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# Alcohol task force seeks youth input

BY REX MARTINICH

HORSHAM'S young people have been asked to fill in a survey about their attitudes and experiences around alcohol use to help develop a new strategy.

Horsham Rural City Council, Wimmera Uniting Care, Wimmera Health Care Group, Wimmera Drug Action Task Force, Grampians Health and the Department of Health plan to use the data to help reduce youth drinking levels.

The group is particularly interested in hearing from people aged between 14 and 20 years.

Every young person who completes the online survey will go in the draw to win a Megaboom Bluetooth portable speaker.

Federation University sen-

ior research fellow Angela Murphy will analyse the survey responses and combine them with feedback from interviews.

"Horsham council needed a research partner and Federation Uni was happy to work on this one," she said.

"At this point we have a survey out there that is trying to identify how young people perceive the issue of alcohol use.

"Do they see it as something they only do at parties? Do they see it as the ritual of becoming an adult? Is it something they don't use at all?"

Ms Murphy said the survey also wanted to identify the areas where youth alcohol use was most common in Horsham.

"It's really trying to get a perspective on the issue

from young people, and what they think our response should be."

Horsham council received \$25,000 in October from Vi- cHealth for a scoping study into reducing alcohol consumption in youths aged 12 to 20.

Horsham was one of eight councils selected to receive initial funding for scoping studies.

Using the results of its study, Horsham will then compete with the other seven councils for the four second stage grants to implement alcohol strategies.

The study was titled 'Shifting the norm: Changing rural alcohol culture through youth'.

The online survey, which takes four minutes or less to fill out, is available at [www.cerdi.edu.au/surveys/hrcc](http://www.cerdi.edu.au/surveys/hrcc)

## HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL



**SURVEY:** Alcohol working group members Meredith Knoop, Jesse Hinch, Sally Pymer, Caleb Lourensz, Mandi Stewart and Kate Waterworth promote the youth survey.