

Perceptions, Peer Groups and Partnerships:

insights and preliminary results from the first Australian 'trial' of Social Norms

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Session outline

1. Background
2. Project overview
3. Media and dissemination
4. Comparisons and preliminary results
5. Final stages
6. The future

1. Background

In the beginning....

- Article by Perkins and Berkowitz
- Reading, talking, planning
- Chicago Conference 2004
- Long 'gestation'
- Funding application



AER
Foundation Ltd

Successful funding bid

- US\$390,000
- 2 years 2006-2007
- Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation

www.aerf.com.au

Youth drinking in Australia

Trends and issues

Policy context – Harm minimisation

Prevention focus

Legal drinking age – 18 years

www.alcohol.gov.au

www.adf.org.au

2. Project overview

Project objectives

- To reduce alcohol-related harm among high-school age youth in two rural municipalities
- To establish whether students, parents and/or teachers misperceive the extent of risky drinking among students
- To determine whether correction of misperception reduces alcohol-related harm among students

Project objectives (continued)

- Resource kit (school/teacher, alcohol focus)
- Recommendations - wider implementation of SN (alcohol, students) in Tasmania.
- Evidence base – SN strategies for minimising harm from licit and illicit drugs, around Australia.

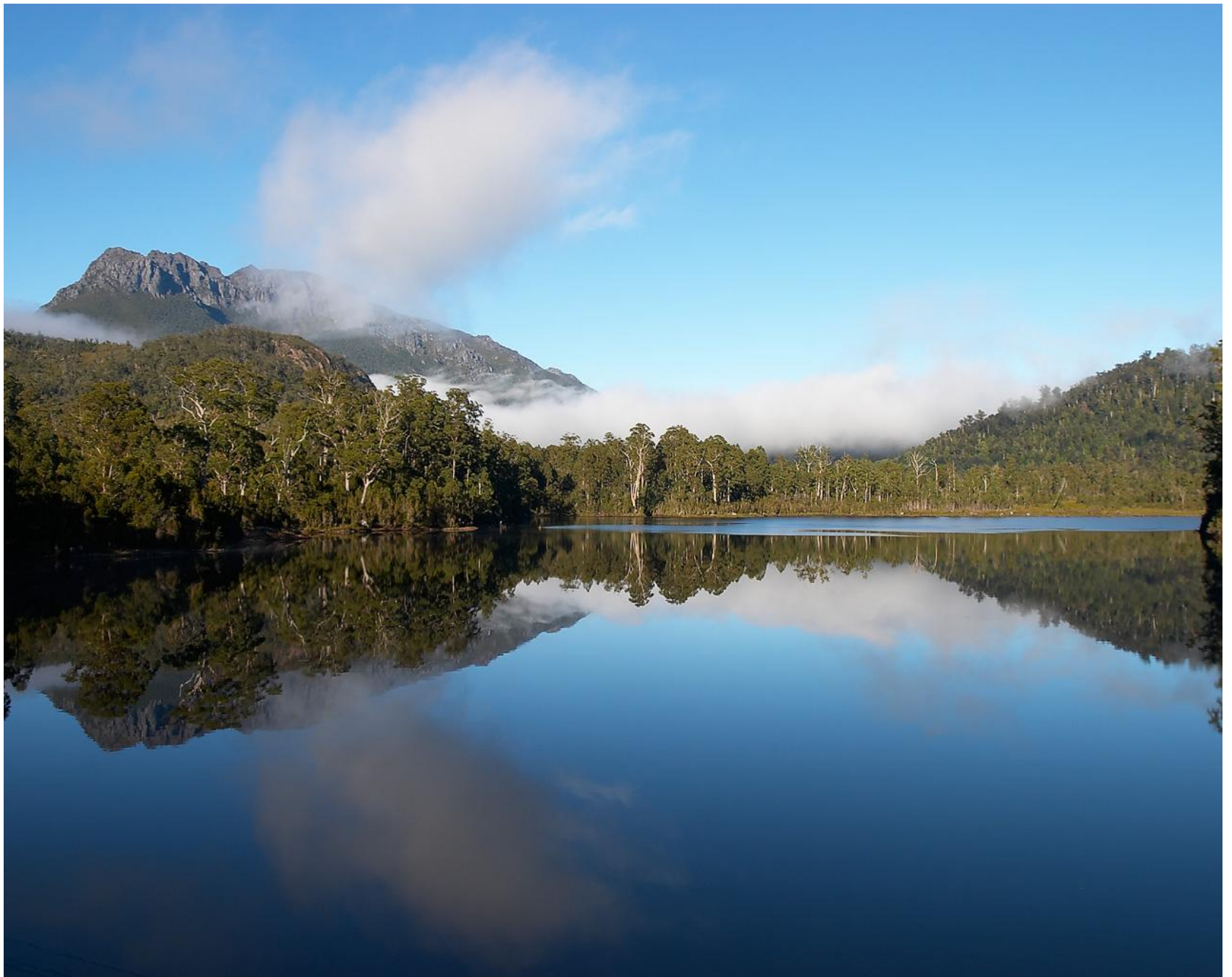
About the collaboration

- University of Tasmania
 - Department of Rural Health
 - Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies
- Departments of:
 - Police and Emergency Management
 - Health and Human Services
 - Education
- Local high-schools and councils
- International expert – Prof Alan Berkowitz









Rosebery – West Coast



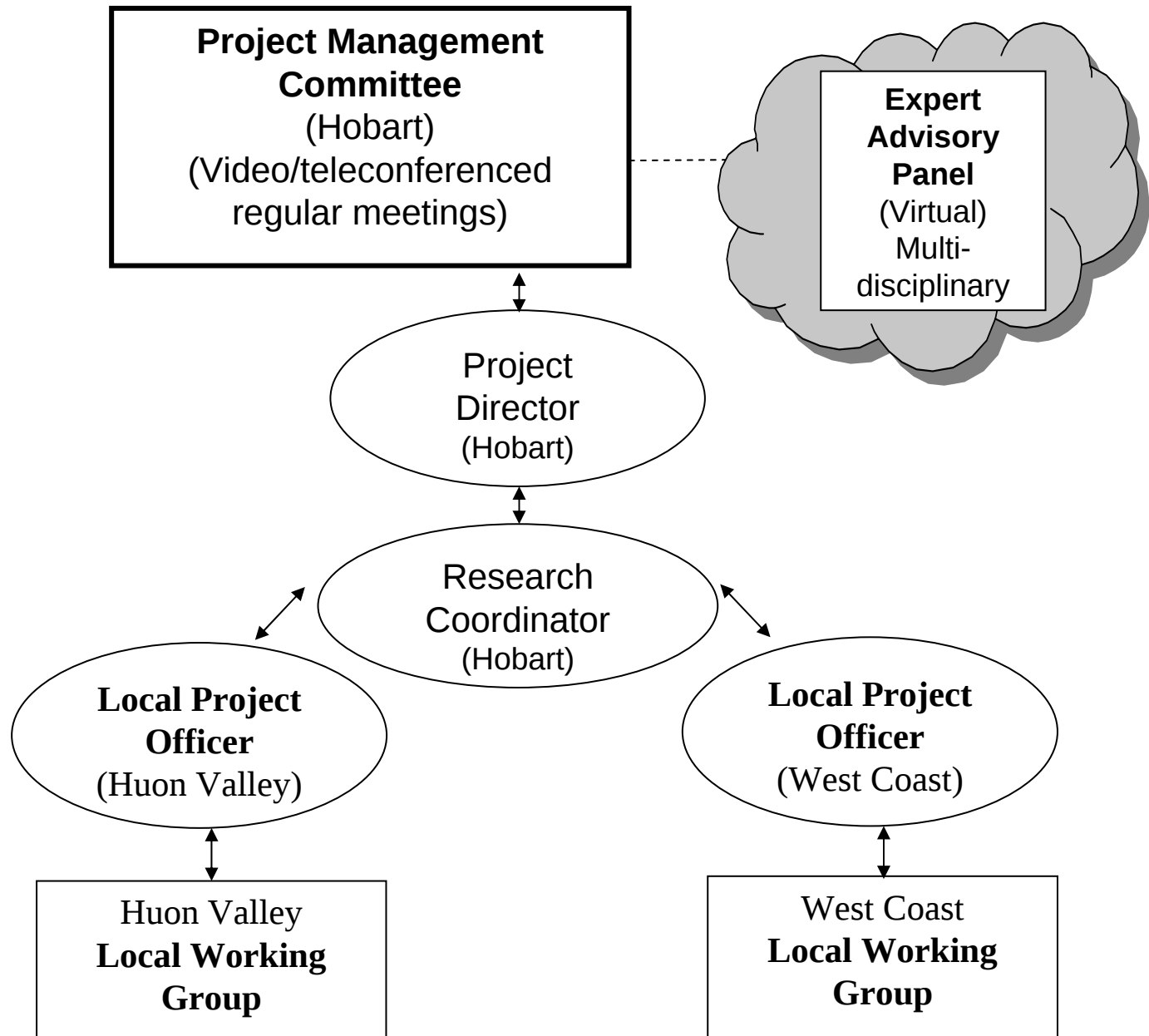
Huonville – Huon Valley



Hobart – Capital of Tasmania

Challenges

- Small, isolated rural communities
- Alcohol 'taken for granted'
- Geographically dispersed
- Multiple stakeholders
- New to 'Social Norms'



Community engagement

- Onsite project officers
- Local working groups
- Regular updates
- Certificates of appreciation
- Diverse EAP

Tasmanian Education System etc

- **‘Primary school’**
 - Kindergarten through Grade 6 = Ages 4 to 11
- **‘High School’**
 - Grades 7 through 10 = ages 12 to 16
- Grades 11-12 non-compulsory
- Three school terms
 - (Feb-May, Jun-Sep, Oct-Dec)
- Long vacation over (southern) summer

- Four small public schools
- Rural/remote
- ‘District High Schools’

Region	School name	2006 student enrolments	T1 baseline 2006	Response rate
Huon Valley	Huonville High	402	284	70%
	Geeveston District	82	62	75%
West Coast	Mountain Heights	202	148	73%
	Rosebery District	90	73	81%

Three main sources of data for SNAP are:

- students at the four trial high schools;
- teachers/parents associated with the trial schools; and
- police data holdings.

Processes

T1 (baseline) data collection – October 2006

T1 media campaign for remainder of third term

T2 data collection – June 2007

T2 media campaign throughout second term

T3 data collection (to be conducted October 2007)

Student Survey

- Planned online
- Developed with EAP
- 50 items
- Grades 7 through 10
- Mostly “tick ‘n’ flick”



Administration of student survey

- Aim for 'census'
- Procedures for obtaining consent
- LPO explanation/supervision
- At school during class time
- Examination conditions
- Emphasis on
 - anonymity/privacy
 - aggregate level data

3. Media & Dissemination

High-impact visuals
Image and branding
Participation of community





Most
students make
healthy choices

A circular button with a rainbow gradient background, transitioning from blue at the top and bottom to red in the center. The text is printed in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The button is resting on a light-colored, textured surface.



Most
students
make healthy
choices

Most
students
make healthy
choices

3/4
of MHS students
(Grades 7-10)
choose non-alcoholic
drinks when hanging
out with friends



Most
Geeveston District High
students make healthy choices!



Most (83%) choose
non-alcoholic drinks
when hanging
out with friends*

Most Mountain Heights students make healthy choices



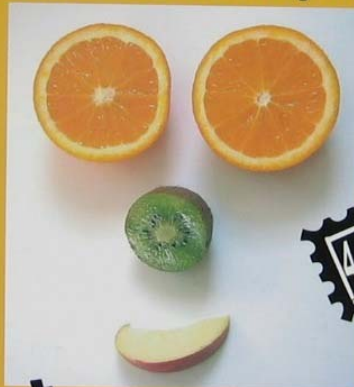
3/4

choose non-alcoholic drinks when hanging out with friends*





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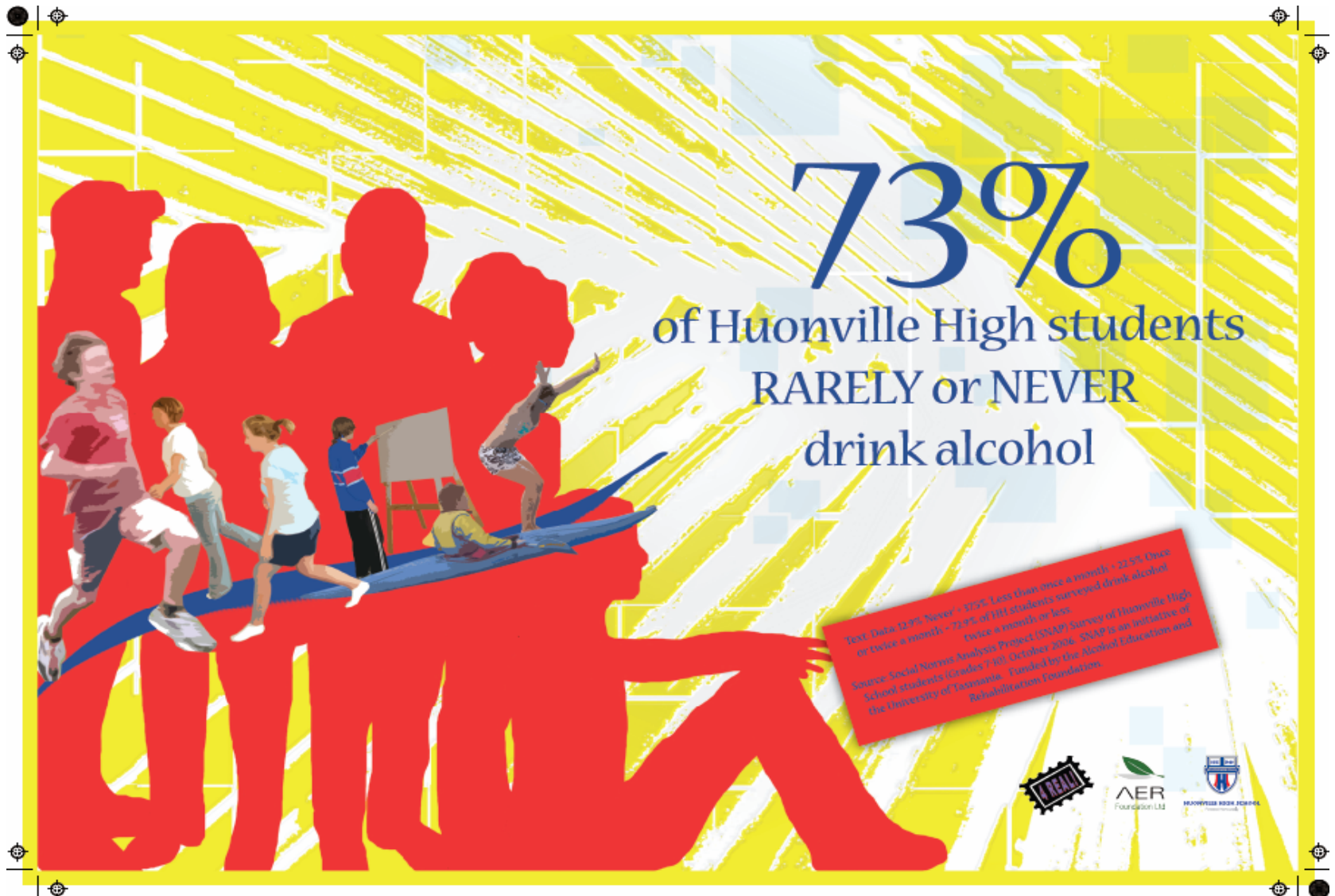
*Data: 83.6% of GDH students mostly choose non-alcoholic drinks (16.4% mostly choose alcoholic drinks) when hanging out with friends on the weekend. Survey question 9.
Source: Social Norms Analysis Project (SNAP) Survey of Geeveston District High students (Grades 7-10), October 2006.
SNAP is an initiative of the University of Tasmania
Funded by the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation



SNAP Wristbands



Sign designed by students



4. Preliminary results

US/Australian Comparisons



- Relatively few high-school based studies
- Evanston Township High School
 - Christensen and Haines (2003)
- ETHS 3000 students, 300 staff
- HHS 400 students, 35 staff
- Time differences etc

Comparisons - continued

**73% of ETHS students have
never smoked cigarettes**

**74% of HHS students have
never smoked cigarettes**

Comparisons - continued

83% of ETHS students do not smoke cigarettes, but perceive that only 15% of their high school peers do not smoke.

74% of HHS students do not smoke cigarettes, but perceive that only 4% of their high school peers do not smoke.

Comparisons - continued

71% of ETHS students choose not to smoke marijuana.

85% of HHS students choose not to smoke marijuana.

Comparisons - continued

**53% of ETHS choose not to drink alcohol,
but perceive that only 8% of their high
school peers do not drink**

**17% of HHS choose not to drink alcohol,
but perceive that only 7% of their high
school peers do not drink**

Comparisons - continued

72% of ETHS students choose options other than drinking when they hang out with friends

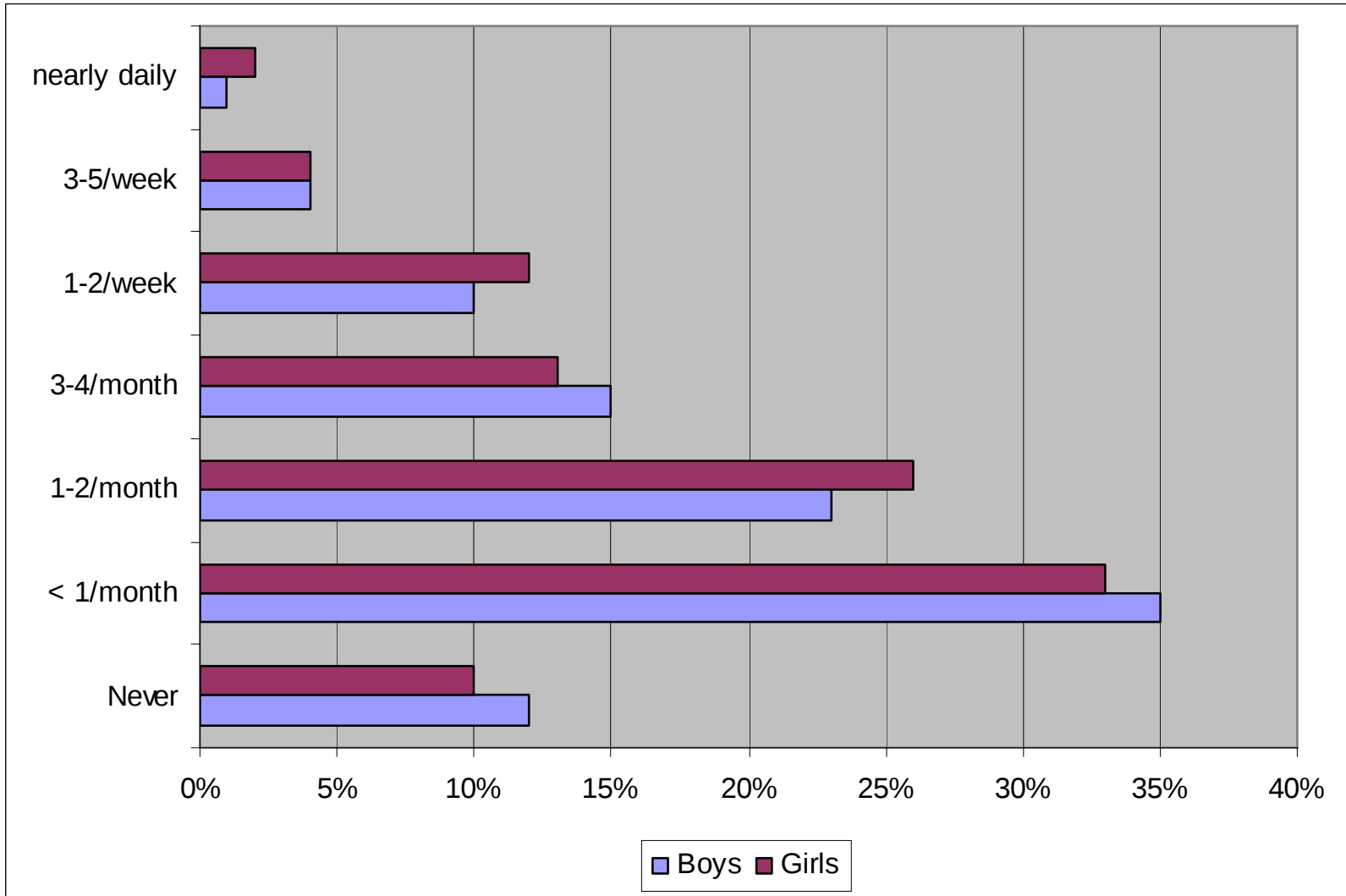
83% of HHS students choose options other than drinking when they hang out with friends.

Preliminary results

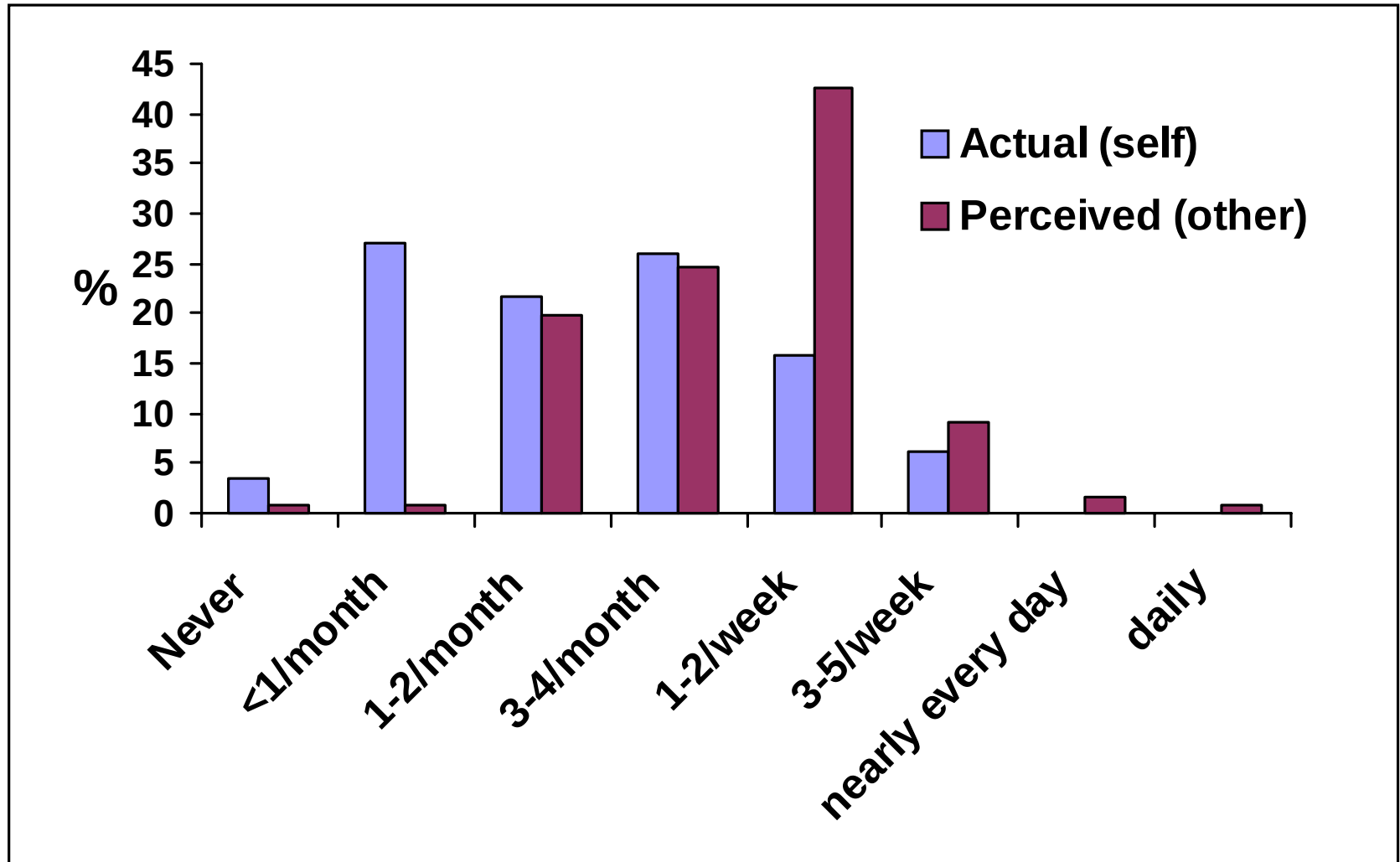
- Student data only
- Whole of sample (all schools)
- Alcohol focused
- Mostly descriptive
- Further information available

T1 (baseline) results

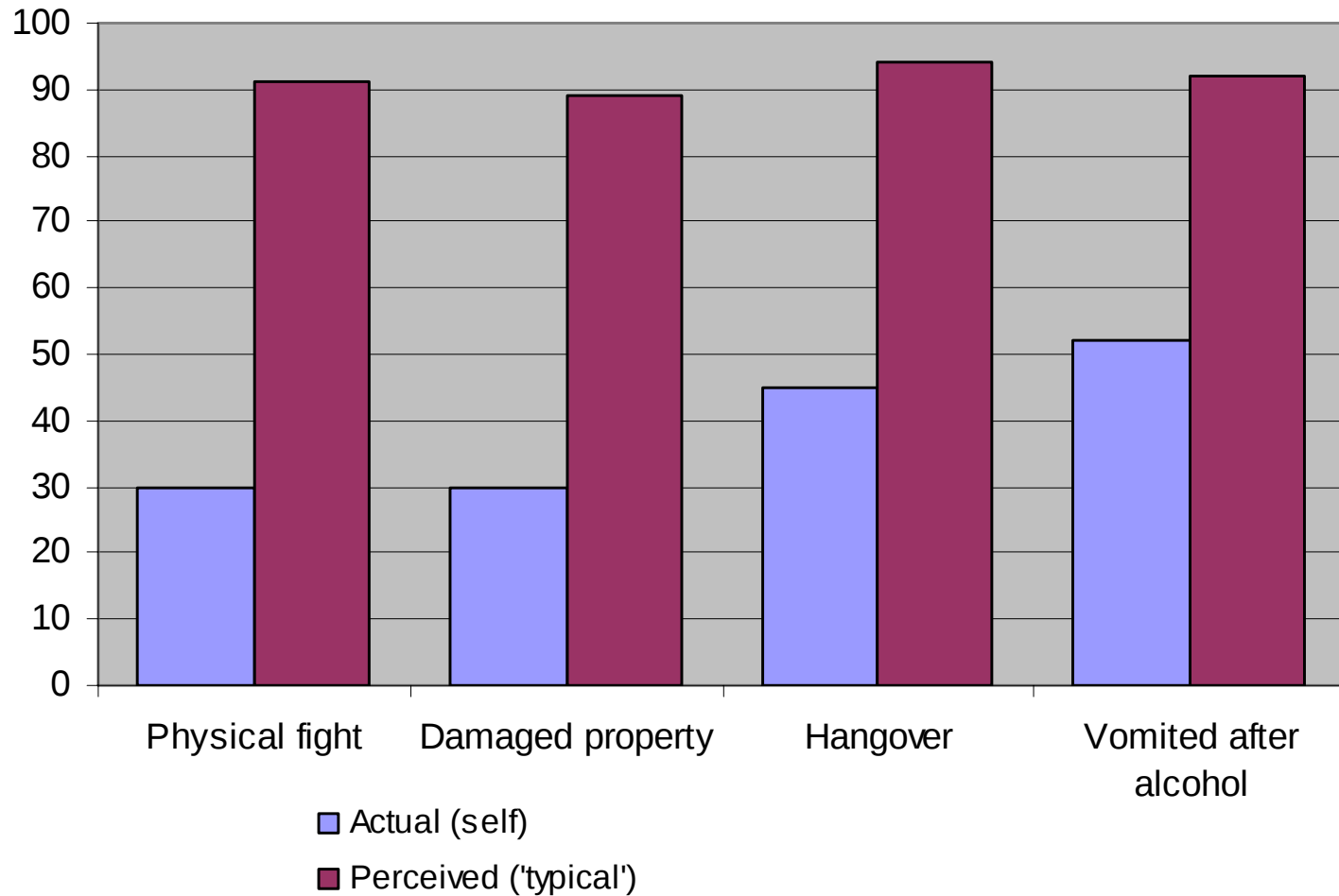
- The age at 'first drink' ranged from 6 to 16 years (median 12 years)
- 14% of students reported that they had never had an alcoholic drink.
- 20% of Grade 7 students report 'never' drinking alcohol'
- Less than 5% of Grade 10 students report 'never' drinking alcohol'



Frequency of alcohol consumption, by gender



'Actual' and 'perceived' Frequency of alcohol consumption



Alcohol-related harms (self vs other)

Changes between T1 & T2

Decline in mean frequency of:

- alcohol consumption **
- attendance at parties where alcohol was consumed by high-school students**
- getting drunk*

Changes between T1 & T2 - continued

Decline in the perceived mean frequency of friends:

- Consuming alcohol**
- Getting drunk**

Decline in perceived level of friends' agreement with:

- ‘It is okay for high school students to drink alcohol’**
- ‘It is okay for high school students to get drunk’**

Some unexpected changes....

Decline in the mean percentage of students who have ever smoked cigarettes**

Decline in the mean percentage of peers who are perceived to have ever:

- smoked cigarettes**
- smoked marijuana**
- used other illicit substances**

5. Final stages

T2 campaigns

- Harm minimisation messages
 - Safe drinking – protective behaviours
 - Peer disapproval of drunkenness
- Student participation
 - Design competitions
 - Screensavers
- Flyers and other items

The SNAP 'To Do' list

- T2 media campaigns
- T3 data collection
- Qualitative component
- Further analyses
- Writeup and reporting
- Website and resource kit development

Resource kit

- Alcohol focused
- Targetting schools/teachers
- Booklet format
- Other kits in future?

6. The future

Are we witnessing a cultural shift?

**Will attitudinal change prompt
behavioural change?**

Will the results be sustainable?



- A 'New Paradigm'
- Impact – policy and practice
- International linkages
- Other applications/funding
- Potential Australian Centre for Social Norms Research

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