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## **Teenage binge drinking campaign**

NSW Minister for Health John Della Bosca, has launched a new interactive website and booklets to raise awareness among young people and their parents about the risks of binge drinking.

Mr Della Bosca said the campaign forms part of an overall strategy to promote responsible drinking and reduce the growing number of younger people abusing alcohol.

“Many young people are drinking at risky levels and at least a third put themselves in danger of alcohol-related harm,” the Minister said.

“According to NSW Health data, since 2000, the biggest increase in alcohol-related Emergency Department admissions was among 18-24 year-olds - up 130 per cent - while female admissions within that group had risen an alarming 200 per cent.

“The Garling Report into acute health services across NSW, released last week, advises that we need to focus on prevention when dealing with the health and well-being of children and young people,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“To avoid creating a new generation of binge drinkers we need to use preventative strategies such as web-based educational material and other mediums to teach younger people about the dangers of alcohol abuse.

“The new booklets - *Guides to dealing with alcohol for teenagers and parents* - will educate young people about the risks associated with binge drinking and inform parents of the significant influence they have on their children’s attitudes.

“They will be available through Area Health Services, Community Drug Action Teams who take part in community information events across NSW and youth services such as Police Community Youth Clubs,” the Minister said.

“Parents can influence their teenagers’ drinking behaviour by talking openly to their children, setting boundaries and being role models by drinking responsibly.

“By following a few simple tips and drinking less you can have a good night out,” Mr Della Bosca said.

The website - **[www.whatareyoudoingtoyourself.com](http://www.whatareyoudoingtoyourself.com)** - expands on the key messages of the booklets as well as offering an interactive educational environment with a quiz and contact details for further information.

“The resources were developed in consultation with NSW Police, National Drug and Alcohol Research Council and City of Sydney Council,” the Minister said.

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“The NSW Chief Health Officer Report shows that in 2007, 37.2 per cent of men and 27 per cent of women reported drinking alcohol at risky levels - down from 50.4 per cent and 36.3 per cent respectively a decade ago,” the Minister said.

“These trends are good news and demonstrate that we are on track to meet our reduction targets, but more still needs to be done to reduce the harm being caused by alcohol use among young people,” he added.

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