

Alcohol is major concern

HEALTH

BY JADE BATE

Community

ALCOHOL addiction is the main drug concern for the Wimmera community.

Wimmera Drug Action Taskforce recently asked Wimmera residents to participate in a survey about what alcohol and other drugs issues were of concern to them.

The results indicated that alcohol culture was the most pressing concern for the

community, with 75 per cent of respondents suggesting alcohol addiction was a big issue in the region.

With multiple responses allowed, 67 per cent suggested ice was a concern, 37 per cent cannabis and 23 per cent prescription medications. Reasons for these responses included the violence and domestic disruption related to alcohol, alcohol being accessible and an accepted drug to abuse, peer pressure to drink and ice "tearing" families apart.

Furthermore, 74 per cent of respondents suggested that there wasn't enough alcohol and other drugs education locally.

More than 60 per cent of respondents were parents of children under the age of 12. WDAT co-ordinator Sally Pymmer said the results of the survey reflected what the taskforce already knew.

"For a lot of community members, their most pressing concern was the culture around alcohol addiction, with some saying that it was

a turn off for joining sporting clubs," she said.

"These findings weren't that surprising, but it's good to see that the community is aware and concerned about the dangers of alcohol culture.

"The survey results are reflective of what a lot of drug and alcohol counsellors are seeing in their clientele.

"Alcohol, ice, cannabis and prescription drug addiction are the main four reasons people seek counselling."

Monday marks the start

of National Prevention of Prescription Medication Dependence Week.

Ms Pymmer said it was interesting to see that almost one in four respondents said they were concerned about prescription medication addiction.

"A lot of people aren't normally aware of the dangers associated with prescription medication, people can become addicted to pain killers very easily," she said. "Pain killers are a short term relief, so we always encourage

people to see their doctor and ask for alternative pain relief methods, whether it be smaller doses of prescribed medication or physio."

Ms Pymmer said alcohol and prescription drug addiction didn't discriminate.

"It can really happen to anyone and a lot of people aren't aware of the dangers associated with them," she said.

She said WDAT was working with Horsham Rural City Council to undertake follow up surveys.

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wmt 14/5/18