

## Ban booze-driven boorish behaviour in teens.

Schools have no control. Parents have no control. Police have no control. It seems that no one in our society can stop out of control teenagers. Especially when they are smashed on alcopops and spirits bought for them by 'well-meaning' parents and older siblings or friends.

Take a walk out on our streets on any Friday or Saturday night to see what I mean. I went out for a quiet dinner last Saturday night with some old friends. I decided to catch the train. As I approached the train platform, an inebriated girl, no more than 15 years of age, accosted me asking if I "had a ciggie to spare". The 10 minutes waiting for the train were spent listening to the constant screams and squeals of drunken girls and watching the boozed up boys bash each other in some sort of 'play fighting' ritual. The train ride was not much better.

I have since discovered that a Saturday night is a bad time to catch a train. It's not that I didn't feel safe; it was just that the scene on the carriage that I got onto reminded me of feeding time at the zoo. However it wasn't peanuts being fed to the monkeys, it was booze. The carriage was a cacophony of shouting, arguing, screaming and over the top laughing from a horde of boozed up teens.

But it is not just members of the general public who have to put up with this blight on our

civil liberty. Maroondah Hospital Head of Emergency medicine, Dr Thun Lum comments on the impact that booze is having on teens, and even tweens. "We are seeing an increasing amount of patients admitted who are teens and who are injured whilst being incredibly drunk," Dr Lum reported, "We have seen a threefold increase in patients from this age category injured or assaulted while drunk. We have even admitted a significant number of 11 and 12 year olds injured while under the influence."

A recent study of hospital admittance conducted by academics at Melbourne University showed that in June alone, over 145 teenagers were admitted to hospital suffering injuries gained while drunk. More shocking and disturbing is the finding that 24 of those admitted were victims of sexual assault. How can we as a safe and modern society let this continue?

In June, 19-year-old Brian Naylor went for a night out in town with a few mates. They were celebrating the successful completion of their university exams. While waiting in the queue for a popular nightclub, a group of boozed up teens approached a female member of their group and acted in an inappropriate and sexually lewd manner. Brian and his friends asked the group to move on, which resulted in the group viciously attacking Brian and his friends. The CCTV footage of

the incident is distressing and highlights the danger of alcohol fuelled teens hanging around in groups. Brian is still in hospital. He has yet to regain conscious. A machine is keeping him alive. His parents recently made an appeal for those responsible or for witnesses willing to help to come forward. While his parents and police wait for a response, Brian continues to be fed by a tube.

We can't continue to allow good kids just out for a good time to end up like this. We need as a society to stop teenagers and young adults from abusing alcohol and then in turn abusing themselves or others. No parent should have to sit by and watch his or her son slowly die as a result of a night out.

Two things need to be done. Firstly I blame the government. The government needs to put more police on the streets and allow less booze to be abused by teenagers. Put the price of alcopops and pre mixed spirits up. Arrest kids who are drunk on the streets. Make the parents of these booze up bludgers pay a fine, because ultimately it is the fault of those parents who have allowed their kids to grow abusing alcohol and using it as an excuse to engage in anti-social behaviour. It's time we got control back and made our streets safer for all.

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