



*Better Leaders,
Better Collegiate Life*



THE ALCOHOL HARM MINIMISATION PRACTICES OF UCA MEMBER COLLEGES

A UCA Member Forum Report

T Corney & B Woods

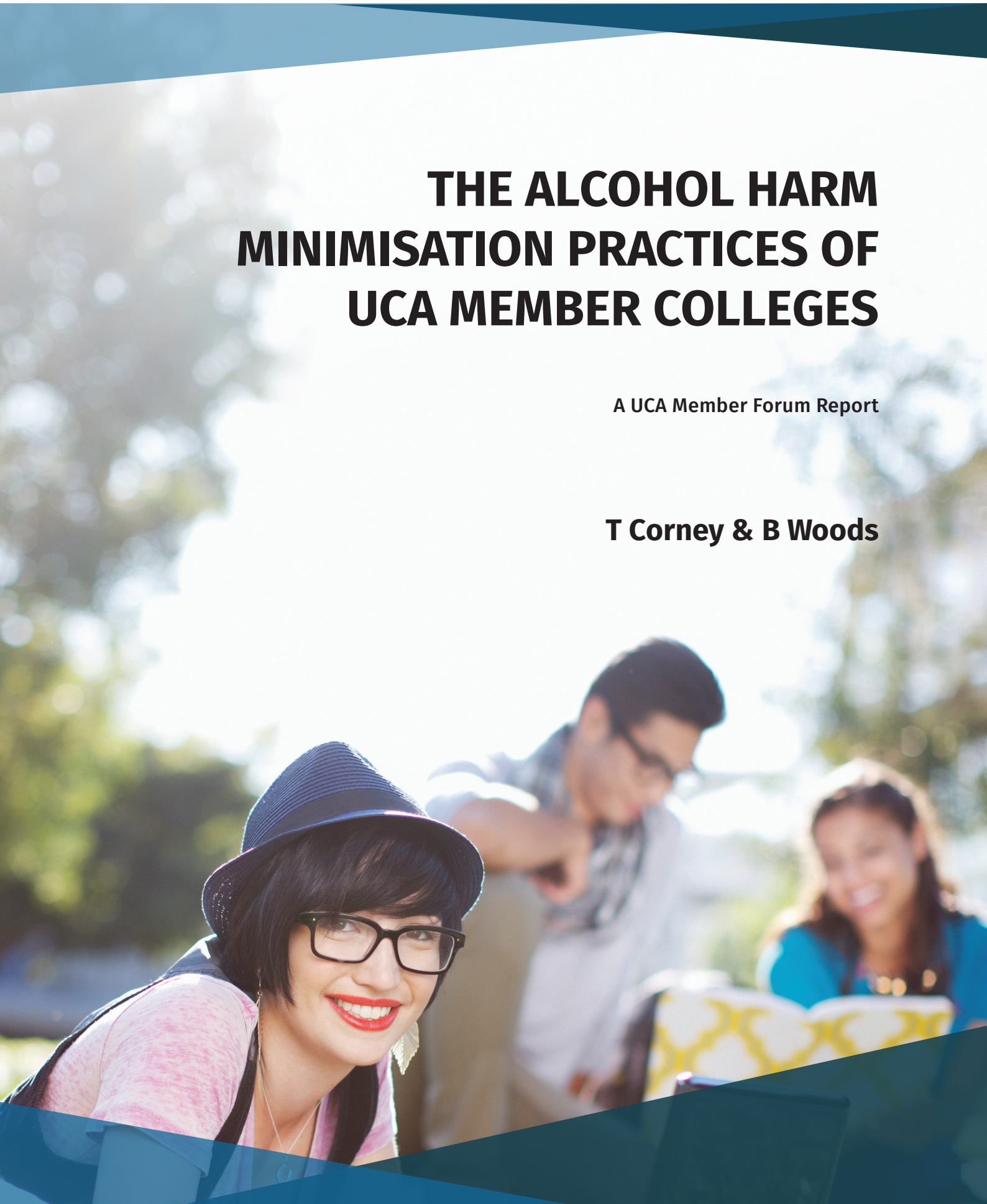


Table of Contents

President’s Message	4
Introduction	5
Methodology	5
Background to This Report	7
University Residential Colleges	8
Australian University Residential Colleges	10
Harm Minimisation and Harm Reduction	11
Forum Workshop Findings	11
Student Leader Training and Staff Induction.....	11
Orientation Week.....	13
Working With a Host University and Other Colleges.....	14
Policies and Procedures – Student Conduct.....	15
In-College Bars.....	17
Pre-Drinking.....	17
Conclusions	19
References	20

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President's Message

In addressing the prominent role that alcohol plays in the social and cultural fabric of residential colleges and halls, University Colleges Australia (UCA) has engaged key experts across the alcohol, drug and public health sectors as part of a wider strategy to reduce harm in our residences. UCA remains committed to supporting its members and working collaboratively in providing practical intervention strategies and progressing best practice for the students in our care.

Over the last two years, the primary goal of UCA's Alcohol Harm Minimisation Committee (AHMC) has been to focus its attention on identifying a set of principles to inform and guide the organisation and governance of drinking cultures in colleges and halls and its relationship to students' alcohol use and harm minimisation. This goal has been realised through this report which is a summary of the experiences and learnings of heads and deputies of residential colleges and halls shared at the National Forum held in Brisbane in September 2017.

UCA continues to prioritise the issue of alcohol harm minimisation and has two important and concurrent research projects led by Associate Professor Tim Corney from Victoria University in partnership with Vic Health and the Victorian Family Violence Prevention project. The first project, funded by Vichealth as part of its Alcohol Culture Change initiative, is aimed at reducing the risky drinking behaviour of students living in residential colleges in Victoria and was initiated following the UCA support for an Australian Research Council funded project regarding drinking practices and alcohol policies within a small sample group of colleges on the east coast of Australia. The second, using a method of appreciative enquiry, is documenting and promoting gender equality as a harm prevention strategy. Both these projects are trialing the innovative use of narrative pedagogy i.e. the sharing of student experiences as part of the co-reviewing of policies, procedures and processes with student leaders and college administrations. The aim of both these projects is to provide practical, innovative and collaborative intervention strategies for our residences.

Alongside Dr Corney's research, the AHMC undertook to build a resource base from within the UCA network and beyond and make these resources available for use among university residential colleges. These resources encompass general student welfare related programs and interventions along with preventative education materials and professional development activities, with a focus on alcohol harm minimisation programs and support mechanisms. The work in this report is part of this resource base and is the result of bringing together the shared experience of heads and deputies and demonstrates the focus on addressing the place of alcohol in the residential setting including the risks and harms associated with the availability and use of alcohol.

I would like to acknowledge the work of UCA's Alcohol Harm Minimisation Committee members from 2016-18: Associate Professor Tim Corney, Dr Rose Leontini, Associate Professor Toni Schofield, Dr Marie Leech, Mr Keith Conley, Mr Wayne Erickson, Dr Carla Tromans, Mr Jamiyl Mosley and Mr Andy Gourley.

Thank you to all UCA members for their collective contributions at the Brisbane Forum and for their commitment and leadership in creating stronger collegiate communities and on their initiatives in the prevention, minimisation and reduction of harm to students. Thanks to Brett Woods and Mark Johnson for their assistance in the production and realisation of this report. Particular thanks to Dr Tim Corney for his commitment to supporting UCA in addressing alcohol and other harms within our residences which will translate in time into significant improvements in the health and wellbeing of the wider population.

Rose Alwyn
Master of St Mark's College, University of Adelaide
Immediate Past President, University Colleges Australia

Introduction

The purpose of this publication by University Colleges Australia ('UCA') is to celebrate, acknowledge and promote to others the wide range of interventions, and programmatic responses being carried out in residential colleges by UCA members with the aim of preventing and minimising harm to students from excessive alcohol consumption.

The content of this publication arises from transcripts recorded during the 'Alcohol, Harm Minimisation' workshop held during the annual UCA member's forum in September 2017. The workshop was facilitated by the Chair of the UCA Alcohol Harm Minimisation committee, Associate Professor Tim Corney, assisted by committee member Mr Keith Conley. Those attending the workshop were Heads and Deputies from UCA member colleges representing 61 colleges from 20 universities around Australia. We hope that this document becomes a useful reference and resource to support UCA members and others in their initiatives to prevent, minimise and reduce harm to students.

Methodology

The methodology was informed by 'strengths based appreciative inquiry' (Waters & White 2015) and 'narrative pedagogy' (Ironsides 2006; Bowes 2016) to explore and progress a whole of setting approach to the prevention and minimisation of harm from excessive consumption of alcohol and the promotion of safe drinking among students in colleges. The methodology was used to explore and document how the differing contexts of individual colleges illicit differing and innovative responses and how these responses intersect with residential college policies and procedures and the social and cultural norms associated with student residential environments.

Appreciative inquiry (AI) is a systematic, holistic, and collaborative methodology that follows a strengths-based model of action and change in order to prevent harm (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Filleul & Rowland, 2006). It differs from other personal and/or organisational change methodologies by harnessing the power of collective positive emotions and organisational strengths, through documenting and learning from the stories and shared experiences of the organisation's members – this is known as 'narrative pedagogy'. As college staff, i.e. Heads and Deputies, share their experiences with others they become part of an inquiry process that seeks to find the strengths in a system and to use those strengths to create cultural change, that in turn informs both systematic policy and procedural change and individual college change.

According to Cooperrider and Whitney (2005), the AI approach is different to deficit based organizational change methods that focus solely on '...diagnosing problems and errors in an organization' (Waters, L., & White, M. 2015). AI is designed to assist the organisation's members to discover the positive elements that already occur in the organisation and to elevate these to address and inform the key drivers of change. This appreciation of the positive in the organisation and in the relationships of those within the organisation builds confidence for successful future culture change and ways to prevent the key drivers of harm associated with excessive alcohol consumption.

As such, participants attending the Forum were invited to join a focus group and were provided with a primary question and a series of target area questions from which to respond appreciatively from the perspective of their college and record their narratives, experiences and findings. The focus group conversations sought to locate, share and appreciate the innovative interventions, activities, policies, programs and support mechanisms currently being practiced in colleges with a focus on positive alcohol culture change, alcohol harm minimisation and reduction and welfare support.

Participants were asked to focus on a primary question ‘What positive things are being done to minimise harm from excessive consumption of alcohol in your college or hall of residence?’ In addition, focus group participants were asked to narrow the question to specific target areas. These target areas were recognised as key locations in colleges for the minimisation of harm.

The target areas were:

- Student leader training
- Staff induction
- Orientation & Welcome week
- Working with a host university
- Working with other colleges
- College policies and procedures
- Student Clubs
- Student activities and conduct
- In-college bars and alcohol geography
- Student pre-event drinking

The focus groups recorded their responses and these responses were fed back collectively to all participants in a plenary session for further reflection and refinement. The data collected from these focus groups and plenary sessions was transcribed, analysed by theme and provided back to UCA members for further comment and publication.

The following report elaborates on the various themes - interventions and programs – as described by participants. These are the positive activities and interventions currently being delivered to minimise harm to students from excessive consumption of alcohol in Australian university residential colleges.



Background to This Report

According to the National Health and Medical Research Council (2009) the responsible social consumption of alcohol is an integral part of Australian culture where people drink ‘for enjoyment, relaxation and sociability’. Alcohol consumption in Australia is socially accepted and drinking to intoxication for some groups is normalised (VicHealth 2016). However, the personal, health and economic costs associated with excessive and harmful consumption of alcohol (sometimes referred to as risky or binge drinking) are numerous. Some of these costs have been particularly detrimental to young people. For example, excessive consumption or risky drinking has been estimated to cause 31.5% of all deaths in 15-29 year olds in the developed world (Toumbourou et al. 2007).

University students have been identified as being especially vulnerable to harm from the excessive consumption of alcohol (Bloch & Ungerleider 1988; Roche & Watt 1999; Sharmer 2001; Dowling, Clarke & Corney 2006; Schofield 2014; Riordan, et al. 2015). Surveys reveal that the majority of Australian university students drink alcohol, and more than two-thirds drink at hazardous or harmful levels (Roche & Watt 1999). Riordan et al. (2015) suggest that attending university is associated with excessive alcohol consumption and related harms. They also suggest that ‘Fresher’ or Orientation Week (‘O Week’) activities are events that encourage and acclimatise students to a culture of excessive drinking. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2005) suggest that young adults of university age (20 to 29 years) are at the highest risk for both short and long-term alcohol-related harm.

The 2017 Report titled ‘Cultural Renewal at the University of Sydney Residential Colleges’, known as the ‘Broderick Review’, documented the reflections and experiences of over 1000 surveyed college residents and 600 interviewed college residents. The report submitted that ‘alcohol plays an important part in the culture of College life and underpins a number of so-called College traditions’ (Broderick 2017, p. 28). This supports both Schofield (2014) and Hughes’ (2012) statements of the ‘intrinsic’ nature of alcohol to the college experience (Broderick 2017, p. 29). Drawing on the findings of Rickwood et al. (2011), Broderick (2017) suggests that 46.6% of university students were drinking at rates that are harmful and hazardous. The Broderick report promoted the prioritisation of diversity and social inclusion in O Week, emphasised the need for the professionalisation of event management and comprehensive training for staff; detailed the indirect and direct pressure to drink alcohol experienced by college residents and the duty of care owed by colleges to their students. Further, Broderick (2017) identified the progress made through harm minimisation strategies adopted by many University of Sydney colleges and applauded the establishment of UCA’s National Steering Committee for Alcohol Harm Minimisation, chaired by Associate Professor Corney. While recognising UCA’s actions, Broderick (2017) further recommended the instituting of a common, national approach to addressing harm minimisation strategies and related college policies.

Engendering cultures of responsible alcohol consumption are also fundamental to addressing the issues of sexual harassment and assault in universities and residential colleges. The Australian Human Rights Commission’s 2017 Report, *Change the Course*, reiterated that alcohol was often a contributing factor in students’ experiences of sexual assault and sexual harassment in both broader university and college settings. The use of alcohol ‘as a tool’ for perpetrators to commit sexual offences and the peer-pressure to engage in excessive drinking (especially in residential settings where there are excessive drinking cultures) were highlighted as areas that need to be addressed by universities and residential colleges (AHRC 2017). The report recommended that universities and residential colleges investigate the role of alcohol ‘... in facilitating a culture which may increase the likelihood of sexual violence’ (AHRC 2017, p. 27).



University Residential Colleges

One of the roles of a university residential college is to support and assist students in their transition from school to university and from home life to independent living. Adolescence and young adulthood are generally regarded as a period of exploration of identity in the context of social and peer-based networks. This may include a range of new experiences including experimentation with alcohol and/or other drugs. In this period of transition, university residential colleges can play an important role in the provision of health and wellbeing information and support along with an educative and preventative role in assisting to minimise the potentially harmful outcomes of excessive alcohol consumption (Corney 2016; Broderick 2017).

While there is information about the harm that excessive alcohol use may cause among Australian university residential college students, and there are multiple and various interventions currently being undertaken in Australian colleges, there is little known about the efficacy or otherwise of these efforts to minimise alcohol misuse and related harm in Australian colleges. Published peer reviewed evidence of the effectiveness of preventative health and education programs, interventions or therapeutic services in Australian university colleges, or in the broader Australian university context, is limited (Schofield 2014).

Attending a university residential college can be a stimulating and rewarding experience that, along with a tertiary education, shapes the future life outcomes of students. However, this important period of transition and development can also be one where students encounter a number of challenges (Corney 2016). This period may contain negative or traumatic personal experiences - academic or social - that may contribute to excessive alcohol use and related harms. While research suggests that many university students who regularly consume alcohol did so prior to making the transition to higher education, there is a proportion of students who begin their alcohol use, or begin to consume more regularly, after commencing tertiary study (Polymerou 2007; Riordan et al. 2015).

Consumption of alcohol by adolescents at dangerous and harmful levels, described as 'excessive consumption', is a problematic in university residential colleges in Australia and internationally (Broderick 2017; Leontini et al. 2015; Schofield 2014; Kyprilou et al. 2009). Recent studies have further identified the negative impacts of excessive alcohol consumption for residential college students, including the need for medical intervention and disruptions to sleep and study times (Stafford 2017, Hughes 2012). Hart & Burns (2016), following Rickwood et al. (2011), identified the particular vulnerability of university students to consequences flowing from their own hazardous drinking, as well as the hazardous consumption of others. Additional negative consequences include (but are not limited to) an increased risk of sexual assault (Broderick 2017; Gilchrist et al. 2012), drink driving and violence (Rickwood et al. 2011).

The body of knowledge documenting the rates and risks of excessive alcohol consumption in Australia and New Zealand for university students is growing. However, there is little documented evidence of interventions in residential colleges aimed to reduce, minimise or prevent this phenomenon (Riordan 2015; Schofield 2014). Individuals require knowledge about safe levels of consumption in order to make informed choices (Martin et al. 1991). However, research in this area reveals low levels of knowledge in relation to safe consumption practices (Dowling, Clarke & Corney 2006). Despite recent and widespread public health campaigns by governments regarding 'drinking responsibly' and the introduction in Australia of standard drink labelling (Hawks 1999), there are few studies examining the levels of knowledge of Australian university students in this area (Dowling, Clarke & Corney 2006; Schofield 2014).

Riordan et al. (2015, p. 525) suggest that the patterns of excessive alcohol consumption developed during O Week, flow on throughout the rest of the academic year. As a result they suggest that '... there is a clear need to develop interventions that take into account event-specific drinking and its potential flow-on effect.' Consistent with Riordan, Schofield (2014, p. 1), in the introduction to her report to the residential college peak body, University Colleges Australia, states plainly that;

'Given the high rate of serious, alcohol-related harm among university students, innovative interventions designed specifically to engage them in managing their own alcohol use and in minimising damage are urgently needed.'

Following the handing down of the Schofield report to the UCA in 2014, a working group was established in 2015 to address its findings and to suggest ways forward for its members. Several key activities have followed: In 2016 a UCA Deans' Leadership Grant was used to fund a short field study of a number of UK university residential colleges regarding welfare provision and alcohol harm minimisation. In 2017 UCA provided support to a Vic Health alcohol culture change initiative being run over three years in the settings of university residential colleges and halls in Victoria. Vic Health (2016) defines Alcohol culture as, the way people drink including the formal rules, social norms, attitudes and beliefs around what is and what is not socially acceptable for a group of people before, during and after drinking. The project team, from Victoria University, the Burnet Institute and UNSW piloted a number of innovative alcohol culture change strategies. The project has delivered a multi-component educative culture change program through 'disruptive innovation' (Christensen, Raynor, & McDonald 2015) using both innovative technological supports such as the Mobile Intervention for Drinking in Young People (MIDY, Burnet Institute 2016), alongside interactive and educative face to face interventions, such as focus groups and culture circles using problem posing (Freire 1996, Wallerstein & Bernstein 1988) and informed by narrative pedagogy and appreciative inquiry methodologies that have involved both students and college administrations in policy co-review processes with positive results (Corney 2018).

In 2017 a workshop was held as part of the annual UCA members forum, the purpose of which was to discuss and document the many and varied positive activities, interventions and programs colleges had been using to attempt to minimise and prevent harm from excessive alcohol consumption. The focus group conversations sought to locate and share innovative interventions, activities, policies, programs and support mechanisms with a particular focus on welfare support, alcohol harm minimisation and reduction and alcohol culture change.

Australian University Residential Colleges

UCA membership includes 61 colleges across 19 universities. University residential colleges in Australia are diverse institutions (Corney 2016). At the older universities a large number of the early colleges were established as independent foundations - many of them by the mainstream churches - for the dual purpose of providing residential college accommodation for university students and as theological halls for the training of clergy and laypeople. Many of these still function in this way. However, there are many other residential colleges, particularly at the newer universities, which were established by, and are accountable to, the universities to which they are attached. The leadership and governance structures of these residential colleges are equally diverse, including staff and student leadership structures (Corney 2016; Broderick 2017).

University education provision has changed dramatically over the last 100 years and even more so in recent times (Bradley 2008). This has had a significant impact on colleges, particularly on student cohorts and the diversity of the student population. Students are now traveling to study more than ever, with international and interstate students making up a significant proportion of the student bodies, both undergraduate and postgraduate, in colleges. This has required colleges to adapt and change to the needs of students with a particular emphasis on their cultural and religious diversity. Australian society has also changed, and the social norms, standards of acceptable behaviour and attitudes to a range of social issues such as gender, sexuality, drug and alcohol use to, name a few, are now more complex than ever before (Corney 2016).

In relation to alcohol use in residential colleges, and the problems associated with excessive consumption of alcohol in particular, Australian colleges have for some years been working to address these issues. Many colleges now have sophisticated pastoral care systems, have employed professional counselling staff and have developed student leadership structures with an emphasis on student health and wellbeing. Colleges now provide extensive training to student leaders in a range of areas, such as first aid, mental health, sexual consent, fair treatment, drug and alcohol use and particularly concerning the provision of a safe environment for students free of sexual harassment, assault and gendered violence (Corney 2016).

In regard to alcohol, most (but not all) colleges allow for the provision of alcohol at college and student club activities and events, and as such, most colleges take a harm minimisation approach, educating and providing information to students about the dangers of excessive alcohol consumption and in some cases regulating the provision and access to alcohol in college. There are a very small number of colleges who are alcohol free and do not allow the consumption of alcohol within the college.



Harm Minimisation and Harm Reduction

The earliest use of the terms 'harm minimisation' and 'harm reduction' appears to be by the British Governments Ministry of Health-Committee on Morphine and Heroin Addiction, known as the Rolleston Committee, established in 1924. However, use of these terms since that time has been inconsistent. Part of the difficulty in defining these terms is that they refer to both a philosophical approach and to particular types of programs and interventions (Ritter & Cameron 2005). Ritter and Cameron (2005, p. 5) assert that the Australian practice is to use '... harm minimisation to refer to the philosophical approach ... and harm reduction to the specific interventions.' However, they go on to suggest that there appears to be some broad agreement that '... harm reduction refers to both policies and programs that are aimed at reducing the harms from use rather than use per se' (Corney 2016).

Ritter and Cameron (2005, p. 6) suggest that the key features and principles of harm minimisation and reduction include the following:

- The primary goal is reducing alcohol harm rather than alcohol use.
- It is built on evidence-based analysis of a net reduction in harm.
- There is acceptance that alcohol is a part of society.
- Harm reduction should provide a comprehensive public health framework.
- Priority is placed on immediate (and achievable) goals.
- Pragmatism and humanistic values underpin harm reduction.

This report uses the terms 'harm minimisation' and 'harm reduction' interchangeably.

Forum Workshop Findings

In concert with the aforementioned methodology, a broad range of positive activities are enumerated under the following headings. While many of the activities listed have been used for some time by colleges as part of wider strategies to reduce harm, they have not been systematically or externally evaluated for impact or efficacy. As such, while the UCA commends many of the activities found within this report it cannot vouch for their overall effectiveness.

Student Leader Training and Staff Induction

Beyond the usual induction regimes for all new staff, many colleges reported the provision of extensive in-house training - both formal and informal - each year to their incoming leadership teams, including student leaders, to prepare them for their important roles within their student clubs and beyond in the wider college context. Some colleges have instituted educative programs that incorporate values-based training for all prospective leadership candidates. This training is to be completed as a pre-condition for those standing for election to student leadership roles. A number of colleges have leadership retreats every year for both staff and for student leaders where the values of the college are presented and reaffirmed along with discussion on policies and practices that relate directly to student life.

The colleges also provide extensive professional development and training, both formal and informal, to residential advisors, tutors and staff within their colleges. This training in some contexts is further supplemented by intercollegiate training programs and wider university run training. This training may



sometimes be provided in-house by experienced and qualified senior staff but is more often outsourced to external providers. These external providers range across a wide field of expertise in youth and student related areas from senior professionals such as; judges, lawyers, QCs, police officers, medical doctors, research scientists and other academics, health professionals, face to face youth workers and professional sporting identities, to name but a few, along with university staff and student services.

The training provided by colleges covers a diverse range of topics. Some training is focused on particular roles within college such as RAs or Tutors and other training is available to the whole college community. This form of wider training and topical seminars is offered in order to develop students in their personal and professional lives. Training may be diverse such as, positive psychology or event management, conflict resolution or leadership and careers advice to name but a few. These are personal development programs offered to students to develop their professional and vocational skills, while also equipping and assisting them to be role models within the student body.

Most colleges provide student leaders and staff with the opportunity to complete their Responsible Serving of Alcohol (RSA) training, and may supplement this training with presentations from medical and other health professionals around the physical and psychological impacts of alcohol and other drug use. Student leaders at many colleges are provided with first aid, mental health and wellbeing and suicide response training. These opportunities, coupled with training around managing stress, anxiety and maintaining work/life balance, have allowed students to promote safe and healthy environments for themselves and their peers.

Students also receive education and training in healthy relationships and physical, sexual and mental health. Responding to the broader community's increasing awareness of sexual harassment and assaults, colleges have prioritised bystander and consent training, mandatory reporting, gender equality and respectful relationships courses. Colleges are also running training programs to develop inclusive cultures amongst their diverse student populations, including training on cross-cultural communication and the experience of LGBTIQ+ community members.

Orientation Week

While Orientation Week ('O Week') remains an important first introduction for new students to both college and the wider university, most colleges reported that they are moving towards minimising the service of alcohol during O Week by encouraging alternative events, alcohol free activities, alcohol free days and in some colleges moving towards an alcohol-free O Week in the college. Colleges also reported trialling, or had implemented, a number of strategies to minimise harm from excessive alcohol consumption during O Week.

These included the following:

- Redirecting college and student club funds towards alternative, fun, non-alcohol events, free non-alcoholic drinks and the serving of food at O Week events.
- Implementing balanced programs that meet the needs of differing cohorts of students, including domestic and international students. With a particular focus on the diversity of the student population, meeting the needs of the increasing number of students who choose not to, or can't, drink alcohol and/or those students whose background precludes them from participating in social functions where consumption of alcohol is present.
- Implementing an induction program for new students prior to O Week.
- Promoting a positive leadership culture within the student body by providing education and training opportunities from experts and creating peer-to-peer mentoring.
- Student leaders encouraged, or required, to abstain from alcohol consumption during O Week to role model positive alcohol cultures and to support other students to remain safe.
- Daily meetings between student leaders and college staff during O Week have allowed for open communication and collective responses to incidents. Alternatively, some colleges have chosen to run O Week without student leadership involvement.
- Implementing policies that require college oversight and approval of student programs and proposed O Week schedules, allowing events and activities to be delivered with appropriate event management procedures and risk mitigation strategies to be in place. This has also sought to create a less overwhelming experience for new students, by minimising the number of events or activities.
- Colleges have continued to review their policies, often collaboratively with student leaders, ensuring students are aware of the consequences for breaches of these policies.
- Seeking to limit the participation of student 'returners' or alumni in O Week activities.
- Restricting or prohibiting the financial support or sponsorship of events or activities by external licensed providers, such as local pubs or nightclubs.
- Embraced or encouraged the involvement of external youth support agencies, such as 'Red Frogs' in event management and or support to students.
- Invited parents or family members to participate in formal welcome events such as ceremonies, chapel services or welcome dinners O Week.
- Building strong relationships with their host or affiliated universities particularly in relationship to alcohol management.
- Encouraged college residents to participate in their University's O Week activities.
- Refocused college O Week on an induction and preparation for university study and welcome to college opportunity for students.

- Worked closely with host and affiliated universities to engender cultural and behavioural expectations that align across the entire student experience beyond O Week.

Working With a Host University and Other Colleges

While many residential colleges are independent bodies, owned and operated separately from the universities they are associated with, all colleges reported that the relationships with their partner university was a high priority. It was felt to be important that colleges work cooperatively with, and be cognisant of the needs of, their host university. In some cases this may include an association or affiliation with more than one university.

A key area for collaboration for colleges was in the awareness of timetabling and major events of the university and to have access to university learning management systems for college tutors and staff. As identified above, a key strategy colleges have implemented during O Week was to work closely with their host universities to ensure that college O Week schedules did not conflict with the university's orientation programs and that college O Week activities complied with university expectations, policies and procedures, particularly in regard to alcohol. Knowledge of their host universities' various faculty and discipline specific orientation processes and activities allowed colleges to promote and support these university events in their residential student populations.

It was reported that an area of increasing significance was the need for colleges to be aware of, and to work closely with, the various university student services available to them - particularly those in the health and wellbeing area such as medical and counselling services. Colleges identified the need to educate students about these services and many provided opportunities for university student wellbeing and support service staff to present at college O Week activities and to Tutors, Residential Advisors (RAs) and student leader training sessions.

Further, many colleges were providing opportunities and or resources such as venues for their University to host speakers on topics such as consent and bystander training. Opportunities to engage with university faculty and Student Unions or Student Groups allowed for collaborative and supportive programs for students to be designed. Colleges identified the need to be working closely with university-wide campaigns relating to a range of student focussed issues, including safety on campus, respectful relationships and drink spiking for example. The building of good working relationships between university administrations and colleges supported the synchronisation of university program goals or events across both the university and colleges.

Of central importance to colleges is the ability to share and centralise information between colleges and universities. Open, regular dialogue with university student services and university leadership (including senior leadership) allows host universities to be informed about systems and processes within colleges and for the valuable contribution of colleges to their host universities to be acknowledged and celebrated.

The other important relationship identified was that of neighbouring colleges and the need to foster good working relationships and, where possible, to work collaboratively, both formally and informally, in managing the misuse of alcohol, in reducing harms from excessive consumption and engaging in alcohol culture change. Many colleges had moved away from sharing social events or 'bar nights' with neighbouring colleges, or the wider university, restricting access to in-house residents only. Some colleges reported that they had moved to a position where mid-week social events that involved the consumption of alcohol were no longer promoted or supported in College because of the impact on tutorials and evening and early morning lectures.

Working with host universities and neighbouring colleges has allowed colleges to build a shared understanding of what it means to be a safe and healthy community and has allowed colleges to work collaboratively to implement policies and strategies to prioritise the creation of these safe communities.

Policies and Procedures – Student Conduct

As with the previous section, colleges felt it was important to work collaboratively with their University and their neighbouring colleges, to harmonise and/or synthesise policies in relation to alcohol including alcohol service and management, alcohol misuse and harm minimisation practices. Colleges felt that aligning policy responses and sharing common discipline measures for breaches strengthened the positions of colleges. An example of aligned policy positions is an intercollegiate agreement on the banning of alcohol from being consumed during intercollegiate sporting events. These policies also reflect the broader state and national laws that these colleges and their host universities operate within.

Colleges reported undertaking several policy measures designed to reduce harm such as monitoring, managing and or restricting the provision and sale of alcohol and the serving of alcohol. This has been done through the restricting and regulating of college and/or student club funds when used for the purposes of purchasing or subsidising alcohol. This included the banning of sponsorship or subsidising of alcohol by businesses such as pubs or licensed venues or by alumni and the banning of alcohol advertising in college or student clubs or of sporting teams. In addition to these policy measures, the introduction of proactive education programs designed to raise awareness to the harms of excessive alcohol consumption and binge drinking has begun a process of promoting a culture of responsible alcohol service and consumption.

The issues associated with the geographic location of alcohol service and consumption, that is where alcohol should be served and consumed within the college and the merits/dangers of consumption in public versus private spaces in college was discussed at length, along with the tension between protecting individual adult liberties and promoting the responsibilities associated with living in a close community. It was noted that many colleges were focussed on removing alcohol from shared/ community spaces such as corridors, hallways, gardens and common areas. The removal of alcohol from these communal spaces was coupled with the limitation of alcohol consumption to either a student's room and/or to licensed areas only. Restrictions were also placed to limit the times of alcohol service/



consumption. Some colleges had banned alcohol from student rooms entirely and only permitted alcohol to be served and consumed in a licensed area at a formal college event such as a formal dinner or social function. Some colleges were completely alcohol free where no alcohol was permitted on the premises at any time. A key tension that many colleges are continuing to negotiate is the freedom of their individual adult students and the need to protect the greater community's wellbeing and safety.

The various options for discipline and student welfare in relation to misconduct were discussed at the forum and the importance of students understanding their colleges' rules and policies relating to alcohol and misbehaviour early in their orientation. These policies are also increasingly being restated following O Week. The importance of explaining the rationale for different policies to the students and working cooperatively with student bodies was also emphasised by many of the colleges. This included ensuring clear and detailed inclusion of these policies in student handbooks. Colleges have been using a variety of communication channels, such as social media, college intranet and email to regularly communicate with students in regard to rules and regulations relating to alcohol. Some colleges have also implemented early intervention opportunities, requiring students who have been identified as having problems with binge drinking or consuming excessive amounts of alcohol, to meet with staff in an informal manner, to support them to build strategies to responsibly consume alcohol, promote cultural change and to refer them on to health professionals if need be.

In establishing, refining and implementing policies and procedures across colleges, staff have worked closely with their student clubs and student leadership teams to align behaviour and alcohol consumption expectations. In some colleges, student club codes of conduct have been aligned with their colleges' codes of conduct to ensure shared values, such as respect for self and others and accountability to peers are included. All student club leaders have been invited to, or in some colleges, required to, complete RSA training. Working with students, colleges have also sought to ensure their alcohol policies reflect the varied cultural and religious perspectives and needs of their diverse communities.



In-College Bars

Many colleges with licensed bars reported that they had made the decision to take on the responsibility of being a Licensee, removing the responsibilities of managing the license from the student clubs. As a result, colleges also reported that they were moving toward the use of professional bar staff and away from a student run service. This has had the effect of both professionalising and, in some instances, commercialising the management and service of alcohol in some colleges. Colleges taking over the management of liquor licenses from the student clubs has removed the responsibility from the shoulders of the student club and student leaders and has been effective in ensuring liquor licensing laws and regulatory policies regarding the responsible sale and or service of alcohol are complied with. These changes have been effective in managing risk, minimising harm and in curbing excessive and harmful consumption of alcohol. This has led to a change in the entrenched cultures of binge drinking in some colleges.

These changes have been coupled with policies strictly controlling the service and provision of alcohol, monitoring and managing alcohol service for students who are intoxicated, using standard drink measures and standard drink containers, banning self-serve 'punch bowls', providing free water, soft drinks, low alcohol alternatives and hot food during service. Some colleges had experimented with external audits of their liquor license and service by professional auditors who then make recommendations about the application of the license. Some colleges have moved to prevent students from running events where the ticket purchase price for the event contains an unlimited access to the bar service. Further, in some colleges external, professional security staff are often employed to monitor those patronising the college event.

To promote social inclusion, and ensure communal spaces are safe and accessible to all students, particularly those from diverse cultural backgrounds, some colleges have moved their in-college bars away from their Junior, Middle and Senior common rooms and other common lounge areas. The removal of the bar, and alcohol consumption from these spaces enables those who do not drink or are unable to socialise in an area where alcohol is served or consumed, to enjoy these spaces. Further, colleges are recognising the need for diverse communal and social spaces, beyond the in-college bar, to promote social inclusion for those who do not drink, in particular.

Colleges have embraced professionalising the management of events where alcohol will be served. Formal event management plans and risk management processes are increasingly being adopted for all events. Many colleges require these plans to include the supply of non-alcoholic beverages and food at all events with alcohol. College Balls are also increasingly held offsite and managed by professional catering companies. Ticket sales for events, such as College Balls, are also restricted to college residents in some cases and not open to college Alumni or to the broader university public and alcohol is not included in the ticketed price of the event.

Pre-Drinking

Colleges identified the risks associated with pre-event drinking or pre 'loading' and the cultures of excessive drinking before events that have historically been associated with events at colleges. In response, significant resources have been invested and innovative approaches have been piloted to reduce excessive alcohol consumption before events or activities. Colleges have also built relationships with external providers, such as local pubs, to allow for the monitoring of excessive alcohol consumption or underage drinking while students are off campus. Partnerships with youth support agencies, such as Red Frogs, are becoming central to creating safe, pre-drinking cultures that prevent excessive alcohol consumption.

Colleges have sought to limit the opportunity for students to consume alcohol before events by limiting the time for pre-drinking by incentivising students to get to the formal social activity earlier through offering free, attractive food early (this also encourages students to consume food during social events).

Entry to social events is restricted to students who are not already intoxicated. To support responsible drinking cultures, colleges have encouraged open and public pre-event socialising to allow for supervised, rather than hidden alcohol consumption. Some colleges have also encouraged staff engagement to allow for an open, responsible drinking culture to be modelled. Colleges have also piloted restricting the numbers of students allowed in any one students' room and or prohibited prevent drinking in student rooms.

Student leaders have also been engaged in building and modelling responsible drinking cultures. Student leaders have been encouraged to limit their own alcohol intake, or refrain from pre-event drinking, to role model safe alcohol consumption patterns and to prioritise social inclusion for students who choose not to drink. Student leaders have also been actively involved in monitoring student alcohol consumption and consequences, such as the restriction of entry to social events for intoxicated students. These have been successful in reducing excessive alcohol consumption and changing culture. Hydration stations and provision of non-alcoholic alternatives at all social events have also supported the strengthening of responsible, safe, healthy and inclusive drinking cultures.

Additionally, many colleges and student leadership groups are seeking to diversify the activities offered before social events. Promotion of alternative activities, including food, sport, competitions, prizes and live music prior to social events seeks to limit the pre-event consumption of alcohol. For example, providing professional photographers prior to social events and at the end of the night has encouraged safe drinking practices, as students want to look their best for these photographs both prior to and at the end of the event. Costume or themed events have also been successfully implemented to allow for inclusive participation where the focus of the event is not on alcohol consumption. These events further limit opportunities for excessive alcohol consumption.

As identified above, there is an increasing trend towards the professionalisation of event management and bar service. Many colleges have transitioned to having professional, paid bar staff serving alcohol at events, moving away from students or student leaders serving alcohol. Many colleges have implemented more rigorous event management and risk mitigation policies and procedures, with many colleges requiring a formal application process to be made to, and approved by, college management for all student led events.

A key tension that exists in many colleges is around the subsidised or no cost provision of alcohol for students at student and/or college run events and in student or college bars. Many college administrations see drink pricing as a control mechanism, and colleges endeavour to ensure alcohol is paid for, but that prices are not so low as to encourage binge drinking, but no so high as to be prohibitive for students' participation in, or attendance at events. A further tension that exists relates to the use of student club funds to subsidise drink prices or to provide drinks at no cost. This is often framed as a question of equity and inclusion to ensure all students, whether consuming alcohol or not, are supported to have enjoyable opportunities for social interaction.

Conclusions

Participants acknowledged the powerful cultural context that they were working in suggesting that all colleges recognised the prominent role that alcohol plays in the social lives of young adults attending university and that alcohol was a significant part of the social and cultural fabric of many residential colleges and associated activities of student clubs and societies. As a result, a variety of proactive and customised interventions that aim to engage this culture, increase student awareness and knowledge, and reduce the harms associated with excessive alcohol use, are being undertaken in residential university colleges.

Participants also stated that their colleges had recognised the interrelationship of academic pressures with welfare related issues and that academic performance was not disconnected from student health and wellbeing. The colleges recognised the importance of minimising harm from excessive alcohol consumption by students through raising awareness to, and educating students about, the dangers of excessive consumption and through the regulation of provision and service of alcohol in colleges. Colleges also recognised the need to work with students to provide services and programs to assist students to manage these issues and to provide referral pathways to health and medical professionals when required.

These responses by colleges are consistent with the research literature in this area. A number of researchers (Larson 2000; Eccles, et al. 2003; Murphy, et al. 2005; Polymerou 2007) have found that educational interventions are beneficial in preventing risky behaviour, including excessive alcohol use among college and university students.

The purpose of this report is to document the responses of Heads and Deputies of UCA member colleges to the question 'What is being done to minimise harm from excessive consumption of alcohol in UCA colleges and/or halls of residence?' and to celebrate, acknowledge and promote to others the wide range of interventions, and programmatic responses being carried out in colleges by UCA members with the aim of preventing and minimising harm to students from excessive alcohol consumption. We hope that this document becomes a useful reference and resource to support UCA members and others in their ongoing initiatives in this area.

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