**DRUGS: Less Knowledge = Higher Use**

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As children we are taught many important lessons 'never accept candy from strangers', 'don't answer the front door if we are not expecting a visitor', 'always look right, then left then right again when crossing the road'. However when teaching young people about drugs what are doing?

The classic terms 'Don't do Drugs' or "Drugs are Bad' just does not suffice when educating young adults and future leaders.

Australia has the highest illicit drug use of any other country in the world. More than 17% of Australians have used an illicit substance in the past 12 months.

More staggering, Australia has the highest Ecstasy use in the world. An incredible 13% of people, aged between 15-24 years of age, have used the illicit substance in the past 12 months.

AlcoCups have surveyed more than 7,500 Australians, aged between 15-30, over the past 3 years regarding drug knowledge. Less than 3% of those surveyed could name more than 3 substances used to create the drug Ecstasy.

What these statistics outline is young Australian's willingness to use Ecstasy without any knowledge of what they are putting into their bodies.

Increasing understanding and knowledge regarding illicit drugs significantly reduces illicit drug use. The Netherlands have identified this and successfully implemented strategies around education and understanding.

It is well documented that in Amsterdam people are able to purchase cannabis from licensed venues and distributors. Incredibly only 17% of people from the Netherlands have used cannabis at least once in their lifetime. More than 33% of Australians have used cannabis at least once in their lifetime.

How you might ask, well it is simple. The Netherlands provide more money into the development and delivery of educational programs regarding cannabis and illicit drugs. Therefore enabling people to make a more informed decision about drugs which results in a reduction in illicit drug use.

After an AlcoCups drug education training session more than 95% of participants (7,500+ surveyed) were able to list 5 or more ingredients found in Ecstasy. Visit the AlcoCups website www.alcocups.com to learn more about our specialised education programs.

AlcoCups believe that using innovative, interactive and informative approaches to drug education significantly reduces drug use. Furthermore significantly reducing the harms and risks associated with drugs for individuals, families and communities.

Accepting that as professionals we need to continually deliver and develop educational messages regarding drugs is the first step in cultural change. Empowering our young Australians and future leaders, regarding drug information, will change the current drug culture in Australia. Let's work towards teaching our young leaders and communities to 'not except candy from strangers'.

