

# LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

## POLICY ON ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

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### BACKGROUND

An Equity, Access and Personal Welfare Committee working group was established to review the University's policy on alcohol and other drugs. After a University-wide consultative process, the policy was adopted by Council on 2 December 2002.

### GENERAL POLICY

*The La Trobe University Act (1964)* states that one of the objects of the University is 'to foster the general welfare and development of all enrolled students'. The University is committed to upholding the law in the area of drug and alcohol use in the State of Victoria, and is committed to the health, safety and welfare of its staff and students. This policy recognises the need for effective and consistent action, while striking a proper balance between work, study, privacy and concern for the individual. The policy should be read in the broader context of the University Occupational Health and Safety legislation and the Discipline legislation.

The University and all its members and visitors are subject to Federal and State laws concerning alcohol and drugs. Additionally Federal and State policies of harm minimisation guide the University. The two primary objectives of any policy of harm minimisation are the identification of harmful consequences for individuals, those around them; the community overall; and the implementation of strategies to minimize harm.

In an effort to meet the goals of harm minimisation, protecting the safety and health of all members of the university community, the university observes the following policies and strategies

### SPECIFIC POLICIES

1. The University buildings are smoke-free environments. Smoking will not be permitted in any enclosed area of the university.
2. Commercial areas of the university with a liquor license are required to provide appropriate training about current laws and policy to their staff.
3. Alcohol and tobacco will not be served to people to whom it is illegal (as governed by the *Liquor Control Reform Act (Vic) 1998* and the *Victorian Tobacco Act 1987*) or to those who appear intoxicated.
4. The University encourages staff and students experiencing difficulties with alcohol or drugs to access the available University community services. The University will support reasonable leave arrangements for involvement in treatment and drug rehabilitation programs, and will also provide discretionary support for staff in accordance with its usual rehabilitation, leave, employee assistance program and return to work policy where appropriate. This does not extend to financial support of treatment.
5. The University will fulfil its obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* which requires the University to provide and maintain where practicable, a safe and healthy workplace. The University may re-deploy or suspend staff or suspend students, or make other reasonable arrangements in situations where there is a reasonable belief that they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs and are a risk to themselves or others.

**STRATEGIES**

1. Information about the University's Alcohol and Other Drug policy will be included in enrolment packages for new students and annual orientation programs for new staff and deans, heads of school and area heads.
2. Counselling and referral services are available through the university counselling service and employee assistance program.
3. Information about alcohol and drug issues will be available on links through the University's internet home page.
4. There will be no alcoholic free-drinks periods conducted at licensed University premises except for special functions and occasions at the discretion of the venue authority.
5. Discount drink periods at licensed premises, or any other venue controlled or sanctioned by the University, must also include non-alcoholic beverages.
6. Any University agency/group organising functions or activities (on or off campus) are obliged to ensure that there are alternatives to alcohol, that responsible consumption of alcohol is observed, and that participants are aware that the use of illicit drugs is illegal.
7. First aid information will be provided in all rest room facilities on campus. This will also include the locality of the nearest phone.
8. Overcrowding will be actively discouraged around bar areas.
9. Signage prohibiting smoking will be posted in appropriate places.
10. There will be a needle and syringe program (NSP) similar to the secondary NSP services provided elsewhere in Victoria under the protocols of the Department of Human Services.
11. There will also be needle disposal facilities.

The University draws the attention of those organising functions or activities (on or off campus) which might reasonably be regarded as associated with the University, from field work to formal functions, that it is the obligation of the organiser to ensure there are alternatives to alcohol and that responsible consumption of alcohol is encouraged.

The University may be exposed to legal liability under the Laws of Negligence or exposed to issues of vicarious liability if reasonable precautions are not taken to avoid personal damage or loss to an individual attending such functions.

The La Trobe University Council approved the *Policy on Alcohol and Other Drugs* at its meeting on 2 December 2002.