

MULTICULTURAL



CANBERRA MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION LDAT PROJECT REPORT

January 2025

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ABOUT MULTICULTURAL HUB CANBERRA

Multicultural Hub Canberra (mHub) is a leading provider of services to the multicultural community in Canberra and surrounding regions.

mHub has long standing connections with multicultural communities, including those who are new and emerging, and provides a wide range of services including youth, men, women, counselling, employment, settlement services and emergency preparedness.

mHub is a key go-to service for external agencies and community leaders and we value the relationships we have within multicultural communities and amongst community organisations and other agencies.

Multicultural Hub Canberra is governed by Queanbeyan Multilingual Centre Inc (QMLC). QMLC governs three other multicultural centres across regional NSW.

mHub has been delivering the Multicultural LDAT in Canberra since 2022, and was involved in past LDAT's being delivered by Red Cross.

Acknowledgments

Multicultural Hub Canberra would like to acknowledge community leaders, multicultural parents and multicultural young people for participating in this project.

The valuable insights, feedback and information will allow us to ensure that future programs are reflective of the needs of the community.

Thank you to the community members and service providers who contributed their time and resources to this project and helping ensure that essential information was able to be gained to complete this report.

And lastly, thank you to ADF, Kasey and the team for their ongoing support throughout this project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About this report

The purpose of this project was to identify and understand alcohol and other drug use amongst multicultural young people in Canberra, as well as the level of understanding multicultural parents have around alcohol and other drug use amongst their children and other young people in their community.

To do this, Multicultural Hub Canberra (mHub) worked together with community leaders and key stakeholders in the multicultural community to engage young people and parents to participate.

This report presents the findings of the survey conducted. The survey gathered insights from 20 parents and 30 young people (aged 13-25 years) from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Limitations and challenges to engage with more young people and parents is highlighted in this report and provides important insight into future engagement processes.

The insights gained from this report will guide mHub in developing program and project ideas to address harm minimisation of alcohol and other drug use amongst young people as well as ensuring that parents are able to access correct and true information and facts.

Additionally, this project has allowed the community to safely provide feedback on a topic that holds a lot of taboo, shame and stigma amongst multicultural communities and is often hidden and not spoken about.

INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this survey was to gain valuable insights and data into alcohol and other drug use among multicultural youth and how families address AOD as a family.

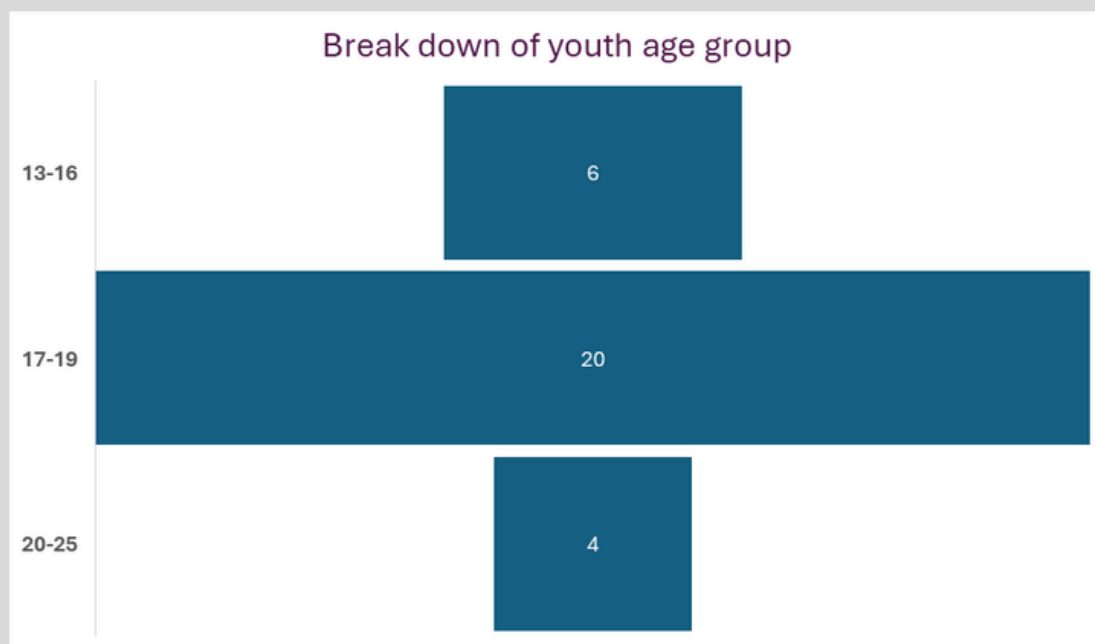
The aim of this data and feedback is to use this information in the development of targeted support programs that address the needs of not only the young people but also parents and the community more broadly.

2. Survey Methodology

Two separate surveys were used, one specifically for multicultural parents and the other for multicultural young people.

This was done so that specific questions were asked from each cohort that was relevant to them, rather than one generic survey.

This allowed us to ask questions from young people that collected data that helped us to better understand AOD use amongst them.



3. Demographic

Cultural backgrounds of young people and parents included: Solomon Island, Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Bhutan, China, Vietnam, Japan, Indonesia, Europe and Australia.

KEY FINDINGS

Parents' Survey

Awareness:

All parents indicated they were unaware of whether their children were using alcohol or other drugs. This could be due to the many stigmas associated with alcohol and other drug use that prevents young people from talking with their parents about AOD in general, as well as related to them specifically.

Knowledge:

The majority of parents expressed a lack of confidence in their knowledge of harms of alcohol and other drugs use amongst young people. This suggests a need for further education for parents to better support their children in navigating these issues, as well as increasing their own knowledge.

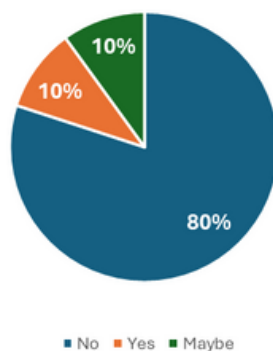
Awareness of support service:

All parents indicated they were unsure about where to seek support if they were concerned about their child's substance use. This suggests a clear lack of awareness about available resources and support network.

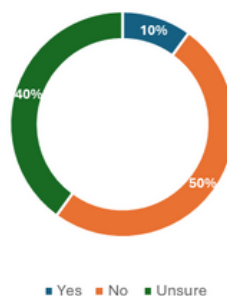
Impact on Family Relationships:

Parents reported varying impacts of substances use on family relationships, with 10% indicating it caused conflict and family breakdown, 40% unsure of its impact, and 50% reporting no effect.

Do you feel comfortable in your knowledge of the harm of alcohol and other drug use?



Has alcohol or other drug use affected your relationship with your child and caused conflict of family breakdown?



KEY FINDINGS

Young People's Survey

AOD Use Trends:

10 young people reported using alcohol or other drugs, with 16 young people indicating they do not use any substances. However, 4 young people responded as unsure. This could be their lack of willingness to openly share due to cultural barriers and stigmas.

Substance Types:

The survey responses indicated that alcohol is the most used substance, followed by vaping and cigarettes. A variety of other substances are also reported, which indicates that young people are experimenting with other forms of drugs.

Frequency:

The majority of young people reported using alcohol or other types of drugs on a monthly basis.

Reasons for Substance Use:

Social and recreational purposes are the primary motivators reported for substance use among young people. One young person indicated they vape to feel relaxed, six young people indicated they use AOD to have fun at parties and outings, and two young people mentioned using AOD to engage in special occasions or social interactions.

Help-Seeking Behaviours:

A majority of young people indicated feeling comfortable asking for help. However, eight young people indicated they are not comfortable seeking help, and four young people are unsure if they would. This suggests that there is a need for more accessible and approachable support options for young people to feel more confident in seeking help when needed. In particular, culturally sensitive services.

Sources of Support:

Responses to where young people would go for help varied. Family was the most mentioned source of help, followed by friends, trusted adults, and AOD services. Other responses included teachers, counsellors and health professionals. This response was unexpected, as many young people have indicated through other programs, activities and supports that they would not feel comfortable or safe to seek support from family due to the cultural and sometimes religious barriers.

Communication:

Half of the young people indicated that they talk to their families about substance use while the other half do not engage in these conversations. This highlights a potential area of opportunity, as there may be barriers to open communication in some families and the opportunity to help resolve this.

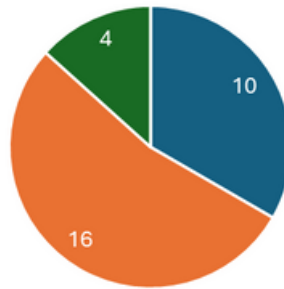
Impact on Family Relationships:

When asked if substance use had caused conflict in families, 7 out of 30 young people responded "yes".

KEY FINDINGS

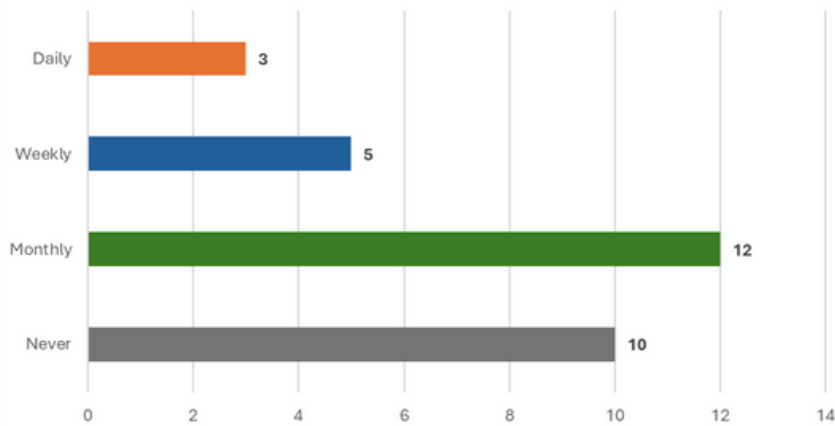
Young People's Survey

Do you consume alcohol, smoke cigarette, vape or use other drugs?

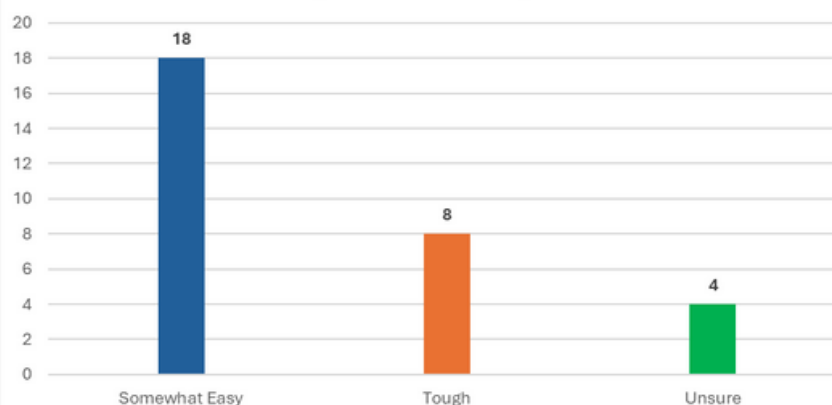


■ Yes ■ No ■ Maybe

How often do you consume alcohol or other drugs?



If you consume alcohol or other drugs, how easy is it for you to ask for help?



CONSULTATION LIMITATIONS

There were some limitations when conducting this survey. Whilst parents were happy to have verbal conversations individually with the mHub team, they were not open to participating in consultations in person.

Several attempts to engage them in these consultations failed and were not able to go ahead. Through conversations with trusted community leaders, it was identified that the community more broadly were interested in understanding more about this project, but cultural and religious stigmas, as well as community perception prevented many of them from engaging, either in person or even through the survey.

The online survey option was utilised to provide multicultural parents the opportunity to provide feedback and help inform future program opportunities.

While the numbers were not as anticipated, with more parents expected to engage with the survey, the feedback provided vital insights into their understanding and knowledge of AOD use amongst young people.

Young people proved to be more difficult to engage with the consultations when it was initially intended to be in person.

Young people indicated that they were not comfortable to have this conversation amongst other young people were there was a risk that information may get back to the community or their parents.

Whilst every assurances were given to young people that their confidentiality would be maintained, they were still not comfortable doing this in person.

However, young people were happy to engage with the anonymous online survey and provide honest and open feedback.

Whilst conducting the survey allowed us to still gain valuable data and feedback, not being able to hold the consultation in person significantly limited our ability to be able to delve deeper into and the topics with both the parents and the young people.

We acknowledge that this not only reduced the number of participants overall in the project, but also limited the results highlighted in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

The following recommendations are based on the results of the two surveys.

1. Improved Education and Awareness.

- Develop culturally tailored education programs for parents and young people to increase awareness of the harms associated with AOD use.

2. Promote open communication between family members.

- Create programs to encourage conversations, reduce stigma, and build trust within families regarding AOD use to enable better support towards harm minimisation and family breakdown.

3. Provide resources and training for parents to support these conversations.

- Collaborate with services such as Conflict Resolution Service to provide this training.

4. Enhancing Access to Support Services

- Increase awareness of existing support services and resources among multicultural families.
- Establish partnerships with AOD service providers to ensure support is culturally accessible, inclusive and safe.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this survey highlight critical gaps in knowledge, communication, and support regarding AOD use among multicultural youth and their families in Canberra.

Addressing these gaps through targeted education, family engagement, and accessible support services is essential.

Consultations with multicultural communities in relation to AOD use is challenging, with many cultural barriers that limited the opportunity to increase the number of participants in the surveys.

The results of this project indicate a need for programs to continue to be able to ensure that parents and young people are supported through culturally sensitive programs and projects to address AOD use amongst young people and to learn harm minimisation strategies.

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THANK YOU

CONTACT INFORMATION

 02 6100 4611

 info@mhub.org.au

 Level 2, 180 London Circuit, City ACT 2608

 www.mhub.org.au