



MEDIA RELEASE

9 July 2019

World-renowned Planet Youth drug prevention program is coming to the Huon Valley

The Huon Valley will be one of ten locations across Australia to trial a world-renowned alcohol and other drug prevention program that has seen huge success overseas.

Planet Youth is an evidence-based program from Iceland that is attracting global attention for significantly reducing alcohol and other drug use rates in young people. Since its introduction in Iceland in 1998, youth alcohol and other drug use rates have transformed from some of the highest in Europe, to the lowest.

The program focuses on boosting protective factors against the harmful effects of alcohol and other drugs, including increased family time and improved access to supervised extracurricular activities such as youth clubs, arts programs and sport.

Between 1998 and 2018, the percentage of Iceland's year ten students who:

- Had been drunk in the past 30 days dropped from 42 percent to just 5 percent
- Smoked cigarettes daily dropped from 23 percent to 2 percent
- Used cannabis once or more in their lifetime went from 17 percent to 6 percent.

Data shows that bullying and juvenile crime rates in the country have also reduced.

Planet Youth is now adopted in more than 50 cities across the world in 20 countries, including Ireland, Chile, Spain, France, Italy, Russia, Sweden and Norway.

The Australian version of the program is to be trialed over an initial period of two and a half years through the existing Local Drug Action Team ("LDAT") Program, which is funded under the Australian Government's National Ice Action Strategy and managed by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation ("ADF").

The Australian Planet Youth trial process will involve:

- Collecting data and information through youth surveys undertaken in local communities to gain an in-depth understanding of young people's lifestyle habits

Communications & Media Officer

Huon Valley Council

communications@huonvalley.tas.gov.au



- The LDAT team will look at the community's ability to support alcohol and other drug prevention activities
- Staff from the Planet Youth program will travel from Iceland to meet with local LDATs and use the collected data to make an action plan tailored to the community.

Huon Valley Council staff and the Geeveston Community Centre Manager spent time with the Director and staff of Planet Youth recently to learn about the program and process.

"We are excited to see the program coming to Tasmania and particularly the Huon Valley," Huon Valley Council Mayor Bec Enders said. "Councillors and staff at Council have been working enthusiastically at building a strong relationship with the LDAT team and have been open to working on new ideas and projects for the betterment of our community. Council's program of attracting 'trials' to the Huon Valley is starting to gain momentum. We look forward to supporting and working with the community to complete surveys during the first part of trial.

"When it comes to stopping alcohol and other drug use, we know that long-term investment in community-led prevention works," Cr Enders said. "A very important benefit of the Planet Youth program is that it involves parents, young people, policy makers and researchers together in the process. Working together is essential to the success of this trial and we are committed to this partnership and project."

Geeveston Community Centre Manager Michael Higgins said, "We are pleased to have this opportunity to partner with Huon Valley Council in the collection of real data that will allow us to put in place an evidence-based drug prevention program for the community."

The Chief Executive Officer of the Alcohol and Drug Foundation, Dr Erin Lalor, confirmed that the program will be tailored to the unique needs of communities in each Australian trial site. "The Local Drug Action Teams taking part in the trial have been selected for their strong local partnerships and commitment to preventing alcohol and drug-related harms," she said.

Please call Huon Valley Council on (03) 6264 0300 or Geeveston Community Centre on (03) 6297 1616 to find out more about the Huon Valley Planet Youth roll-out, or visit the ADF website at adf.org.au.

For more information: Mayor Bec Enders (03) 6264 0300

Communications & Media Officer

Huon Valley Council

communications@huonvalley.tas.gov.au