



Substance  
Misuse  
Limestone  
Coast

Global Problems, Local Solutions

Media Release – October 15, 2020

## **New SMLC education campaign – Time for Change**

A new community education campaign by the Limestone Coast’s leading alcohol and drug advocacy service is designed to prompt the question – is it time for change in my drinking behaviour?

The radio and print campaign by Substance Misuse Limestone Coast (SMLC), will create awareness of how small increases in alcohol use at home can quickly become a major problem.

“You are not alone if you had a few extra wines or beers per week during the pandemic,” said SMLC Project Officer Sophie Bouchier.

“Covid-19 has had, and continues to have, a massive impact on our lives. Everything has changed in our home, education, work and social lives and for some, this includes the way alcohol is consumed.

“More and more people are drinking at home and it’s become far more common to see alcohol advertised prominently and delivered right to your door via a text or a phone call.”

National studies show the pandemic has prompted some major changes in drinking behaviour.

In April, the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) found 1-in-5 Australians had purchased more alcohol than usual. Seventy per cent were drinking more alcohol than normal, with one third now drinking on a daily basis.

A survey conducted by SMLC examining how the pandemic impacted local drug and alcohol services is currently being reviewed, with the results due to be released later this year.

Ms Bouchier said she hoped the campaign, which is linked to an online assessment tool and tips to reduce alcohol use, would make people stop to reflect on their relationship with alcohol.

“I hope it raises some questions for people and it encourages people to take that first step and make a change,” she said.

“Many people may not be aware that the first step to reducing alcohol use is to visit your GP.”

The campaign will also coincide with the launch of the SMLC website, which is designed to create awareness about the role the organisation plays, said Ms Bouchier.

“SMLC are not a treatment service, however we advocate for, and collaborate with local, state and national drug and alcohol treatment services,” she said.

“We are a dedicated group of professionals working together to facilitate the establishment of a community-based model to address the needs of AOD misuse across the Limestone Coast region.”

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