

## Hindley Street Program FAQ

### ***Who is Encounter Youth?***

Encounter Youth is not-for-profit, charitable organisation that is a positive influence on young people in the community. We support, advocate for and encourage young people with the social challenges they face and we mobilise volunteers from all over the state to do the same.

### ***How did Encounter Youth become involved on Hindley Street?***

Hindley Street is a popular celebration area in the city of Adelaide, consisting of numerous bars, nightclubs and entertainment venues, many of which operate with 24-hour liquor licenses. As evident by the consistent media coverage, there is a concerning number of alcohol-related problems which impact on public safety in Hindley Street.

Encounter Youth received an invitation from South Australia Police in 2009 to provide direct relief to vulnerable young people in the challenging Hindley Street social environment. This invitation came after seeing the positive effect of our involvement in transforming the environment along the Fleurieu with school leavers.

We launched our Hindley Street intervention program in 2011. It began as a pilot project, where we discovered:

- A clear gap in services to young people, especially past 2:00am;
- A main demographic being 18-25 year olds; and
- A real need to provide support and a responsible presence to the area.

At capacity, the venues on Hindley Street can hold over 50,000 patrons, with many additional young people congregating in the street. Due to the large numbers of young people in the West End on a Saturday night, SA Police are unable to meet demand for engagement and prevention work in these peak times, indicating that extra services were required to address the needs of vulnerable young people in the CBD.

### **Encounter Youth**

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The program has continued to develop over the years, so this is what the program looks like today. Every Saturday night between 11:30pm - 5:00am, our Encounter Youth Green Team volunteers offer a hands on service to the community. We send out two street teams of four volunteers with an equal male/female split, who are specifically trained and equipped to make a difference in this environment.

You'll find our Encounter Youth volunteers on foot patrol along Hindley Street operating between King William Road & the UniSA Jeffrey Smart Building. The Encounter Youth volunteers provide a safe presence, referral service and basic first aid to patrons, as well as always being available for an encouraging chat. Each team carries two backpacks with them that contain a wide assortment of supplies such as vomit bags, bottled water, a first aid kit, thongs and minties.

### ***What does the Hindley Street Program aim to achieve?***

Our main objectives are to:

- Support young people in vulnerable situations caused by excessive alcohol consumption.
- Communicate party safe information to young people through the 'A Lighter Night' campaign.
- Collaborate with key stakeholders to improve late night safety in the Hindley Street entertainment precinct and report engagement and critical incident referral statistics.

### ***How do the Encounter Youth volunteers respond if a critical incident occurs?***

Encounter Youth volunteers receive training on how to respond to a range of critical incidents that may occur. Our volunteers respond through a triage report as follows:

1. Assess – the person and/or incident
2. Refer – to the most suitable service and/or the person's friend
3. Support – the individuals involved throughout the process
4. Report – the incident to the team leader and complete an incident report form

### ***What is the 'A Lighter Night' campaign?***

We seek to influence a decrease in risky levels of drinking among young people through our positive engagement strategies. As part of a National Binge Drinking Grant we received in 2012, we created a campaign around the slogan, 'drink a little less...have a lighter night'.

The 'A Lighter Night' campaign continues to educate young people and give them reasons and tools to reduce binge drinking, rather than simply telling them it is risky. This is in line with the approach of our Party Safe Education program in secondary schools.

We promote the benefits of drinking less alcohol through three key messages. By choosing to drink less alcohol:

- Your body will thank you for it, especially the next day
- You will have more money in your back pocket
- You will be a better mate in a time of need

How do we get these conversations started?

We set up a pop-up photobooth, once a month (on a Saturday night) from 9:30pm - 1:00am located on the corner of Hindley Street and Morphett Street in the CBD. There you'll find our volunteers



engaging with the people that visit us for their a photo. This opportunity provides patrons with the opportunity to rest their party feet (and more importantly delay any further alcohol consumption that night). We offer them free water, fairy bread and a safe place for young people to sit and wait for friends.

Patrons are given a wristband that directs them to our 'A Lighter Night' Facebook page where they can find their photo the next day. Through the Facebook page we share direct messages about the effects of risky levels of drinking on the body, lifestyle changes, common myths and issues surrounding the Australian drinking culture. On the inside of the wristband they'll find the words, "We believe in you." We want to further encourage young people to make positive choices surrounding their alcohol consumption and the journey they are on with life. We want them to know that they matter and that we believe in them!

***How do you collaborate with other services such as SA Police on Hindley Street?***

We work closely with SA Police to provide the best support for vulnerable young people and often refer to them for assault, domestic abuse and suspected drug activity. Encounter Youth volunteers have proven to be vital at "filling the gap" when an issue first presents and referring onto the appropriate services. We also conduct training with SAPOL officers, outlining what situations our volunteers are able to respond to, so they are aware of the support we provide to patrons and our positive engagement strategies.

At a project level, to assist in the management of this program, we lead a Hindley Street Program Key Stakeholders Group. We meet every six weeks with representatives from the SA Attorney-General's Department, SA Police, South Australian Ambulance Service (SAAS) and Adelaide City Council. We are the only service who captures data and information of our observations on the street and we continue to be transparent and collaborative with what we are seeing and experiencing. This is done so that all key stakeholders can be at the forefront of improving late night safety in direct support of young people and the community.

***Has the Late Night Code of Practice reduced the amount of alcohol-fuelled violence?***

Encounter Youth is in full support of the Late Night Code of Practice. Whilst it is difficult for us to define if there has been a direct reduction of alcohol-related harm and alcohol-fuelled violence, we have seen a reduction in the amount of aggression shown between patrons and a reduction in fights that result in significant injuries.

Prior to the 3:00am lockout, it was not uncommon for volunteers to not finish until approximately 6:00-7:00am due to the sheer number of people still congregating in the street. Our volunteers have now observed a reduction of street patronage from the hours of 2:00am, whereby patrons begin heading home. In line with this we have observed that alcohol related harm and violence is occurring earlier, predominantly between 12:00 and 2:00am. Prior to the code changes, this was more common between 2:00 and 4:00am. The reduction of patrons on the street footpath has increased the visibility of incidents requiring attention from our volunteers and emergency services.

***I've heard that there are changes in the works for the Liquor Licensing Act in South Australia. What will that look like on Hindley Street?***

The laws around alcohol provision in South Australia have been under review since the end of



2015. A report with 129 recommendations was handed down by former Supreme Court Judge, Timothy Anderson QC in July 2016. The South Australian Government released its response at the end of September 2016 and legislation will come before parliament this year to amend the *Liquor Licencing Act 1997*. For the majority of patrons on Hindley Street there will be limited noticeable changes. Things like trading hours and drinks restrictions will remain the same and the lockout law will be retained, pending a review in 2-3 years time. However, there are some changes that will affect the responsibility of the businesses on Hindley Street to ensure that they are complying with the legislation.