

SMASHED

EQUIPPING OUR RANGATAHI
TO MAKE SAFE DECISIONS
AROUND ALCOHOL

IMPACT AND OUTCOMES 2023

CHANGING ATTITUDES TO ALCOHOL

SMASHED is Life Education Trust's theatre-in-education programme, equipping young people to make safe decisions around alcohol.

SMASHED uses social cognitive theory, live theatre and interactive workshops to engage secondary school students (Years 9-10) in learning about peer pressure, relationships and the dangers of consuming alcohol.

"Drinking culture is very real in their families for some of our kids and so for them, to see a different perspective in a non-confrontational way, not from teachers, but from someone else... is actually really, really valuable. And actually, showing them real-life scenarios that a lot of them get into." (School leader)

Young audiences follow three characters and witness how they become involved with alcohol and how it affects their lives. Interactive workshops enable students to understand the vulnerability of the adolescent brain to substances such as alcohol, discuss strategies for managing peer pressure and making positive choices.

SMASHED extends the learning for these students that began with the Healthy Harold programme in Years 7 and 8 at primary school.

WHY ALCOHOL EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT IN AOTEAROA

New Zealand is seeing positive trends in young people's attitudes to excessive alcohol consumption.



The proportion of secondary students who have never drunk alcohol (more than a few sips) increased from 26% in 2007, to 39% in 2012, and 45% in 2019.¹

However, our binge drinking rates remain high compared to other countries and binge drinking is a key contributor to health and social harm in adolescents.



22% of secondary school students reported having five or more drinks in a session (binge drinking) within the last month.²

"Substance use is a major cause of health and social harm in adolescents (13-19 years) and is linked to the two leading causes of death in this age group: road crashes and suicide. As well as having immediate risks, substance use at an early age is a predictor of long term health and social problems including addiction issues, mental health problems and financial problems in adulthood."¹

1. The Youth 19 Rangatahi Smart Survey

2. Long-term trends in adolescent alcohol, tobacco and cannabis use and emerging substance use issues in Aotearoa New Zealand 2022

NZCER KEY FINDINGS

An independent evaluation of SMASHED by the New Zealand Council for Education Research (NZCER) was released in 2022.

Supports the health curriculum

School staff viewed SMASHED as a key support for the health curriculum, and most integrated it into classroom health learning.

We used SMASHED as reinforcement for what we are already teaching in health.

Aligns with school focus

School staff viewed SMASHED was well aligned with their health education focuses and that this presentation by an external provider acted to reinforce key information, messages and social competency strategies covered at school.

Outside presenters can be very valuable if they are presenting something that is aligned with the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes we desire for our students.

Highly engaging

Staff valued the way that SMASHED was a visual performance and therefore offered students a different form of learning, that both enhanced and supported school programmes.

It was real life examples, specific examples, that the students could relate to which made them buy in and listen from the start. The performers were interesting and dynamic and clear and fun...the kids felt like they could ask the tricky questions. So ... that was a really key part of it as well.

Provides strategies to deal with peer pressure

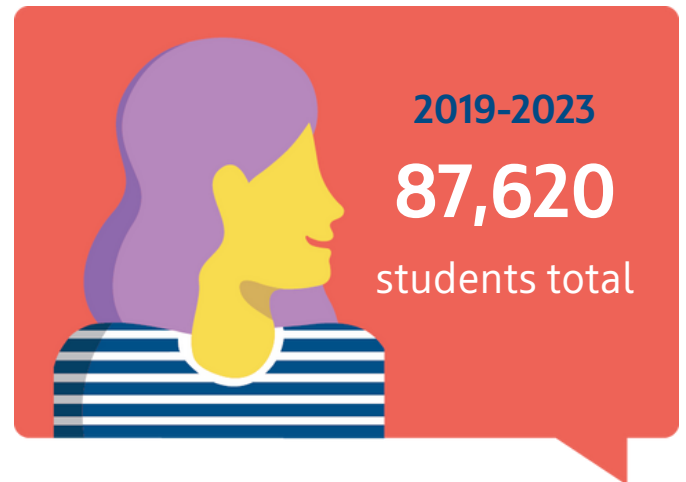
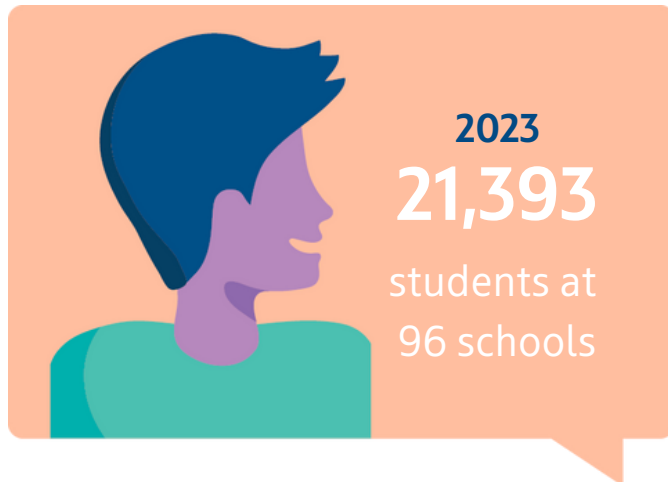
The workshop aspect of the performance was particularly valuable for students as they were able to suggest alternative social competency strategies and see them tested out by the actors.

One thing I might do differently now .. use the things I learned and stand up for myself when being peer pressured. (student)

SMASHED follows a harm minimisation approach, as recommended by the Ministry of Education*.
"It is best to approach alcohol education through health promoting messages, focusing on delaying use and reducing harm. For example: 'If you choose to drink, then drink safely.'"

*Alcohol and Other Drug Education Programmes – Guide for Schools, Ministry of Education

PROGRAMME REACH



AFTER EXPERIENCING SMASHED...

Teachers shared:

- 86%** strongly agreed or agreed the performance and workshop explored the issues and key concepts of underage drinking well.
- 75%** strongly agreed or agreed the workshop was effective in bringing out the key learning concepts of the play.
- 71%** thought that students knowledge improved after the performance, and **97%** thought it had improved after further classroom discussion.

Students shared:

The most important thing they learnt from SMASHED was...

"About how **peer pressure** can make you do things you might not want to do and that's when you need to put your foot down and tell your friends that you don't want to do it."

"Every decision you make has **consequences**, some of which will affect you for your entire life. Especially ones that aren't a good idea."

"What underage drinking can do and that you **should definitely wait till you're at least 18.**"

"That binge drinking can lead to **serious problems physically and mentally.**"

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