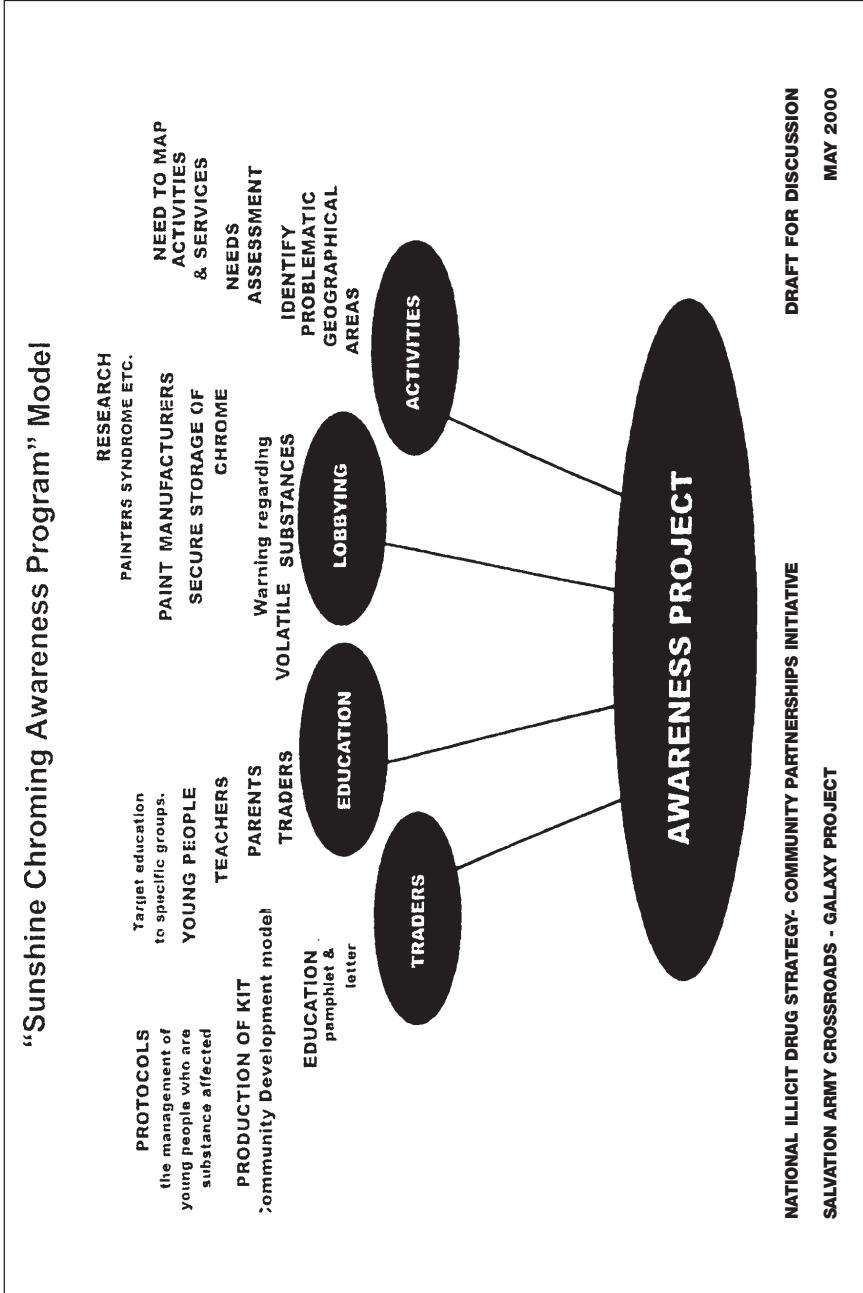
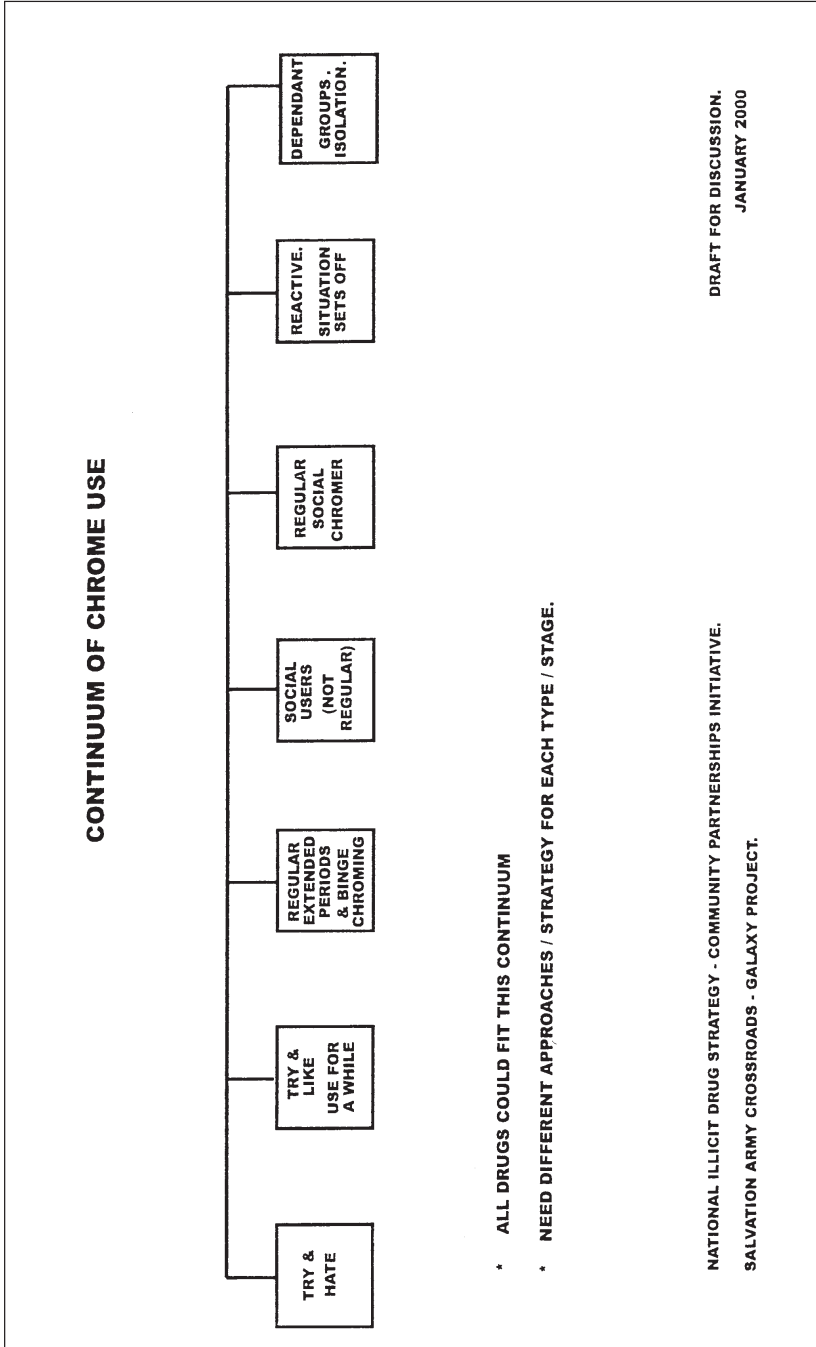


# Appendix 4a – Sunshine Chroming Awareness Program Schematic Model



# Appendix 4b – Sunshine Chroming Awareness Program Continuum of Chrome Use Model



# Appendix 5a – Western Australian Voluntary Code of Practice for Retailers – Availability of materials used for solvent abuse<sup>189</sup>

## SOLVENTS

*There are numerous commercially available products containing potentially intoxicating inhalable solvents and aerosols. They are found in everyday products and as propellants in aerosols. Solvents and aerosols belong to a group of substances known as 'inhalants' because of the manner in which they are used. Other substances in this group include nitrites (amyl and butyl nitrite). Solvents and aerosols are described as 'volatile substances' because they are gases or give off fumes at room temperature.*

### Who uses solvents

Research indicates that individual solvent use is generally an experimental or temporal phenomena among some young people between the ages of 12 to 18 years. Solvent use also appears to be some geographical areas, groups of individuals, while others use as a passing phase, but used on a continuous basis. Overall, individuals who do inhale solvents generally try it for a limited period and then discontinue.


It has been known for adults to use and/or purchase supplies for younger users.

### Effects of Solvent Intoxication

The effects of solvents are similar to alcohol (although they come on and wear off faster). As with alcohol these effects depend on:

- The drug itself (amount, strength, and the way it is taken).
- The characteristics of the person (health, personality, mood, expectations, previous experience with the drug).
- The occasion on which the drug is taken (alone, with friends, while using other drugs, driving etc)

**Requests for plastic bags at the same time as the purchase of solvent-based products should raise your suspicions immediately**



**DRUG AWARE**

## AVAILABILITY OF MATERIALS USED FOR SOLVENT ABUSE

### VOLUNTARY CODE OF PRACTICE FOR RETAILERS

Retailers can provide a great service to their communities by limiting the opportunities for materials to be obtained for the purpose of solvent abuse.

The code refers particularly to all solvents, glues, butane and other aerosols.

The code encourages retailers to take reasonable steps to limit the likelihood of these materials being obtained for solvent abuse by such actions as is appropriate to their circumstances, which may include any of the following:

- Displaying these materials in sight of shop staff, near tills, on high shelves, under the counter, or in locked display cabinets
- Use of dummy containers for display purposes
- Avoiding sale of products to children unless accompanied by adults
- Identification of the purpose of use of large quantities of product
- Display of signs indicating your right to refuse sales
- Politely refusing sale of these substances to those you suspect of being a solvent abuser

*This code of conduct has been developed by the government of Western Australia in partnership with community organisations, recognising the contribution of retailers in the effort of Western Australians to control drug abuse.*

189 The Committee would like to acknowledge the Western Australian Drug Strategy Office, Western Australia Police Service and the North East Midland Community Drug Service Team for their kind permission to reproduce this Code of Practice.

# Guidelines to Retailers

## Q1. Is it illegal to sell solvents?

A. At this stage there is no law against selling, buying or possessing solvent products in Western Australia. This is because many solvents have a legitimate use (i.e. petrol, glues, paint thinners, paint etc.) which makes them difficult to restrict to any member of the community.

## Q2. As a retailer do I have a responsibility to not sell solvents to an individual whom I believe may be using them for purposes other than their intended use?

A. Yes. Retailers and their staff are called upon to develop a moral and responsible approach to the sale of volatile substances. If the retailer and/or staff have reasons to believe that a particular compound is likely to cause harm or be used for the purpose of intoxication, then the decision not to sell should be supported.

## Q3. Is there any legislation that states that a shop owner has to sell solvents to customers?

A. No. Retailers are often concerned that if they do not sell particular products that they will be taken to court for discrimination or such like. There has not been any recorded case of this happening. However, a retailer has the right to withdraw a particular item from sale if they so choose.

## Q4. Do retailers have the right to evict any individual from the store?

A. Yes. The store manager has the right to ask any individual to leave the store. Particularly if an individual appears to be demonstrating unusual behaviour and/or has been known to steal from the shop in the past.

## Q5. Should I display a sign indicating that solvent products will not be sold to any person under suspicious circumstances?

A. Yes. A sign can state "We reserve the right to refuse the sale of certain harmful substances if we believe they are going to be used in a way other than the purpose for which they were intended".

## Immediate effects

Inhalation leads to a feeling of excitement. This intoxicating effect only lasts for a short time, usually less than an hour. Intoxication is similar to that of alcohol and may include:

- Erratic behaviour, unsteady gait, slurred speech, sensitivity to light, sneezing, coughing, impaired judgement, nausea and vomiting.
- Impression of body functions like breathing and heart rate.
- Feelings of relaxation.
- These effects are often followed by drowsiness. Repeated inhalation over a period of minutes or hours may lead to disorientation, loss of control, fits and unconsciousness.
- Afterwards the user may experience a mild hangover (headaches and poor concentration).

## Long term effects

Some studies have linked the heavy use of certain solvents and aerosols to liver, kidney and nerve damage. Temporary and permanent interference with brain functions has been reported, although permanent cases of brain damage are rare.

## Identifying the user

- Be aware of individuals standing around counters in stores or areas where aerosols or other solvent based products are displayed
- If you are worried or suspicious **Call the Police**
- Be aware of frequent purchases of solvent-based products and aerosols by the same individual
- Traces or smell of solvent on a person's clothes, or
- Other indications of solvent or substance use are red eyes, heightened colouring, reddening spots around the mouth and nose, uncontrolled excessive giggling and rowdy or silly behaviour

Produced by Northeast Metropolitan Community Drug Service Team (Holyoake), The Australian Institute on Alcohol and Addictions



The inhaled solvents are rapidly absorbed through the lungs and quickly distributed to the brain and other organs. The effects therefore appear within minutes of inhalation and may last for 15 to 45 minutes. The user will feel drowsy for a period of 2 hours and suffer no more than a headache.

St John's Ambulance suggest using the DR-ABC method:

- D** = Danger to self and others, remove plastic bag from face, check for other young people with the victim.
- R** = Response call out to the person or gently shake to assess consciousness.
- A** = Airways check airways are not obstructed
- = Breathing check person is breathing
- C** = Circulation feel for a pulse

***If a person is drowsy or unconscious:***

- Lay them on their side and make sure always are clear
- Make sure they are breathing fresh air
- Call an Ambulance if the person is unconscious, it is better to be safe than sorry
- If they stop breathing commence CPR immediately and continue to help arrives

***If the person is conscious:***

- Keep them calm and relaxed until they have completely sobered up
- Don't try to talk to them about their sniffing problems
- Don't chase them or get them stressed, this may lead to them having a cardiac arrest
- The important thing is for you to stay calm

**Q6. Should shop assistants be trained in how to deal with incidents?**

- A. Training of all staff members is an important part of addressing the issues of solvent use and the stealing of products from your shop. Each staff member should be given training in how to recognise and communicate with individuals who they suspect are solvent users. Each staff member must know their rights and responsibilities in the sale of solvent products. Situations that arise are best handled calmly and without fuss.

**Q7. What should I do if an individual becomes threatening?**

- A. Call the police. Retailers and staff should not put themselves in danger trying to prevent the sale or stealing of volatile substances from the shop. If an individual becomes agitated or angry do not engage him/her in an argument, call the police first and then call the manager.

**Q8. What products are being used to sniff?**

- A. It is difficult for retailers to keep track of the entire range of solvents used. It is more important for retailers to keep the whole shop or property safe rather than particular items.

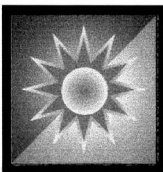
**Q9. How do you recognise a solvent user?**

- A. Sometimes it is not easy to distinguish solvent users from other genuine customers. This makes it difficult for retailers to know if an individual wants a particular solvent product for legitimate purposes or for sniffing.

**Q10. What are some clues in identifying a possible solvent user in the store?**

- A. Watch out for groups of young people standing around counters or areas where solvents are displayed. Frequent purchase of solvents by the same individual. An obvious indicator of solvent use is the strong chemical smell on the users breath or clothing as well as a drowsy, vacant or glazed expression in the eyes. Requests for plastic bags at the same time as solvent-based products should raise your suspicions.

# Appendix 5b – Sunshine Chroming Awareness Program Traders’ Resource Kit



## **TRADERS RESOURCE KIT** to address solvent use in the Sunshine shopping area.

*Developed by the*  
Sunshine Chroming Awareness Group  
Salvation Army Crossroads  
Galaxy Project

*Funded by the:*  
Commonwealth Government's National  
Illicit Drug Strategy Community  
Partnerships Program.

*Information drawn from the:*  
Retailers Acting Against solvent Abuse.  
Resource Kit funded by the:  
Western Australian Drug Abuse Strategy Office.

## **SUNSHINE CHROMING AWARENESS GROUP**

The Sunshine Chroming Awareness Group was formed in November 1999, and includes representatives from:

- \* Sunshine Police (Youth Liaison Officer)
- \* Sunshine Youth Housing
- \* Sunshine Traders Association
- \* Salvation Army Westcare Alcohol and Drug Consultant
- \* Good Shepherd Youth & Family Services
- \* Westcare Residential Units
- \* Youth Outreach Team (Alcohol & Other Drug Program)
- \* IMYOS – MHSKY
- \* Rotary Club
- \* Department of Education Employment & Training
- \* Brimbank City Council
- \* ESCOR – Smorgon family.

The group is coordinated by the Galaxy Project Worker in conjunction with Westcare.

The group has met regularly during 2000, and has spent time discussing the issue of chroming and developing ways to tackle the problem. This is one of the initiatives decided on by the group.

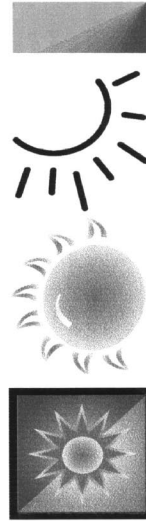
### **AIM**

- \* to form a group with representatives from local community agencies and traders to develop an action strategy / pilot program to address chroming issues in the Sunshine Shopping areas.
- \* Document a best practice model for other communities to use when dealing with chroming and other commonly misused substances in their local areas.

## BENEFITS FOR RETAILERS IN MANAGING THE SALE OF SOLVENTS

- \* Reduced theft of solvents
- \* Deter intoxicated individuals from entering your store.
- \* Improve staff safety in the management of the sale of solvents.
- \* Improve compliance with occupational health and safety requirements.
- \* Customers do not feel threatened in the store.
- \* Positive public view of store as being community minded and socially responsible.

## A RESPONSIBLE AND ETHICAL APPROACH TO REDUCING DRUG RELATED HARM IN THE COMMUNITY.



## WHAT CAN RETAILERS DO?

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF ACTIONS THE RETAILER CAN TAKE TO DETER POTENTIAL USERS FROM VIEWING THE SHOP AS A PLACE TO OBTAIN THE PRODUCTS THEY WANT.

RETAILERS CAN DEVELOP A VOLUNTARY CODE OF PRACTICE.

By developing a voluntary code of practice retailers can provide a service to their communities by limiting the opportunities for materials to be obtained for the purpose of solvent abuse. The code refers particularly to all solvents, glues, butane and other aerosols, particularly chrome paint.

The code encourages retailers to take reasonable steps to limit the likelihood of these materials being obtained for solvent abuse by such actions as appropriate to their circumstances, which may include any of the following.

- \* Identifying sensitive products in your store is the first important step.
- \* Educate and train yourself and your staff about solvent use, safety and management precautions.
- \* Keep local emergency numbers near the phone and / or programmed into the phone, and call from a visible point in the store.
- \* Displaying these materials in sight of shop staff, near tills, on high shelves, under the counter, or in locked display cabinets.
- \* Avoiding sale of products to children unless accompanied by adults.
- \* Identification of the purpose of frequent or large sales of product.
- \* Display of signs indicating your right to refuse sales.
- \* Politely refusing sale of these substances to those you suspect of being a solvent abuser.
- \* Undertake a signage program highlighting the fact that these products will not be sold to minors (under 18)
- \* Network with retailers on a regular basis to keep informed about solvent users and the products they are seeking.

## SOLVENTS

There are numerous commercially available products containing potentially intoxicating inhalable solvents and aerosols. They are found in everyday products and as propellants in aerosols. Solvents and aerosols belong to a group of substances known as 'inhalants' because of the manner in which they are used. Other substances in this group include nitrites (amyl & butyl nitrite). Solvents and aerosols are described as 'volatile substances' because they are gases or give off fumes at room temperature.

### WHO USES SOLVENTS

Research indicates that individual solvent use is generally an experimental or temporary phenomena among some young people aged 7 - 18 years. There are three broad categories of young people who sniff chrome, glue or other solvents:

1. **The experimenter**  
The majority of young people fall into this category. They try it once or twice then stop by themselves.
2. **Social user**  
Usually done with a group of friends. The amount of using varies, depending on what else is going on in their lives.
3. **The long term / dependent user**  
A small number of people go on to use on a regular basis over a long time. These users usually have other major problems in their lives. They may sniff alone or with other people who use regularly.



## CHROMING

**Chroming means sniffing chrome based paint. Most users do this by spraying the paint from an aerosol can into a plastic bag then putting their face or entire head into the bag to inhale the vapors.**

### IMMEDIATE EFFECTS

- \* Erratic behavior, unsteady gait, slurred speech, sensitivity to light, sneezing, coughing, impaired judgement, nausea and vomiting.
- \* Unpleasant breath - after inhaling inhalants people often have the smell of the product on their breath.
- \* Nosebleeds and sores - Inhalants may also cause nosebleeds, bloodshot eyes and sores around the mouth and nose.
- \* Reckless behaviours - sometimes people do reckless or dangerous things after inhalants. This can cause serious accidents.
- \* Depression of body functions such as breathing and heart rate.
- \* Feelings of relaxation.
- \* These effects are usually followed by drowsiness. Repeated inhalation over a period of minutes or hours may lead to disorientation, loss of control, fits and unconsciousness.
- \* Afterwards the user may experience a hangover.

### LONG TERM EFFECTS

- \* Some studies have linked the heavy use of chrome and other certain solvents to liver, kidney and nerve damage.
- \* Temporary and permanent interference with brain functions has been reported, although permanent cases of brain damage are rare.
- \* A small number of people have died from using inhalants, and the associated behaviours that place them at high risk.



**GUIDELINES TO RETAILERS**

**1. Is it illegal to sell solvents?**

At this stage there is no law against selling, buying or possessing solvent products in Australia. This is because many solvents have a legitimate use (i.e. petrol, glues, paint thinner, paint etc.) which them difficult to restrict to any member of the community.

**2. As a retailer do I have responsibility to not sell solvents to an individual whom I believe may be using them for purposes other than their intended use?**

Yes. Retailers and their staff are called upon to develop a moral and responsible approach to the sale of volatile substances. If the retailer and /or staff have reasons to believe that a particular compound is likely to cause harm or to be used for the purpose of intoxication, then the decision not to sell should be supported.

**3. Is there any legislation that states that a shop owner has to sell solvents to customers?**

No. Retailers are often concerned that if they do not sell particular products that they will be taken to court for discrimination or such. There has not been any recorded case of this happening. However, a retailer has the right to withdraw a particular item from sale if they so choose.

**4. Do retailers have the right to evict any individual from the store?**

Yes. The store manager has the right to ask any individual to leave the store. Particularly if an individual appears to be demonstrating unusual behaviour and / or has been known to cause problems or steal from the shop in the past.

**5. Should I display a sign indicating that solvent products will not be sold to any person under suspicious circumstances?**

Yes. A sign can state "We reserve the right to refuse the sale of certain harmful substances if we believe they are going to be used in a way other than the purpose for which they were intended.

**GUIDELINES TO RETAILERS.**

**6. Should shop assistants be trained in how to deal with incidents?**

Training of all staff members is an important part of addressing the issues of solvent abuse and the stealing of these products. Each staff member should receive training in how to recognise and communicate with individuals who they suspect are solvent abusers. Each staff member should also receive training in their rights and responsibilities regarding the sale of solvents. Situations are best handled calmly and without fuss.

**7. What products are being used to sniff?**

It is difficult for retailers to keep track of the entire range of solvents used. It is important for retailers to keep the whole shop or property safe rather than particular items.

**8. What are some clues in identifying a possible solvent abuser in the store?**

Watch out for individual or groups of young people standing around counters or areas where solvents are displayed.

Frequent purchase of solvents by the same individual.

An obvious indicator of solvent use is the strong chemical smell on the users breath or clothing as well as a drowsy, vacant or glazed expression in their eyes.

Requests for plastic bags at the same time as solvent based products should raise your suspicions.

**9. What should I do if an individual becomes threatening?**

**Call the Police.** Retailers and staff should not put themselves or customers in danger trying to prevent the sale or stealing of volatile substances from the shop. If an individual becomes agitated or angry, do not engage him / her in an argument, call the police first and then call the manager, or follow individual store protocols.

## WHAT TO DO IN A CRISIS:

**if someone has an adverse reaction while using inhalants it is very important that they receive professional help as soon as possible. Quick responses can save lives.**

- \* Immediately remove the plastic bag if one has been used.
- \* Call an ambulance. Dial 000. Don't delay.
- \* Stay with the person until the ambulance arrives. Ask for the nearest person in the shop, or at the scene who knows mouth to mouth resuscitation or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- \* Ensure adequate air by keeping the crowds back and opening windows where possible. Loosen tight clothing.
- \* If the person is unconscious, don't leave them on their back - they could choke. Turn them on their side and into the recovery position. Gently tilt their head back so their tongue does not block the airway.
- \* If breathing has stopped, give mouth to mouth resuscitation if there is no pulse, apply CPR.
- \* Provide the ambulance officers with as much information as you can - what inhalants were taken, how long ago, other medical conditions if known.

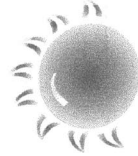
This information is taken from the Australian Drug Foundation pamphlet - Inhalants - How Drugs Affect You, and is a guide only.

You must seek professional medical assistance immediately if someone has had an adverse reaction whilst abusing inhalants.



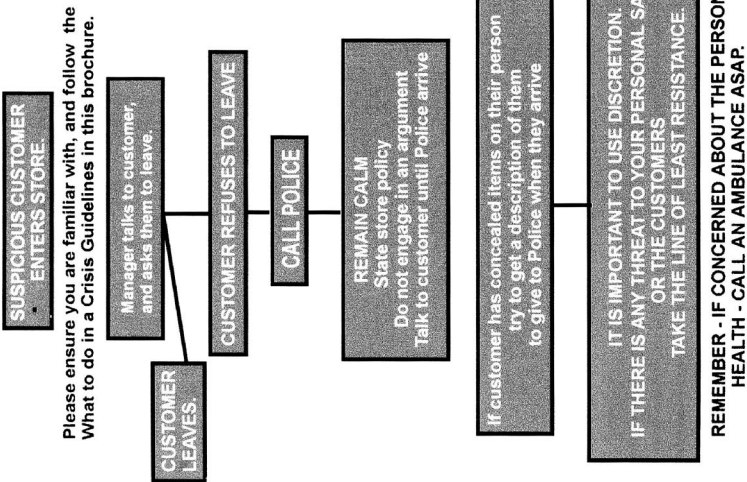
THE SUNSHINE CHROMING AWARENESS GROUP AND COMMUNITY THANK THOSE RETAILERS WHO HAVE ALREADY RESPONDED

- \* **BUNNINGS WAREHOUSE - SUNSHINE**
- \* **SAFEWAY**
- \* **BIG W**
- \* **REJECT SHOP**



### RETAILERS FLOW CHART

Suggested procedure for dealing with problem customers



### CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

#### TRAINING OR ASSISTANCE

Sunshine Chroming Awareness Group.

- \* Salvation Army Crossroads Galaxy Project Coordinator - Lyn O'Grady (03) 9372 1877
- \* Salvation Army Westcare ICMS Alcohol & Other Drug Consultant - Steve Marchese (03) 9312 3544
- \* Youth Outreach Team - YOT. (Alcohol & Other Drug Program) Western Hospital - (03) 9317 2217
- \* Salvation Army Westcare Glenys Bristow (03) 9311 5261 Mobile: 0407 811 331.

For contact details for other Awareness Group members please contact the above.

---



---



---

# Chroming alert

CHROMING in Swan Hill was an across the board problem for the city's young teenagers, according to drug and alcohol worker Al Milton.

Working from the Swan Hill and District Aboriginal Co-operative, Mr Milton said chroming, inhaling products such as paint to get high, was a cross-cultural practice.

Mr Milton was responding to the announcement by

## Solvent abuse is highlighted

the State Government last week of an inquiry into chroming.

The Melbourne media reported that Swan Hill had a particular problem with chroming, and that paint had become "the drug of

choice among isolated and marginalised children, often Aboriginal".

"It's a problem here, but it's far from chronic," Mr Milton said.

It was mainly done by teenagers who were

experimenting with different drugs, he said. He said teenagers from years seven to nine in school were the ones most often inhaling.

"That's when you become experimental and want to become part of a peer group."

He said the dangers of chroming included brain damage and death, and the effect it had on the central nervous system was irreversible.

Mr Milton said chroming was a bigger problem in the western suburbs of

Melbourne, where he used to work, than here.

Because Swan Hill was a smaller city the problem was more visible, and became highlighted, he said.

Swan Hill District Hospital executive officer of clinical services Kathy Wright said the casualty department saw one or two cases resulting from chroming in a six month period.

"It is happening ... but it hasn't translated into appearances in Emergency," she said.

From the few cases the hospital does see, Mrs Wright said, "It is not something that is confined to the young Aboriginal population".

"Certainly that was the tone of The Age article, but our experience hasn't been that," she said.

Mr Milton held a forum on the issue last month and is currently producing an education strategy on the matter, in consultation with health providers.

More reports— Page 3

*The Guardian (Swan Hill)* 21 May 2001, p. 1.

# Teens having fun

From — Page 1

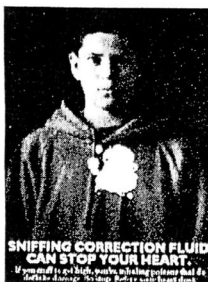
With the help of local health officials, we have constructed the life of our fictitious Billy to illustrate how simply youth can fall into a pattern of abuse, an abuse which is eating out their brains.

Billy habitually skips a class after lunch.

He is neither black nor white, nor male or female — he can be any of these.

Billy meets up with friends who hide themselves from the public gaze.

Together they have discovered a cheap euphoria through abuse of readily-available solvents.



Warning poster

Billy starves his brain cells of oxygen and causes

irreversible damage.

He may feel less inhibited, excited, or drowsy.

Billy might also experience flu-like symptoms, sickness, nosebleeds and sores.

Up to an hour later the effect has worn off.

He goes home, straight to his room.

Billy changes his clothes, maybe sprays some deodorant around.

His parents notice he is sniffing.

He doesn't do it every day.

If Billy keeps doing it, the brain damage he is causing will increase.

He could burst blood vessels in his eyes, making

them completely red, and eventually leading to blindness.

If he is stealing, it's likely he will get into trouble with the law at an early age.

He is not addicted, he just wants to fit in, or likes the buzz, or has nothing better to do.

Billy is in trouble.

There are a number of people who can help him, or help his parents.

The druginfo line is a free-call, 1800 136 385, so is Youth Substance Abuse Service, 1800 014 446.

Locally, there is Koorie Community Alcohol and Drug Worker Al Mitton 5032 2265.

## Billy likes fun

BILLY is in his early teens.

Like his mates, he likes fun, he likes pushing the boundaries "just to see what would happen".

In fact, Billy is probably not much different from his parents who snuck a fag behind the shelter shed when they were his age, or a quiet nip of an uncle's forgotten beer glass.

But today Billy has ready access to some of the most poisonous toxins man has produced.

Tell him, it'll kill him, he'll want to test it for himself just to make sure those domineering adults don't want to share a tasty secret.

Continued — Page 3

## Drug experiments

CHROME paint is "burning the brains" of Swan Hill's Koorie children who are choosing to experiment with drugs, according to local police.

A spokesman from the Swan Hill police station said police continue to see alcohol and drug abuse within the local Aboriginal community as a problem.

Children as young as 10 are experimenting with "chroming", sniffing chrome paint, under the Swan Hill bridge and at local parks.

A ring of paint left on their face, lethargy and disorientation are some of the tell tale signs of the dangerous past time.

The police officer said reports of chroming had been "fairly quiet of late".

"I dare say it is happening but the police haven't had direct involvement." Because buying and smelling paint is not an offence there is little local police can do to stop chroming.

"We have fought long and hard

against it," the spokesman said.

"Traders have recently been requested to store paint more securely and only supply on demand."

While substance sniffing and marijuana were the drugs of choice for the young, heroin and amphetamines were seen as a problem for adults.

Poor role models were blamed for the continuing problem.

"It is a lack of supervision and role models"

"Nine out of ten of the children 'chroming' see their parents smoking marijuana or something harder," he said.

He agreed more Koori children were "chroming" compared with non-indigenous children.

Referring to recent reports in the media of sexual abuse police said they could not gauge the problem because it was common for the Aboriginal community to keep cases of abuse to themselves.

**Chroming concerns**

SIR,

I am extremely concerned at the misrepresentation in the article "Chroming Alert" in *The Guardian* on Monday, May 21, 2001.

My concern is the angle your paper has taken in regards to "glorifying" this very sensitive and dangerous practice.

I have been endeavoring to adopt a uniform approach to dealing with this matter, by adopting 'harm minimisation' strategies.

Your paper has omitted the majority of my conversation with the reporter. There are several quotes, which made up a combination of my conversation.

I have never mentioned 'inhalants' as a drug, they are as labelled, a 'poison'.

I went to great lengths in explaining the misuse of Volatile Substances, the educational objectives and the 'goats' of media reporting. I have given your paper a copy of the "Australian Drug Foundation" guide to inhalants as a reference. You have even gone against the National Guide Lines for Drugs.

Your paper has no regard for the victims of this behavior and the young community of this area.

The practice of Volatile Substance Abuse is extremely dangerous and does irreversible damage to the body.

To quote "it is the drug of choice" and "inhaling products to get high" is morally wrong and shows no regard for the community.

To edit a "Health Related" article provided by a national organisation in regards to "life threatening behavior" is extremely senseless and shows a total ignorance of the matter.

Al Mitton,  
Swan Hill and District Aboriginal Co-Operative,  
SWAN HILL.

(Editor's note: We believe Mr Mitton's concerns are completely unfounded. Any reader

of our stories on Monday and last Friday's editorial will note our careful and cautionary approach to this sensitive issue. We did not identify Swan Hill as a chroming "hotspot" as other media have done, we have sought to alert parents that this horrifying abuse is not widespread locally, but is happening and we should be aware of it. We defend our right to alert parents to social and health issues which some professionals would prefer were swept under the carpet.)

*The Guardian* (Swan Hill) 23 May 2001.

# Appendix 7 – Chroming story, The Wimmera Mail Times

THE WIMMERA

# Mail-Times

MONDAY AUGUST 27 2001 VICTORIAN COUNTRY PRESS NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 90c (inc GST)



## Suicides spark city chroming warning

AN Aboriginal community justice worker has sounded an urgent warning about 'chroming' after linking the sniffing of inhalants to four suicides in Horsham this year.

Horsham-based Mary Moore said the potentially lethal practice of chroming — the inhaling of volatile substances including paint, petrol and glue — was becoming commonplace among Horsham's 15 to 25-year olds.

She told the Mail-Times that chroming was responsible for four suicides and an attempted suicide in the Wimmera capital in less than eight months.

And she issued an urgent plea for Horsham retailers to help address the problem by keeping a close check on items including spray paints and plastic bags.

Wimmera crime prevention officer Senior Constable Laurie Thomas supports her call for retailer vigilance and confirms that chroming is a problem among young people in the region and across Victoria.

Both Sen Const Thomas and Mrs Moore believe retailers must be aware of potential liability if someone injures or kills themselves by 'chroming'.

Mrs Moore said young people did not understand the lethal repercussions of using such potent substances.

She said chroming was an issue in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

"It's incredibly addictive. The fumes and toxins get into the brain making the users think they are able to fly," she said.

"I've come across people who have claimed they can fly and have tried to jump off roofs and walk in front of cars. This delirious state of mind gives

By JENNY SHAND and JANE MINTERN

users the unintentional ability to kill themselves."

Sen Const Thomas said police were concerned about spray products' availability and appreciated retailers' assistance in distributing products responsibly.

"But people should also be aware of the vicarious liability. It could be a matter of time before someone supplying these products to young people who hurt themselves are held responsible financially," he said.

"We advise retailers to put spray paint products out of

**'It's incredibly addictive'**  
Mary Moore

reach and behind sales counters to assist in preventing harm being done to young people. This would also assist in prevention of products being stolen."

Mrs Moore believes retailers must be aware of lost stock because they might be found liable if death or injury occurs by people using their products for chroming.

The Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981 states that a person shall not sell a deleterious substance to another person if they know or believe the customer intends to drink, inhale, administer or otherwise introduce it into his body.

Deleterious substances include glue and volatile products

derived from petroleum, paint thinner and aerosol propellant. People found guilty of contravening the law face possible fines and jail.

Mrs Moore said young people had 'stolen products' for chroming from Horsham businesses for many years.

"They find it easy to steal products from Horsham businesses because there is limited surveillance. Retailers don't fuss about can missing here and there, they don't realise it could be someone's life," she said.

Mrs Moore urged retailers to put surveillance systems in their stores, move paint products behind counters and keep a close watch on plastic bags in fruit and vegetable departments in supermarkets.

She asked retailers to be aware of potential chromers, saying the majority of users were unemployed.

"We need to crack down on this situation before it gets out of hand," Mrs Moore said.

She said symptoms retailers might notice among chromers included red eyes, facial abrasions and the smell of paint. Parents could watch for signs including red eyes, blood noses, confusion, poor concentration, insomnia and nightmares.

Horsham police first spoke out about the growing problem two years ago after the dangerous practice while not large scale, increased substantially in 12 months.

Police said at the time that youths sniffing inhalants risked death or brain damage, with users unable to control the 'dose' or its effects.