



Toowoomba faces the disturbing problem of under-age drinking. PICTURE SUPPLIED

Parents get advice on party plans



Lawyer Adair Donaldson

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SIX HUNDRED parents and teachers attended a presentation at St Ursula's College on Wednesday night about under-age drinking. According to a Toowoomba high school survey 65% of Year 10 students have attended an under-age drinking party. The presentation titled 'Partying' - putting parents back in the picture' was organised by 15 public and private Toowoomba high school principals.

The main speaker was Toowoomba lawyer Adair Donaldson, ex-policeman Paul Jones (hired by Mr Donaldson) and a family therapist from Brisbane, Paul Gibney. Scott McGrath from the Toowoomba Police Station was scheduled to speak, but pulled out at the Queensland Police Service's direction because film extracts in Mr Donaldson's presentation had not been viewed by relevant personnel.

Mr Donaldson's presentation covered Queensland Police Service safe partying guidelines and how to deal with alcohol, amphetamine and marijuana use at parties.

"My biggest concern is that 13 to 14-year-olds in this city are getting pissed and parents turn up



Some of the group of six hundred concerned parents and teachers at the safe partying presentation at St Ursula's College on Wednesday.

PICTURE: KEVIN FARMER

with their children and alcohol at parties," Mr Donaldson said.

"You don't have to have an acquired taste to drink alcohol anymore. If you can drink a soft drink, you can drink alcohol."

This theory was proven on Wednesday night when the principal of Fairholme College, Stan Klan, was unable to distinguish between the soft drink 'V' and Smirnoff Ice during a taste-test.

Mr Donaldson described drinks such as Smirnoff Ice and Vodka Cruisers as most dangerous to teenage girls. A 250ml can of Smirnoff Ice contains 7% alcohol and equates to 1.4 standard drinks, yet a stubby of beer is 375ml, contains 3% alcohol and equates to just one standard drink.

"Imagine young girls turning up at parties with a four-pack of these (Smirnoff Ice) which they'll drink in an hour," he said.

After outlining the danger of excessive alcohol consumption, Mr Donaldson advised parents on how to best plan a party by referring parents to the Queensland Police Service's Party-safe Program.

Principal of St Ursula's College,

SAFE PARTYSING TIPS

QUEENSLAND Police Service tips for sending your child to a safe party:

- Speak with the party host to find out whether alcohol is available and how many people will attend.
- Get the phone number of the party host and the house where the party is held.
- Drop your child off at the party venue and arrange a time to pick them up.
- Talk to your child about how to have a good time at a party without coming to any harm.

"Parties are becoming something that students are having in Grade 8 and parents are encouraged by their children to have large parties and invite heaps of friends from a wide area. It's something a lot of parents have to contend with," Ms Pawsey said.

Mr Donaldson said that he conducted the presentation not pushing a moral agenda, but to ensure the safety of Toowoomba's youth.

“My biggest concern is that 13 to 14-year-olds in this city are getting pissed and parents turn up with their children and alcohol at parties.”

— Adair Donaldson