



Substance Use & Family Violence

'Permission' Policies vs the Rights of the Child

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Recent headlines peal...

Leading lawmakers gather in Melbourne to discuss Family Violence crisis.

"It's a national disgrace, and it's time we do something about it!...There is no doubt it is getting worse. We are seeing data that high-risk family violence filed in our courts was thought to be around 38%, but it's more like 60%..."

The First Round Table of The Federal Circuit & Family Court of Australia (Source: [Daily Motion](#))

The siloing of violence from alcohol and other drug use and the often-behavioural atrocities these, if not facilitate, then intensify, appears from our watchful perspective more than a mere act of cognitive dissonance.

This now almost decade long 'culling' from the public square recording and reporting on substance use involvement in familial, child and intimate partner violence appears almost protective of pro-drug permission pursuing cohort.

The vociferous minority of drug use promoting activists agenda to liberalise greater substance use in our culture is being enabled by a failure to record and report the harms of substance use in the most vulnerable of settings. The correlation between greater and greater 'permission' models for substance use and the consequentially growing demand these models precipitates, is only adding to this crisis of family violence and neglect.

Our investigative questions are,

- Who has been deliberately obfuscating, if not burying this disturbing and growing data of substance use and family violence?
- Why aren't courts and judiciary exposing this connection?
- Why are lawmakers seemingly silent on this correlation, and causation?
- Why don't the media ask the hard questions on this?

The Commissioner for Children and Young People Victoria, among many other children's rights protection groups, have not only identified, but codified five types of unacceptable conduct that mandate reporting. These categories cover all conducts that are determined to be at odds with the health, safety, and well-being of the child or young person, up to the age of 18 years.



What type of conduct is reportable?

There are five types of 'reportable conduct':

- sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child
- any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- significant neglect of a child.¹

[The Commissioners talking about the Reportable Conduct Scheme and Types of Reportable Abuse](#)

Whilst all these conducts can be perpetrated or otherwise affected upon a child by anyone at any time, it is the use of alcohol and other drugs that can hasten, multiply, intensity and otherwise conflagrate these harms to some of our most vulnerable citizens.

This very recent and shocking story highlights this egregious issue all too painfully.

[Michigan Prosecutors Say Ethan Crumbley's Parents Exposed Him To Chaotic Home Life - CBS Detroit \(cbsnews.com\)](#)

In growing instances though it can be the initiator of anyone of the above unacceptable conducts. An otherwise reasonably engaged parent or guardian may not have stepped into these behaviours, until they used a substance, legal or illegal, and found themselves, perhaps for the first time, conducting themselves in a manner that facilitates the above harms – such is the idiosyncratic nature of substance use and its impact.

Including Children and Young People in Reportable Conduct Investigations

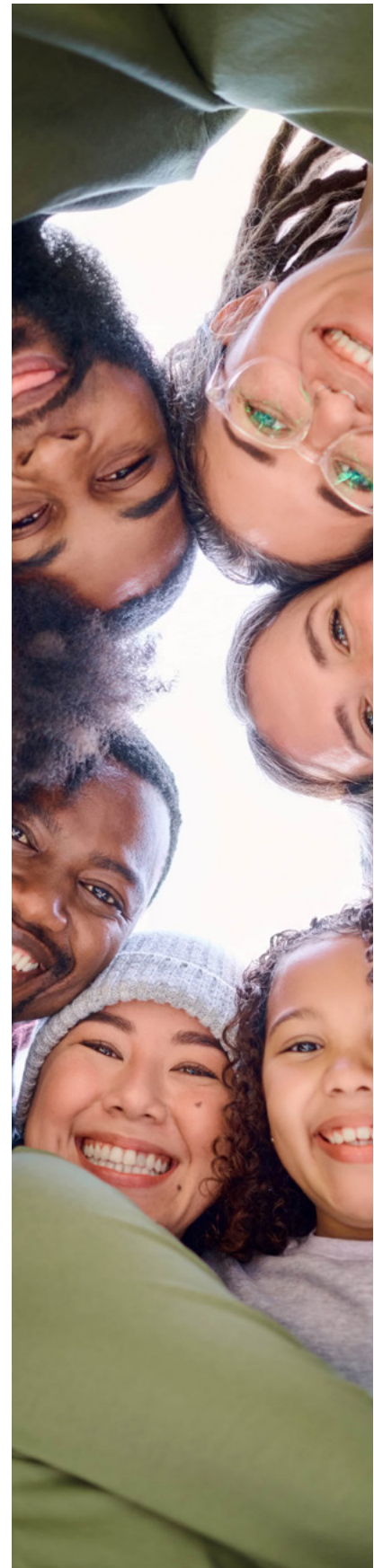
The following points are primer for understand the impact of substance abuse on the Reportable Conduct Scheme and must be an imperative consideration in not only reporting and monitoring, but vitally, preventing.

I. Understanding the Reportable Conduct Scheme:

- The Reportable Conduct Scheme oversees allegations of child abuse and misconduct within organizations.
- It requires organizations to notify authorities of alleged abuse by workers or volunteers. However, any individual who witnesses these reportable conducts can initiate a report, not least those who witness such conduct in home settings.
- [The scheme aims to improve oversight and protect children from harm¹.](#)

II. Substance Abuse and Reportable Conduct:

- The use of alcohol or other drugs by parents, workers, volunteers and anyone charged with responsibility for a child, can significantly affect not only their behaviour, but more subtly their judgment.
- When substance abuse leads to inappropriate conduct, it will fall under the category of reportable conduct. Not least the following categories.
 - Physical violence: If a worker or volunteer behaves violently due to substance use.
 - Significant neglect: Substance abuse impairing their ability to
 - care for children.
 - Behavior causing emotional harm: Substance-induced emotional distress affecting children.
- All responsible citizens of a community should be casting a protective eye on the children in their orbit, but an assiduous vigilance is required in any workplace caring for children in identifying and addressing such instances as they prioritise child safety and well-being.



III. Reporting Obligations for Organisations:

- Organisations must promptly report any allegations related to substance abuse.
- The head of the organisation has specific responsibilities under the scheme.
- Reporting ensures timely intervention and protection of children².

To give you just as a small sample of the potential scope of these harms, according to police reporting for years 2018-19 alone, there were over 1500 attended family violence incidences that had alcohol definitely or likely involved, and this was only in relation to the 0-19 age demographic – the children. This data does not include other illicit drugs which only amplifies this data.

(AOD STATS Victoria: [Family Violence](#))

IV. Preventive Measures: Organizations should,

- Educate staff: Raise awareness about substance abuse and its impact, both short and long term, including impairment issues beyond immediate consumption.
- Implement policies: Have clear guidelines on substance use during work hours and policies in impairment issues from out of hours substance use.
- Monitor behaviour: Regularly assess workers' conduct, including mandatory drug testing.
- Support and refer: Offer assistance to those struggling with substance abuse, but this must not relegate the safety of the children.
- Early intervention can prevent harm to children.



Conventions on the Rights of the Child: Article 33

States: Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as defined in the relevant international treaties, and to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances.



Drug Policy Development & Deployment

With a growing voice for greater permission for illicit substance use in some cultures and entrenched addiction for profit industries like Big Alcohol and Big Cannabis, where should the policy priorities lie?

The incessant insistence of pro-drug activists that their 'right' to substance use is liberty and privacy based, and invoking self-determination mantras in that context gives little regard for the environments the substance user may find themselves in.

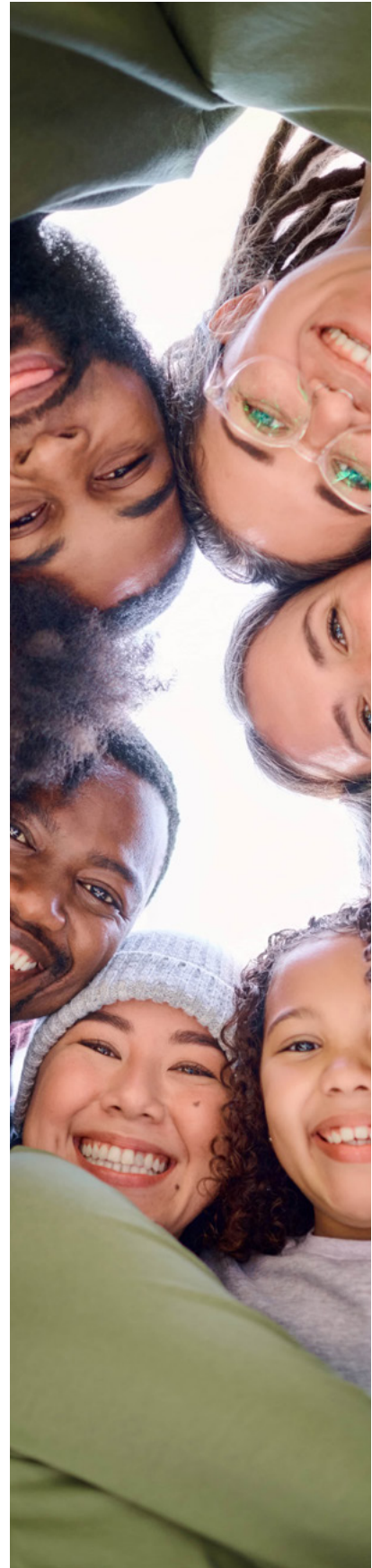
This utter egocentric and careless attitude toward others who share the community space, especially the children, is not 'amoral', it is deeply concerning. Of course, once substance use intrenches itself in dependency – functional or not – this 'carelessness' only grows and with it risk to children.

Civic, health, safety, productivity and children minded citizens don't negotiate on these duties of care, they invest in best-practice for the community sake, which is the avoidance of self-gratifying substance use.

Important further reading... [Drug Policies Contravening International Drug Conventions & Rights of the Child](#)

Also see...

- [The 'Unleashing' Of Domestic, Familial & Intimate Partner Violence – The Drug Factor.](#)
- [Cannabis & Violence](#)



References

1. [CCYP | About the Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)
2. <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/reportable-conduct-scheme/reportable-conduct-scheme-information-sheets/>



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