

POSITIVE CHOICES & Climate Schools

Empowering young Australians

Professor Maree Teesson AC
The Matilda Centre





Acknowledgements & Declaration

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of the Chief and Associate Investigators and the staff of The Matilda Centre. We would also like to acknowledge the many community members from around the country who contribute to our research.

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Declaration: Maree Teesson and Nicola Newton are the directors of CLIMATESCHOOLS PTY LTD, an Australian company set up in 2015 to distribute the online CLIMATESCHOOLS Programs. Income from the company supports the distribution.



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National Health and Medical Research Council



Black Dog
Institute



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA



UNSW
SYDNEY



Within **one year**, AFL, NRL and Cricket broadcasts draw a cumulative viewing audience of



During this time, **these children** will be exposed to



instances of **alcohol advertising**¹.

1. Child and adolescent exposure to alcohol advertising in Australia's major televised sports: Carr S, O'Brien K, Ferris J, et al. Drug and Alcohol Review 2013; DOI: 10.1111/dar.12020.
2. Alcohol Advertising: The Effectiveness of Current Regulatory Codes in Addressing Community Concern (2014), p52. Australian National Preventive Health Agency.
3. Alcohol Advertising Review Board: Annual Report 2014-15, p5.

Why prevent?

- Burden of disease associated with AOD use is substantial.
- Associated harms are considerable - peak impact is 15-24yrs
- Early initiation leads to:
 - Substance use disorders
 - Comorbid mental health problems
 - Poor academic performance/drop out
 - Neuropsychological deficits
 - Less likely to access treatment



Young people want a better future



Mission Australia asked over 24,000 young Australians what they think are the most important issues in Australia today



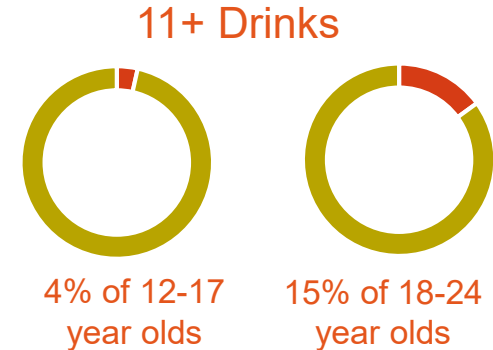
Young people are starting to drink later



Source: National Drug Strategy Household Survey

Rates of risky drinking are significant

- Rates of very high risk binge drinking are significant and are highest among young people
- Younger people remain more likely to be victims of alcohol related crime



Source: 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey

Risk factors for teenage drug & alcohol use

- Peer use, and confidence to assert own choices (Trucco et al. 2011)
- Perception of use as normative (“everyone is doing it”) (Amialchuk et al., 2019)
- Mental Health and behavioural problems (Birrell et al., 2016)
- Parental attitudes, monitoring, and rule setting
(Yap et al., 2017; Tael-Oeren et al; 2019; Newton, 2018)



Effective principles of school-based drug prevention

- Evidence-based and theory driven
- Developmentally appropriate & immediately relevant
- Implemented *prior* to harmful patterns of use
- Part of a comprehensive health education curriculum
- Use of peer leaders but keeping teacher as the central role
- Employ *interactive* teaching methods
- Adopt a social influence or comprehensive approach

Sources: Newton et al., 2013, Botvin & Griffin, 2007, Midford et al., 2001; 2002, Tobler et al., 1999; 2000, Foxcroft, & Tsertsvadze, 2011, Faggiano et al., 2014, Dusenbury, L., & Falco, 1995)

Common obstacles to effective implementation

- Insufficient resources e.g. time & money
- Adaptation
- Lack of training
- Commercially based packing
- Sustainability



Poor implementation → poor outcomes



A new approach was needed

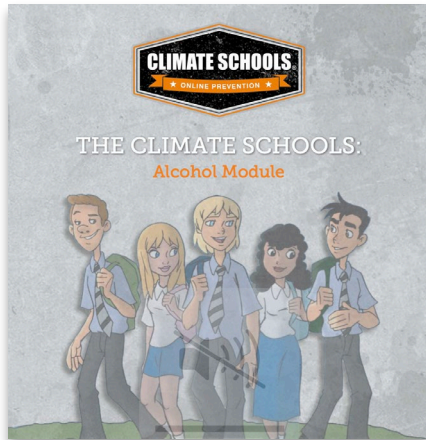
1. Evidence-based
 - adheres to effective principles of drug prevention
2. Overcame barriers to implementation
 - to increase fidelity & outcomes
3. Improved student engagement



Climate Schools program

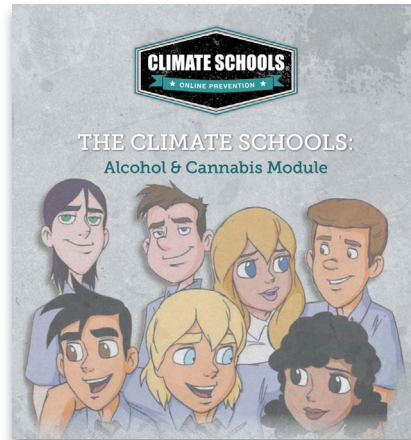


Universal prevention programs which aim to prevent substance use and related harms in adolescents



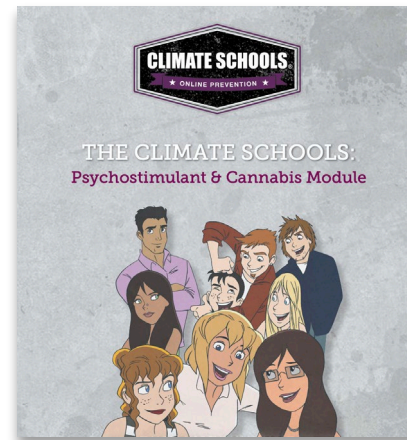
Alcohol module

(Yr 8: 13-14yr olds)



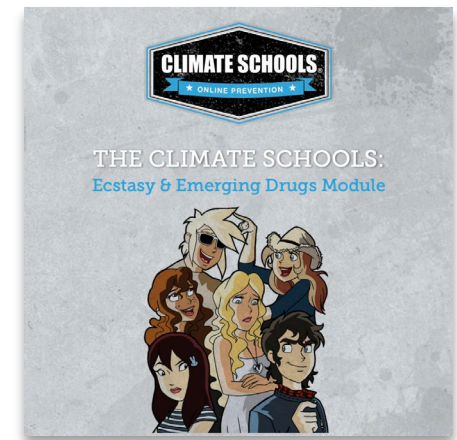
Alcohol & Cannabis
module

(Yr 8/9: 13-15yr olds)



Cannabis &
Psychostimulant module

(Yr 9/10: 14-16yr olds)



Ecstasy & Emerging
Drugs module

(Yr 11: 16-17yr olds)

Integrated into the learning centre

climateschools.com.au



A screenshot of the Climate Schools website interface. The background is a dark, textured grey with a grid pattern. At the top, a black navigation bar contains white text for "HOME", "COURSES WE OFFER", "REGISTER YOUR SCHOOL", "TEACHERS", "STUDENTS", "OUR RESEARCH", and "CONTACT". Below the navigation bar, there are three circular icons representing different countries (USA, UK, Australia). To the left is a dark teal sidebar with a white "CLIMATE SCHOOLS ONLINE PREVENTION" logo at the top. The sidebar contains a "★ LOGIN" section with fields for "USERNAME (CASE SENSITIVE)" (containing "nick1en@unsw.edu.au") and "PASSWORD (CASE SENSITIVE)" (containing "****"), a "Login" button, and links for "Forgot your password?" and "Create a new account". Below this is an "★ OTHER INFORMATION" section with links for "TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS", "PRIVACY STATEMENT", "FREQUENTLY ASKED Q'S", and "IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE", and a "Support" button at the bottom. The main content area on the right features a white paper-like background with a spiral binding on the left. It has a heading "★ Climate Schools" followed by a paragraph: "Climate Schools provides health education courses which aim to empower students to gain knowledge about their health and wellbeing. This knowledge will assist them in making good choices. Students learn about ways to avoid harm and to optimise their physical and mental health." Below this is another paragraph: "Prior to registering your school, you can preview the Climate Schools course material including lesson 1 of the Alcohol module and lesson 1 of the Alcohol and cannabis module. These interactive student lessons will provide a preview before your school registers for full access to the Climate Schools programs." This is followed by a heading "★ Who is behind Climate Schools?" and a paragraph: "Climate Schools is the work of researchers and practitioners from the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC) and the NHMRC Centre for Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Sydney, Australia." The final section is "★ Course Benefits" with a paragraph: "Our research shows that Climate Schools programs improve student outcomes by:" followed by a list of five bullet points: "→ Reducing alcohol consumption", "→ Reducing binge drinking", "→ Reducing the frequency of cannabis use", "→ Increasing knowledge about alcohol and cannabis", and "→ Improving attitudes towards alcohol".

Part 1: Online lessons

climateschools.com.au



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Psychostimulant & Cannabis - Lesson 1



This lesson will teach you about:

- What cannabis is.
- Acute/short-term effects: physical, psychological and social.
- Reasons why people might choose to use or refrain from cannabis use.
- Cannabis and the law.
- Risk factors and preventative factors for drug use.
- Prevalence of cannabis use.
- Mental health and cannabis.

[Cartoon](#)

[Teacher summary](#)

[Activities](#)

[Student summary](#)

Psychostimulant & Cannabis - Lesson 2



This lesson will teach you about:

- Critically analysing drug related internet and media resources.
- Classifying drugs as hallucinogens, stimulants and depressants.
- Common names and properties of psychostimulant drugs.
- Short-term effects of psychostimulants.
- Prevalence of use of psychostimulants.
- The multifaceted nature of the effects of drug use on people's lives.

[Cartoon](#)

[Teacher summary](#)

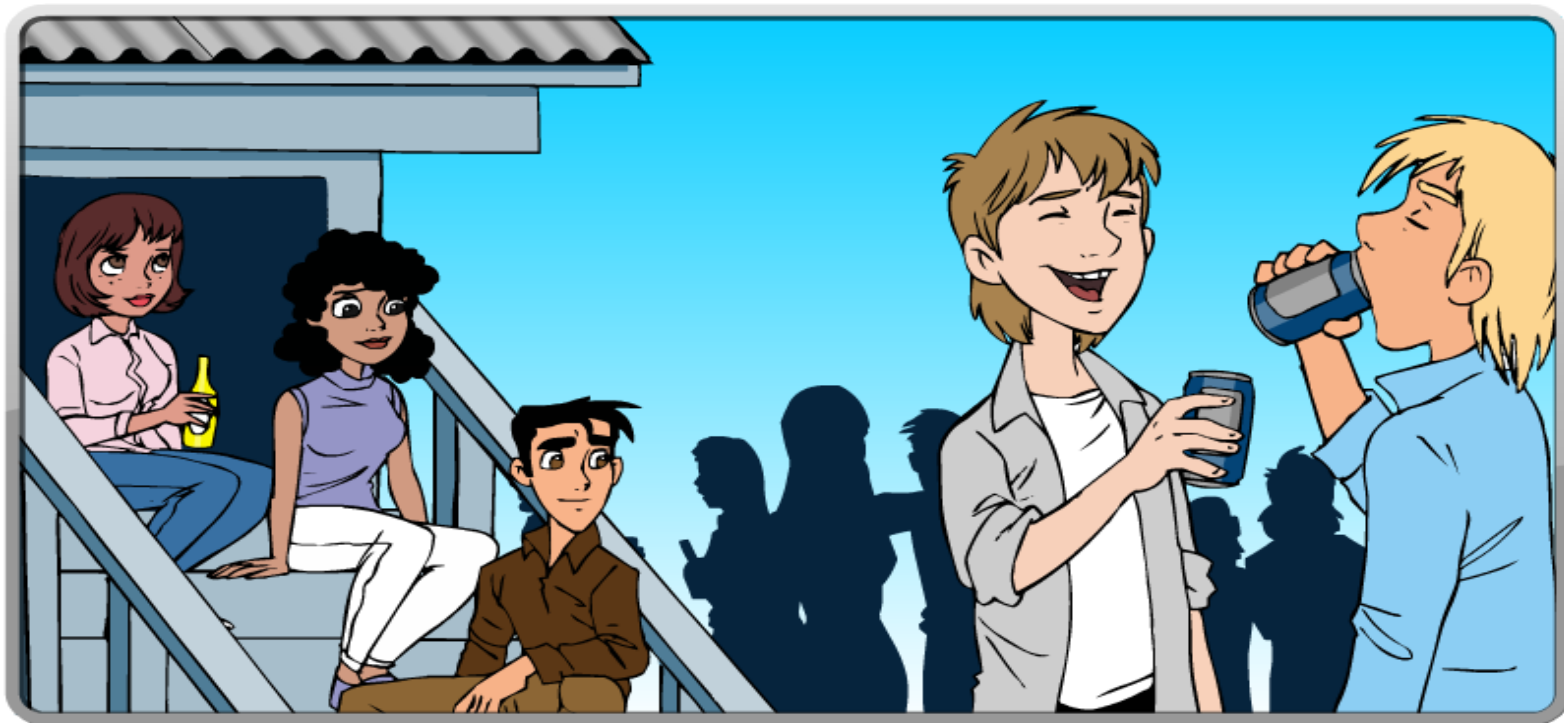
[Activities](#)

[Student summary](#)









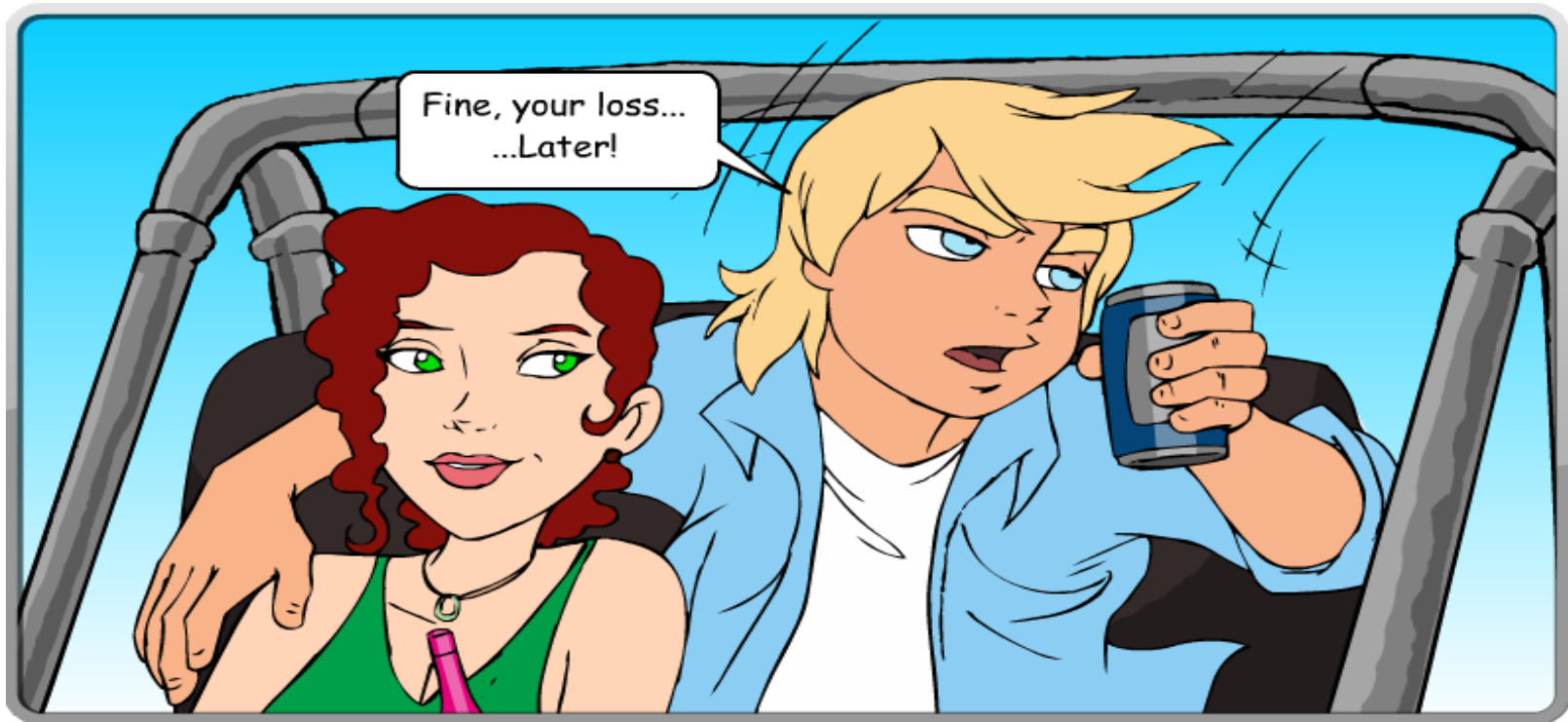






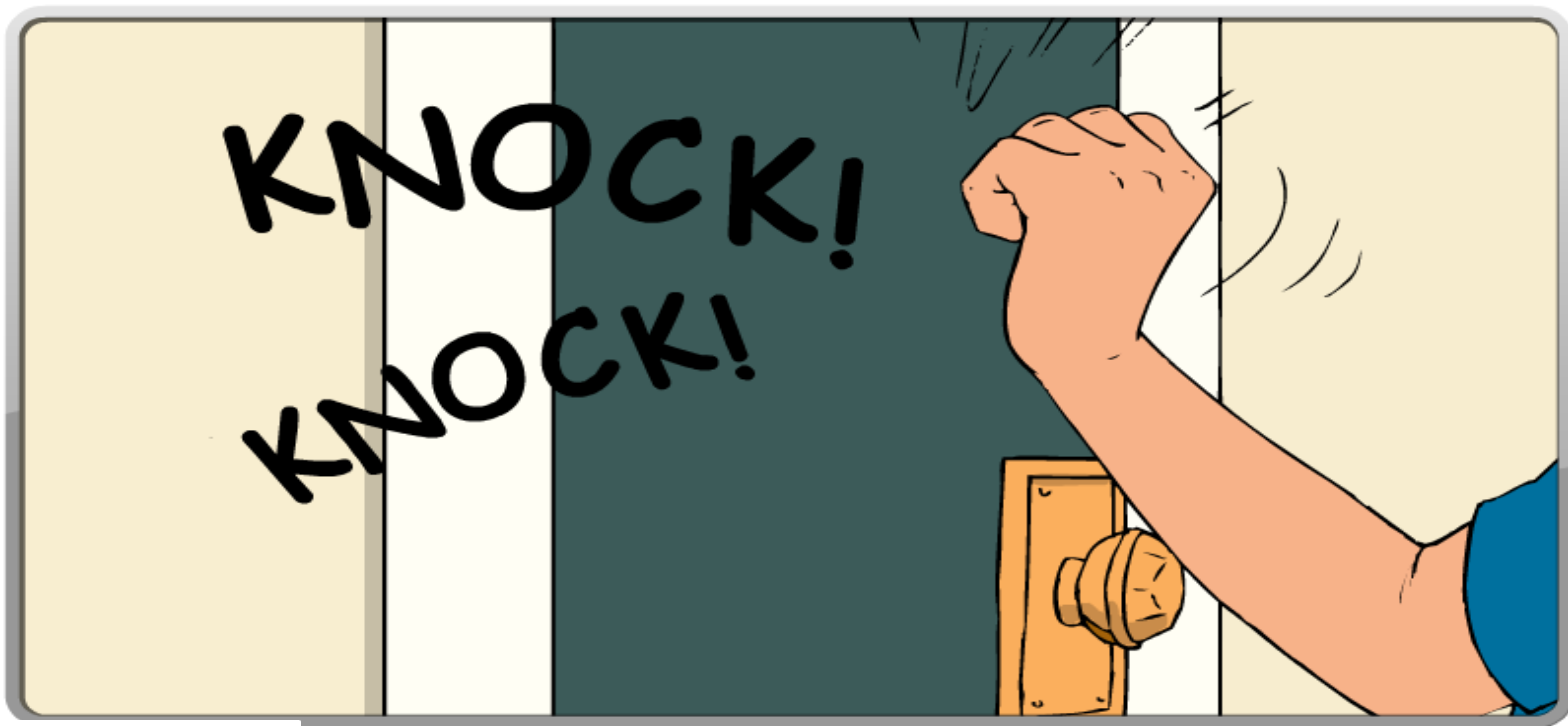






The day after





I just want to say
I'm really sorry
about last night.





At the time it seemed
like a good idea...



...that was until I threw up
in that older girl's lap...







To be continued....



Online lesson summaries

climateschools.com.au

STUDENT SUMMARY

METHAMPHETAMINE

What is the difference between amphetamine and methamphetamine?

Methamphetamine is a chemical compound which is very closely related to amphetamine, but stronger. Amphetamine was common in Australia in the early 1990s, but nowadays what you buy on the streets is almost always methamphetamine.

How is methamphetamine made?

Methamphetamine is a synthetic or man-made drug which is typically made in backyard laboratories and sold illegally. However, certain types of amphetamines are made by pharmaceutical (medicine) companies and can legally be prescribed by a doctor to treat different medical conditions.

These over-the-counter amphetamines will be briefly covered at the end of this section. The remainder of this section will address those forms of the drug which are illegal.

Methamphetamine and the law

Unless amphetamines are prescribed for a person by a medical practitioner, possessing, using, making or selling amphetamine/methamphetamine is against the law. Methamphetamine and the law will also be covered in greater detail in lesson 6.

What are some of the different names for methamphetamine?

There are many different names used for methamphetamine, including



Are there different 'preparations' of methamphetamine and how is it taken?

There are four different preparations of methamphetamine: speed, base, ice and pills. All four preparations are the same drug. They only vary in strength and appearance.

Speed: Speed is a white or off-white powder and is typically of low strength. It can be snorted (that is sniffed up through the nose), injected or taken orally (swallowed). Speed is usually mixed ('cut') with glucose, bicarbonate soda, ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, vitamins, Epsom salts or some other substance to cheaply make larger quantities to increase profits. There is no quality control on illegal drugs, which means there is no guarantee that what you are buying is safe.

Base: Base is a damp or oily substance with a white or yellow-brown colour which is stronger than speed powder. It is typically injected and sometimes swallowed.

Ice: Ice, also known as 'crystal meth', is methamphetamine in its strongest form. It has a frosted to white crystalline appearance. Ice is usually smoked or injected. The effects are stronger and it can cause agitation, worse comedowns and it is very addictive.

Pills: Methamphetamine has also been sold in pill form on the ecstasy market to people who think they are buying ecstasy. These pills contain only small dose of methamphetamine, which is often combined with Ketamine (hallucinogen made from veterinary drug used to block the feeling of pain) to give an ecstasy like effect. These pills are usually swallowed.



BASE SPEED
METH P SHABU
ICE P CRYSTAL

CLIMATE SCHOOLS

★ ONLINE PREVENTION ★

Part 2: Optional activities

Worksheet
Activity 1

Seeking help

In last week's lesson, Lee was experiencing a number of difficulties related to his drug-use. For example, he punched a hole in the wall at home, he upset his family and he hocked his mum's jewellery to buy drugs. This week, he acknowledges that he is having trouble giving up drugs and discusses this with his parents. For the next 15 minutes, your task is to create a list of four other places he could get help from. You may wish to use the internet to assist you with this task. You may also want to find organisation/s that are happy to provide information on drugs and give advice where needed. Any place you choose must be easily accessible for teenagers living in your area.

For each place you find, complete the details below. The first example has been completed for you.



Name of organisation Kids Help Line

Phone number 1800 55 1800

Opening hours 24 hours

Problems they can help you with All youth problems for people aged 5-25 years

Telephone and online counselling

Advantages of seeking help from here

1. Anonymous
2. Specially for young people
3. You get a specific counsellor assigned to you who you can talk to next time
4. Easy to access - you can just call anytime

Disadvantages of seeking help from here

1. You don't get to see someone face to face
2. The person to whom you are assigned won't always be able to talk to you
3. It may feel awkward talking on the phone to a stranger
4. You may not have access to a phone in a private location

Climate Schools - Psychostimulant 6 Cannabis Lesson 4

Optional Class Activities

Lesson 2

Choose the **activity or activities** to suit the needs of your class.

	Name of Activity	Task	Format	Preparation
1	Evaluating drug related information on internet sites	Pairs of students find and critically analyse three internet sites on the drug they are assigned. Students then present their findings and gain feedback from the class.	Work in pairs followed by a brief class presentation	Book computer access for class and photocopy or print worksheets
2	Drugs and their classification	Students complete worksheets aimed at familiarising them with the names and classes of various drugs.	Individual worksheets followed by class discussion	Photocopy or print worksheets
3	Psycho-stimulant Quiz	Students learn about psychostimulant drugs through competing in pairs against one another in a knowledge quiz.	Small group activity (5 per group). Each group completes a quiz on psychostimulants	Photocopy or print worksheets and student summary. Take a pair of scissors for each group
4	Mind Maps	Students break into groups and develop a mind-map for the one of a number of different drugs. Following this students answer questions encouraging them to think more deeply about the key points in their mind maps.	Small group activity	Photocopy or print sample mind-map, worksheets, and student summary. Take A3 paper for students to use if possible
5	Homework/ Assignment Activity: Drugs in the Media	Students collect three articles or advertisements about drugs and critically evaluate the way information is provided	Research and collect media articles and critically analyse the information provided <small>Please note: This homework activity is designed to be done over a two week or longer period.</small>	Photocopy or print worksheets or dictate worksheet instructions

Climate Schools: Alcohol module

- Two independent RCTs
- Summary of results:
 - ✓ Increased alcohol knowledge
 - ✓ Decreased average consumption of alcohol
 - ✓ Decreased binge drinking
 - ✓ Decreased alcohol-related harms
 - ✓ Decreased positive expectancies
 - ✓ Positive teacher & student evaluations

1. Vogl, L. Teesson, M. et al. (2009). *Addiction*.
2. Newton, N. et al. (2009). *ANZJP*.



Climate Schools: Alcohol & Cannabis module

- Three independent RCTs
- Summary of results:
 - ✓ Increased alcohol and cannabis knowledge
 - ✓ Decreased frequency of cannabis use
 - ✓ Decreased average alcohol consumption
 - ✓ Decreased binge drinking
 - ✓ Reduced truancy, psychological distress & moral disengagement
 - ✓ Positive teacher & student evaluations

1. Newton, N., Teesson, M. et al. (2010). *Addiction*.
2. Newton, N. et al. (2009). *Preventive Medicine*.
3. Champion K. et al. (2016). *ANZJP*.
4. Teesson M & Newton N (2018) *Psychol Med*



Climate Schools: Cannabis & Psychostimulant module

– Summary of results:

- ✓ Increased cannabis & psychostimulant knowledge
- ✓ Reduced positive attitudes towards psychostimulants
- ✓ Decreased intentions to use psychostimulants & ecstasy in the future
- ✓ Decreased recent use of ecstasy
- ✓ Positive teacher & student evaluations

Vogl, L. et al (2014). Substance abuse treatment, prevention, and policy.



Climate Schools: Ecstasy & Emerging Drugs module

– Summary of results:

- ✓ Increased knowledge about ecstasy & New Psychoactive Substance (NPS)
- ✓ Reduced intentions to use synthetic cannabis and any NPS
- ✓ Positive teacher & student evaluations

Champion, K.E. et al. (2016). *Addiction*.
Champion, K.E. et al (2017)



Australian evidence base behind Climate Schools

- 7 RCTs in Australia (6 complete, 1 ongoing)
- 169 schools and > 14,600 students have participated across NSW, WA, VIC, ACT, QLD
- 24 papers reporting effectiveness
- Effect sizes for the AOD use uptake $d=0.16 - 0.38$



The Matilda Centre

Internet-based prevention for alcohol and cannabis use: final results of the Climate Schools course

Nicola C. Newton¹, Maree Teesson¹, Laura E. Vogl¹ & Gavin Andrews²

University of New South Wales, National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, Sydney, NSW, Australia¹ and University of New South Wales, Clinical Research Unit for Anxiety and Depression, St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, NSW, Australia²

Research

ANZJP

A cross-validation trial of an Internet-based prevention program for alcohol and cannabis: Preliminary results from a cluster randomised controlled trial

Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry
2016, Vol. 50(1) 64-73
DOI: 10.1177/0004867115577435

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SAGE

Katrina E Champion, Nicola C Newton, Lexine Stapinski, Tim Slade, Emma J Barrett and Maree Teesson

Vogl et al. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy* 2014, 9:24
<http://www.substanceabusepolicy.com/content/9/1/24>



RESEARCH

Open Access

A universal harm-minimisation approach to preventing psychostimulant and cannabis use in adolescents: a cluster randomised controlled trial

Laura Elise Vogl¹, Nicola Clare Newton^{2*}, Katrina Elizabeth Champion² and Maree Teesson¹

Abstract

Background: Psychostimulants and cannabis are two of the three most commonly used illicit drugs by young Australians. As such, it is important to deliver prevention for these substances to prevent their misuse and to reduce associated harms. The present study aims to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of the universal computer-based Climate Schools: Psychostimulant and Cannabis Module.

Methods: A cluster randomised controlled trial was conducted with 1734 Year 10 students (mean age = 15.44 years; SD = 0.41) from 21 secondary schools in Australia. Schools were randomised to receive either the six lesson computer-based Climate Schools program or their usual health classes, including drug education, over the year.

Results: The Climate Schools program was shown to increase knowledge of cannabis and psychostimulants and decrease pro-drug attitudes. In the short-term the program was effective in subduing the uptake and plateauing the frequency of ecstasy use, however there were no changes in meth/amphetamine use. In addition, females who received the program used cannabis significantly less frequently than students who received drug education as usual. Finally, the Climate Schools program was related to decreasing students' intentions to use meth/amphetamine and ecstasy in the future, however these effects did not last over time.

Conclusions: These findings provide support for the use of a harm-minimisation approach and computer technology as an innovative platform for the delivery of prevention education for illicit drugs in schools. The current study indicated that teachers and students enjoyed the program and that it is feasible to extend the successful Climate Schools model to the prevention of other drugs, namely cannabis and psychostimulants.

Trial registration: Australian and New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry ACTRN12613000492752.

Keywords: School, Harm-minimisation, Computer-based, Universal, Psychostimulant, Cannabis, Prevention

International evidence base behind Climate Schools

- Trial in the UK
- 222 students and 11 teachers at secondary schools in London.
- Overall, Climate Schools was found to be feasible and acceptable in the UK.



Downloaded from <http://bmjopen.bmj.com/> on January 5, 2015 - Published by group.bmj.com

Open Access Research

BMJ Open A pilot study of an online universal school-based intervention to prevent alcohol and cannabis use in the UK

Nicola C Newton,^{1,2} Patricia J Conrod,^{2,3} Daniel M Rodriguez,¹ Maree Teesson¹

To cite: Newton NC, Conrod PJ, Rodriguez DM, et al. A pilot study of an online universal school-based intervention to prevent alcohol and cannabis use in the UK. *BMJ Open* 2014;4:e004750. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2013-004750

► Prepublication history for this paper is available online. To view these files please visit the journal online (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2013-004750>).

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Revised 18 April 2014
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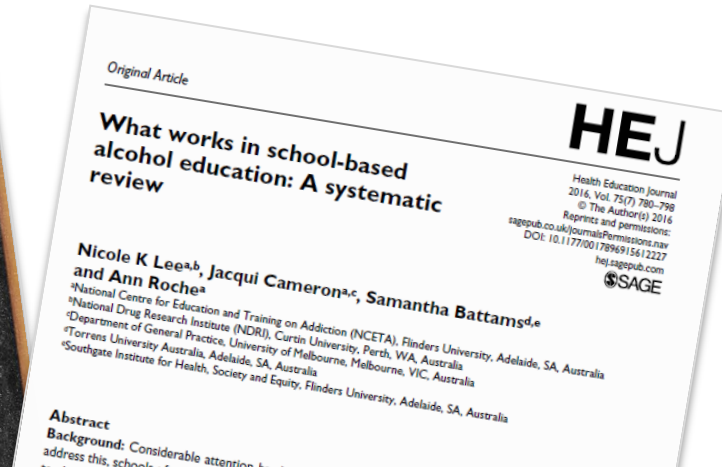
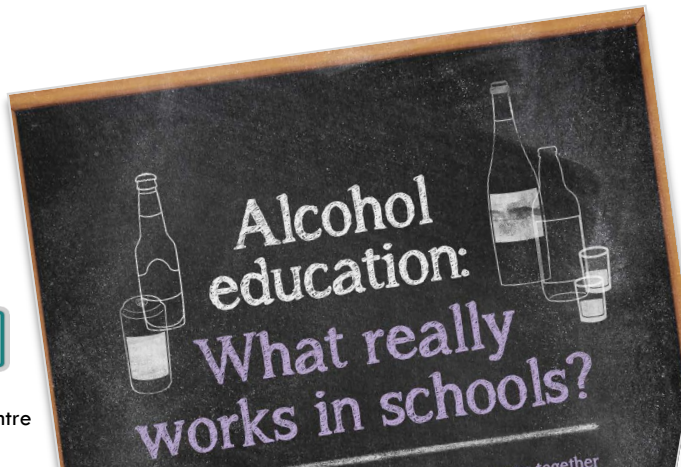
ABSTRACT
Objectives: The online universal *Climate Schools* intervention has been found to be effective in reducing the use of alcohol and cannabis among Australian adolescents. The aim of the current study was to examine the feasibility of implementing this prevention programme in the UK.
Design: A pilot study examining the feasibility of the *Climate Schools* programme in the UK was conducted with teachers and students from Year 9 classes at two secondary schools in southeast London. Teachers were asked to implement the evidence-based *Climate Schools* programme over the school year with their students. The intervention consisted of two modules (each with six lessons) delivered approximately 6 months apart. Following completion of the intervention, students and teachers were asked to evaluate the programme.
Results: 11 teachers and 222 students from two secondary schools evaluated the programme. Overall, the evaluations were extremely positive. Specifically, 85% of students said the information on alcohol and cannabis and how to stay safe was easy to understand, 94% said it was easy to learn and 80% said the online

Strengths and limitations of this study

- A pilot study examining the feasibility of the internet-based *Climate Schools* programme in the UK was conducted with 222 students and 11 teachers at secondary schools in London.
- Student evaluations were extremely positive with approximately 85% reporting that the information taught in the programme was easy to understand and learn.
- Teacher evaluations were extremely positive with all teachers reporting that the students were able to recall the information and over 80% saying that they would be likely to use the programme in the future and recommend it to others.
- Overall, the online school-based *Climate Schools* prevention programme was found to be feasible and acceptable to students and teachers in the UK.
- A full evaluation trial of the *Climate Schools* intervention is now required to examine its effectiveness in the UK.

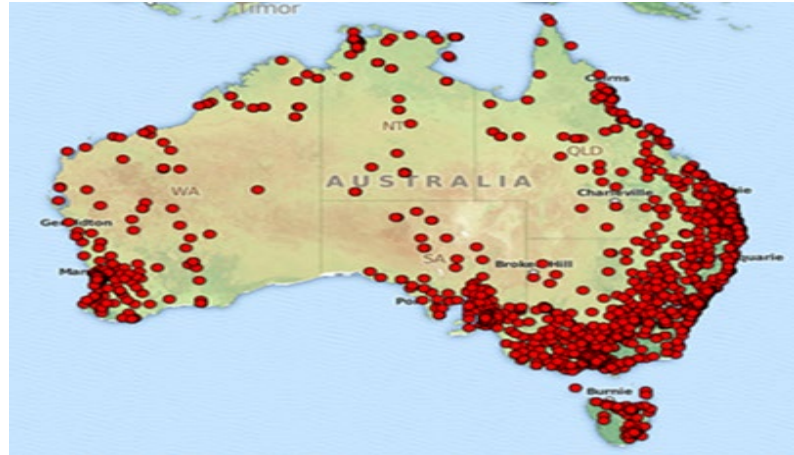
Evidence base behind Climate Schools

- Cited in a number of influential reviews (e.g Cochrane)
- Registered with US National Register of Evidence-based Programs & Practices (NREPP)
- One of only three alcohol education programs rated as having good evidence of effect (Roche et al, 2014; Lee et al, 2016).

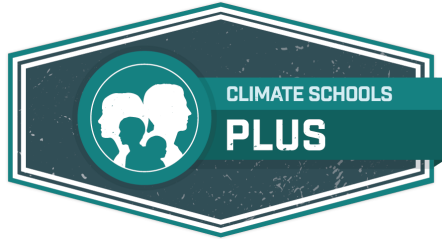


Who has Climate Schools reached?

- In addition to the participants in the trials (169 schools and >14,600 students)
- ~450 schools and >13,000 unique users have accessed Climate Schools online climateschools.com.au



Where to Next? New program development



An online drug prevention program for parents and students

RCT underway



A computerised drug prevention program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students

In Development



An online multiple health behaviour change program to reduce chronic disease risk among students

In Development



Climate Schools Summary

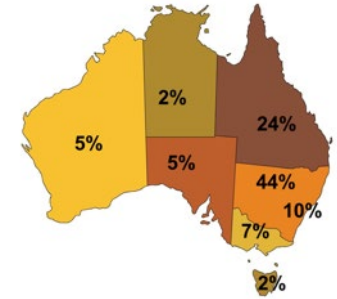
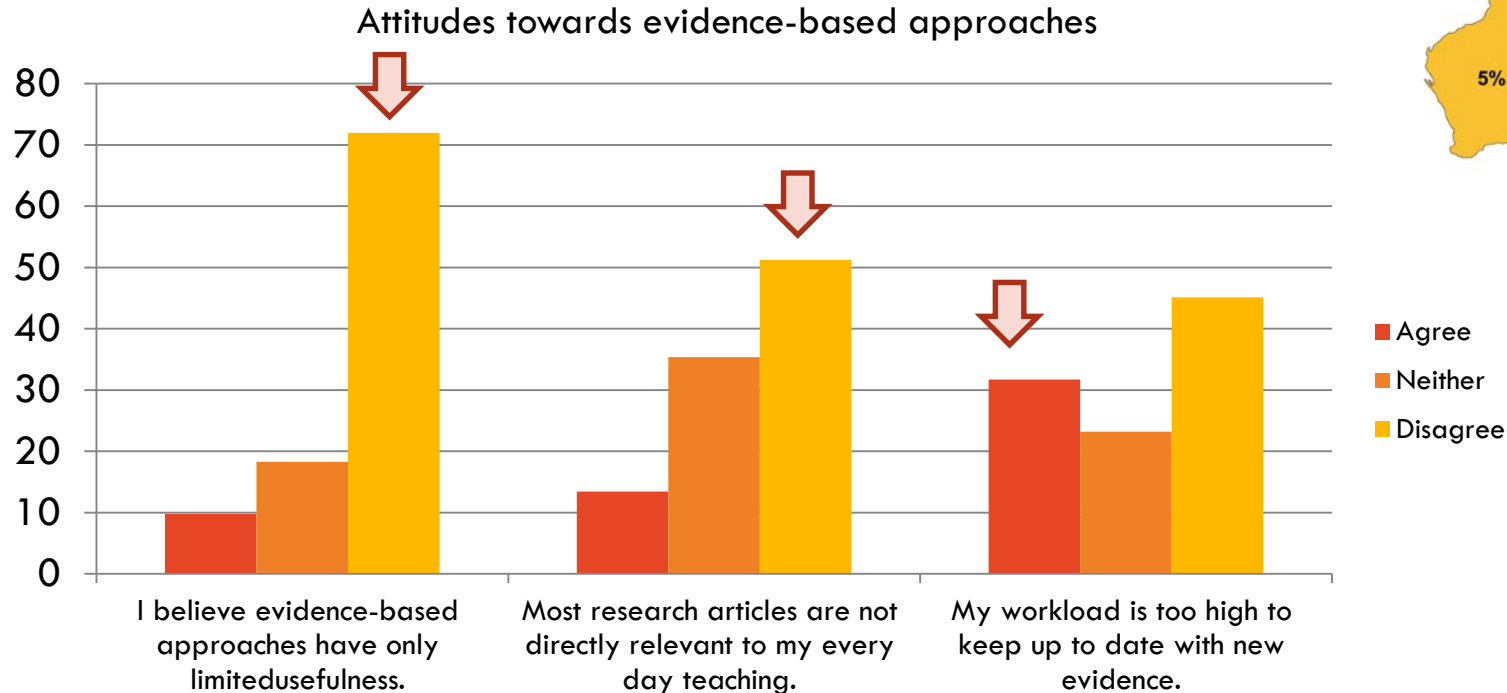


- Earlier initiation of use is associated with term negative outcomes.
- School-based prevention has proven effective in reducing use and related harms.
- Internet-based programs can be effective and increase engagement and scalability.
- **Climate Schools** provides an effective and efficient program for prevention.



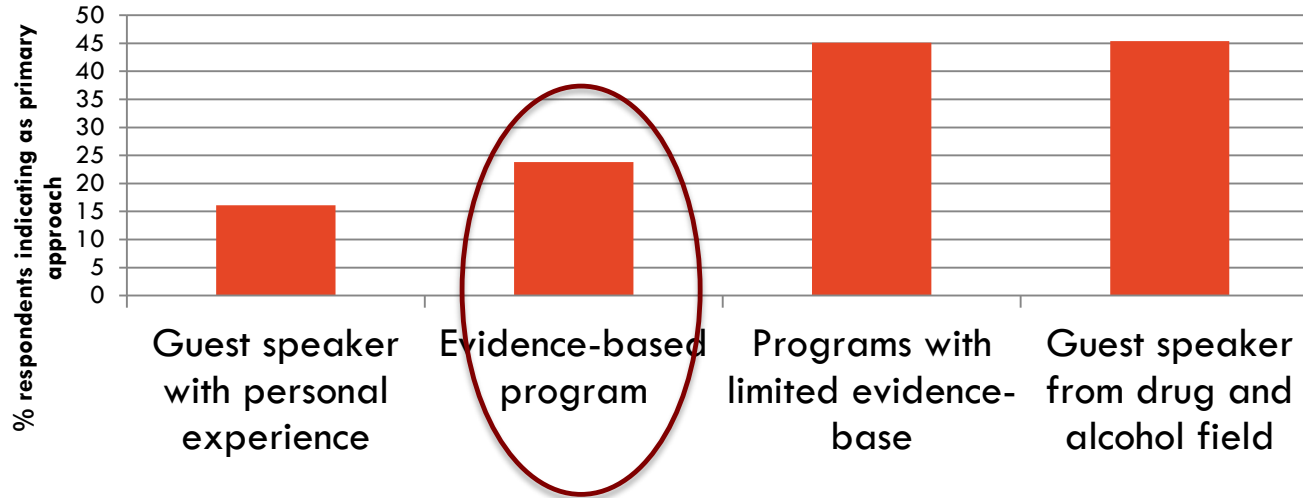
What are the barriers to evidence-based prevention?

- Survey of teachers to assess current teaching practices, attitudes and barriers



What is currently being implemented in schools?

Primary approach to drug education



Stapinski, Lawler, Newton, Reda, Chapman & Teesson, 2017 Learning Communities Journal

Barriers to evidence-based prevention

- **Teachers reflected that they valued evidence-based approaches.**
- **Reported barriers to drug prevention were:**
 - Lack of support
 - Lack of time
 - Student background & attitudes
 - Difficulty communicating
 - Parental attitudes
 - Teacher confidence*





POSITIVE CHOICES

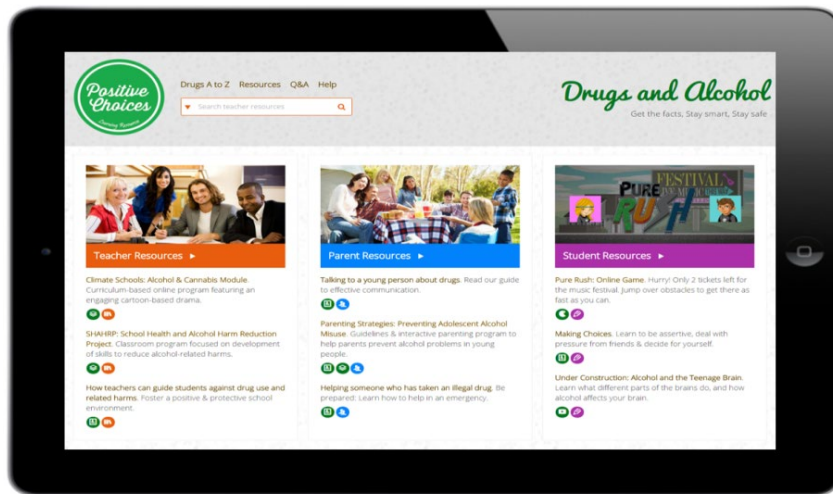


Australian Government

Department of Health

One-stop portal providing
up-to-date evidence-
based information

Builds on existing
research and resources



Resource developed
with teachers,
students & parents

Online delivery &
ease of access



positivechoices1



pos_choices

WWW.POSITIVECHOICES.ORG.AU

POSITIVE CHOICES

Facilitating evidence-base prevention

The screenshot shows a website interface for 'School resources'. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home » School resources'. Below this, the main heading is 'Teacher and Wellbeing Support Staff Resources'. A 'Switch to: Parent | Student' dropdown menu is visible. The page features several filters: 'Recommended Programs', 'Drugs A to Z', 'Factsheets', 'Videos', 'Games', 'Webinars', and 'Apps'. Below these, there are sorting options: 'Sort my search by: Drug Type', 'Year Level', 'Links to Australian Curriculum', 'Evidence Rating', and 'Developed in Australia'. A yellow banner highlights 'Recommended programs' with a 'See all >' link. Three featured programs are shown: 'Climate Schools: Alcohol & Cannabis Module', 'SHAHRP: School Health and Alcohol Harm Reduction Project', and 'IMP'. Three callout boxes provide additional context: one points to the top navigation area, another to the featured programs, and a third to the IMP program.

Access to up to date drug and alcohol info & teaching resources linked to curriculum

Access to a database of school-based prevention programs with research evidence of effectiveness.

Support via regular newsletters, social media updates, training opportunities

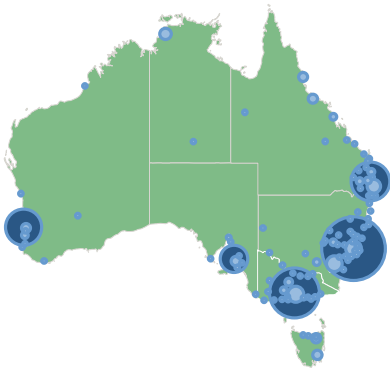


POSITIVE CHOICES

Reach and Engagement Since Launch

Linking school communities to evidence based prevention

1.4 ^{OVER} Million
pageviews
& **591,357** site users



Social Media Reach



3.3 million

Facebook impressions



1.8 million

Twitter impressions

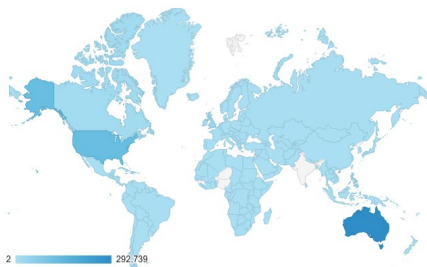
OVER 185,000

hardcopy resources
distributed to every
high school in
Australia

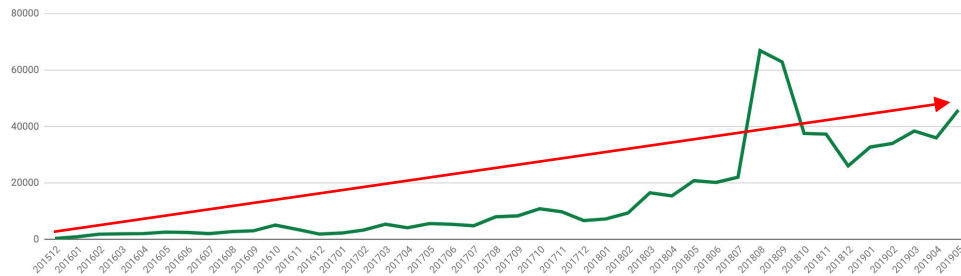


53%

site users Australian



Monthly site user growth





POSITIVE CHOICES

Reach and Engagement Since Launch

Linking school communities to evidence based prevention



Newsletter

Sent 4x year
Teachers: 1,468
Parents: 845



Webinars

13 webinars
1,595 live viewers
3,196 total views



Conferences & events

44 Presentations/
Workshops
15 Booths/
Conferences

Positive Choices Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resources

The **Positive Choices portal** now provides culturally appropriate resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. **Resources include:**



Videos



Factsheets



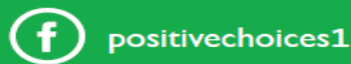
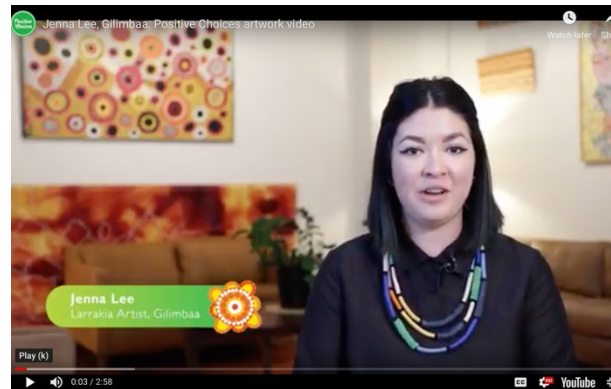
Games



Programs



Australian Government
Department of Health



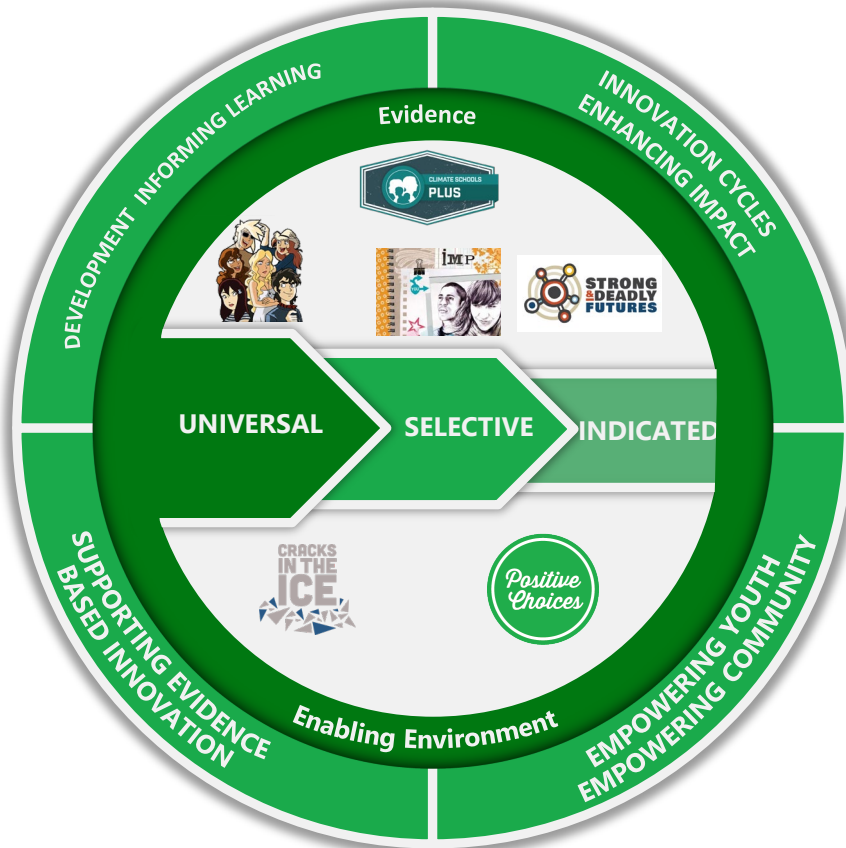
WWW.POSITIVECHOICES.ORG.AU



PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

OUR APPROACH

- Identify new and more effective ways to improve learning
- Spanning low to high risk individuals
- Bridge evidence and community



PRINCIPLES

- Self determination
- Equipping young people with skills to shape their own future
- Enabling environment



Local Drug Action Team Program

Thank you

To find out more, visit:
positivechoices.org.au
climateschools.com.au

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Declaration: Nicola Newton and Maree Teesson are the directors of Climate Schools Pty Ltd - an Australian company set up in 2015 to distribute the online Climate Schools programs.

