselves or others – we will not achieve long-term, sustainable growth.

We invest in initiatives that improve drinking behaviour and attitudes and in targeted intervention with at-risk groups. This includes two major partnerships in Australia and New Zealand:

Claim: alcohol-related harm is individual and/or cultural. It is therefore largely immune to legal reform

3 ©VicHealth



4 ©VicHealth

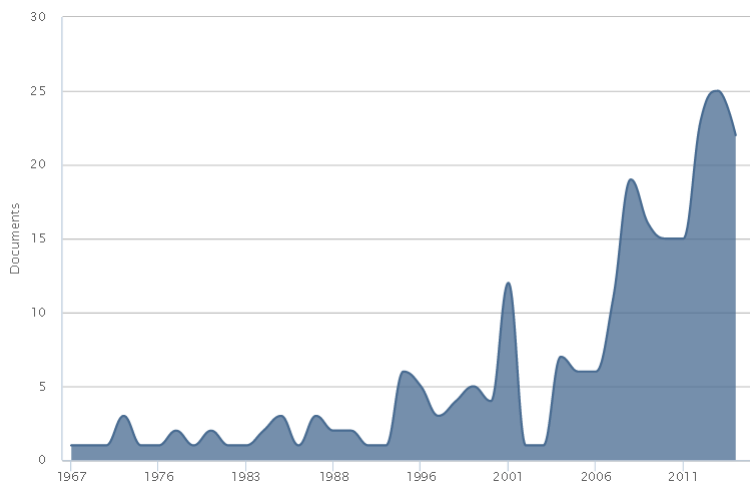
Alcohol Cultures Framework



164

↑ interest in 'drinking cultures'

Peer-reviewed publications containing the term "drinking culture"



Savic et al (2016) Defining "drinking culture". A critical review of its meaning and connotation in social research on alcohol problems. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy*



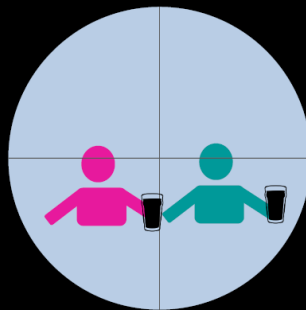
A working definition?

“ Drinking cultures are generally described in terms of the norms around patterns, practices, use-values, settings and occasions in relation to alcohol and alcohol problems that operate and are enforced (to varying degrees) in a society (macro-level) or in a subgroup within society (micro-level). Drinking culture also refers to the modes of social control that are employed to enforce norms and practices. Drinking culture may refer to the aspects concerned with drinking of a cultural entity primarily defined in terms of other aspects, or may refer to a cultural entity primarily defined around drinking. Drinking cultures are not homogeneous or static but are multiple and moving. As part of a network of other interacting factors (e.g. gender, age, social class, social networks, individual factors, masculinity, policy, marketing, global forces, place, etc.), drinking culture is thought to influence when, where, why and how people drink, how much they drink, their expectations about the effects of different amounts of alcohol, and the behaviours they engage in before, during and after drinking. The degree and nature of the influence that drinking cultures have on individuals is not inevitable but will depend on the configuration of factors in play in any given situation, and the nature of the relationships between the culture as a whole and smaller cultural entities as they affect the individual.

Savic et al (2016) Defining “drinking culture”. A critical review of its meaning and connotation in social research on alcohol problems. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy*



It's not just about this



It's about all this

Norms (not just consumption levels)



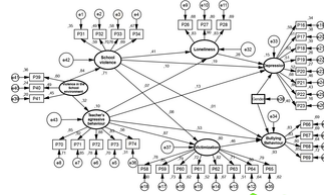
Informal sanctions



Formal sanctions



Multiple and moving



9 ©VicHealth



Alcohol Cultures Framework



A framework to guide public health action on drinking cultures



Here's a practical definition of alcohol culture:

“ the way people drink including the formal rules, social norms, attitudes and beliefs around what is and what is not socially acceptable for a group of people before, during and after drinking.

”

What might a culture that prevents harm from alcohol look like?

- A supportive policy, physical and social environment where people do not feel pressure to drink
- When alcohol is consumed, it is done at levels of low risk
- Social pressure supports low-risk drinking and discourages high-risk drinking
- Occurrences of drinking are reduced
- Intoxication is socially rejected

©VicHealth



Frames for intervention

Frames for intervention

Societal

Whole-of-population drivers at a state, national or global level around alcohol.



Setting*

The physical and social environment where alcohol is consumed and the context of the occasion.



Subculture*

Social groups with established boundaries and commitment from members who share identity, values, beliefs and social norms. Identifying as a member of a subculture can extend beyond face-to-face interactions. They can sometimes be recognizable to those inside and outside of the group.



Family and individual

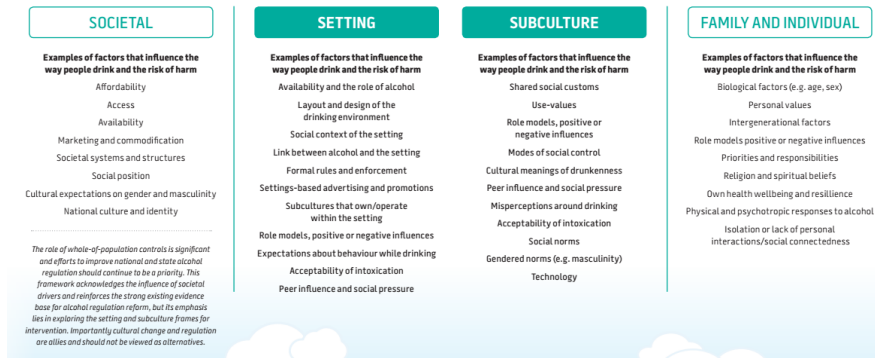
Individuals have a unique combination of genetic and personal characteristics which interact with the configuration of structural, cultural, contextual and interpersonal factors in play in any given situation.



©VicHealth



Examples of factors that influence drinking



©VicHealth



Disrupting the way groups of people drink

Move beyond traditional approaches that focus on individual behaviour change (Murphy et al 2016, Suski et al. 2016, Zajdow & Maclean 2014, Maclean & Moore 2014, Harrison et al. 2011, Lindsay 2006)

Address unhelpful masculine norms around drinking (Hepworth et al. 2016, Lindsay, 2012, Lindsay, 2006)

Provide/encourage alternative activities or practices (Supski & Lindsay 2016, Supski et al. 2016, Advocat & Lindsay 2015)

Make it socially & culturally acceptable for young people to adopt diverse subject positions/identities that don't centre on alcohol (Supski & Lindsay 2016, Advocat & Lindsay 2015)

Use young peoples stories and own accounts to facilitate culture change (Zajdow & Maclean 2014)

©VicHealth



Alcohol Culture Change Initiative projects

Subculture/setting:

- Young people in late night inner city precincts
- Young people disengaged from education, training or employment in Melbourne's fringe
- Rural teenagers and their parents
- Rural male blue collar workers
- Rural LBQ Women
- University students
- Male construction workers
- Peers of heavy drinkers in Western VIC



©VicHealth



18 ©VicHealth



Practical implications

- New approach to alcohol harm reduction to complement legislative reform
- Definition of alcohol culture
- New planning tool to influence alcohol cultures

Contact:

Genevieve Hargrave

ghargrave@vichealth.vic.gov.au