

Hindley Street Program FAQ

How did Encounter Youth become involved on Hindley Street and what does the program look like now?

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 (SAPOL) 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 in and around Victor Harbour 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 2am;
- 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.

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 directly equipped to make a difference in this environment.

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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 mints.

What does the Encounter Youth 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.

What are the roles and duties of the Encounter Youth Green Team volunteers in the Hindley Street Program?

Volunteers offer a direct, hands on service to the community, patrolling Hindley Street, ready to support young people should a need arise. Our volunteers provide a safe presence, extra supervision and referral to emergency services, reducing the time taken to address critical incidents. Volunteers are available for basic first aid, free water, friendly chats and to encourage patrons to drink less, look after themselves and their mates.

What are the 'working hours' of Green Team volunteers on Hindley Street?

Volunteers patrol Hindley Street every Saturday night between the hours of 11:30pm and approximately 5:00am Sunday morning. 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.

What are the qualifications of a member of the 'Green Team'?

There are no official qualifications required to be a member of the Encounter Youth Green Team, however there are compulsory training events and a level of expectation required from each volunteer. It is required that all volunteers have a level of maturity needed for Hindley Street, gain the endorsement of a Christian community or church, and provide a satisfactory criminal history document and character reference to Encounter Youth.

Before their first shift on Hindley Street, all volunteers must complete a full day of training. The training day incorporates specifics including the situation on Hindley Street, positive engagement strategies, how to respond to critical incidents, when to contact emergency services, cultural awareness and alcohol and other drugs information. All current volunteers are retrained regularly on the changing trends in Hindley Street and have further opportunity to gain Child-Safe Environments and First Aid accreditations.

Does your volunteers' Christian faith impact the way they interact with patrons on Hindley Street?

We bring together and equip volunteers from Christian communities from across South Australia,



with the aim of creating safer environments for young people.

Our volunteers are passionate about living for God and serving young people and the wider community. They represent 11 different Christian denominations from across South Australia. Our volunteers are motivated by how Jesus cares for others, to practically help and serve the people they encounter on Hindley Street, regardless of their background, social status or spiritual beliefs. This inspires our volunteers but does not directly impact who or how we interact with patrons on the street.

A volunteer describes their motivation as: *"...being a volunteer on Hindley Street is an amazing way to live out your faith, in a way that is engaging, relevant and appreciated. The novelty wears off pretty quick at 4 o'clock in the morning, but it's the sort of thing you do if you're looking for a way to live out your faith in a way that is practical and to be Jesus in a situation that is not easy going."*
– Damian, Volunteer Team Leader

How do the Encounter Youth Green Team respond if a critical incident occurs?

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 are the patrons' reactions to the Encounter Youth Green Team? Are they happy that they are on Hindley Street?

The overwhelming majority of Hindley Street patrons are extremely grateful and excited to see our volunteers, many of whom have fond memories of the Encounter Youth Green Team from Schoolies Operation.

Here's a Facebook inbox from a young person that our volunteers helped:

"Thank you sosososo much for everything you guys did for me on Saturday night. I literally don't remember a thing but when my friends told me they found me being looked after by a group wearing green I knew exactly who you were! I seriously don't know what would have happened to me if you weren't there."

We are thankful that our volunteers are an informed community presence, who are empowering others to look after themselves and their mates through role modelling positive public space behaviour.

What actions do the Encounter Youth Green Team take if a patron begins behaving aggressively?

If a volunteer observes a group of patrons or is engaging with a patron and the situation turns violent, the team will call for immediate assistance via 000. If there is the threat of violence but the situation has not yet reached a tipping point, the team will call SAPOL via 131 444, with a view to



prevent a breach of the peace.

What else do the Encounter Youth Green Team do on Hindley Street?

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 give young people 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 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