



MEDIA RELEASE - 17 June 2019

DrinkWise education sessions kick off with Gold Coast Titans

DrinkWise and the NRL have kicked off their alcohol education program with the Gold Coast Titans today.

The Titans are the first NRL club to undertake the DrinkWise education session, which is specifically designed to educate up to 4000 players across the nation, as well as NRL club officials and fans about the importance of drinking in moderation.

Simon Strahan, CEO of DrinkWise said: "The aim of our new education program is to promote responsible attitudes and behaviour towards alcohol consumption."

"We see a real opportunity within the NRL to ensure the moderation message is visible and promoted to clubs, players and fans," Mr Strahan said. "The Gold Coast Titans have shown great leadership by actively supporting this inclusive DrinkWise program at their club."

"NRL players are often in the spotlight and held up as role models. Through education, the aim is for everyone to make better decisions, to celebrate and enjoy the game for what happens on the field, rather than being distracted by what can happen outside of the game."

DrinkWise research indicates that the Australian drinking culture is changing, with more Australians reporting that they are reducing their alcohol intake to improve their health. In 2017, 63 per cent of drinkers typically consume alcohol at moderate levels compared to 48 per cent in 2007.

DrinkWise is committed to driving behavioural change around alcohol consumption, which was a key factor that led to the NRL partnership and their support of the DrinkWise moderation message.

Beyond the NRL partnership, DrinkWise is also working with Gold Coast Titans Head of Performance and Culture, Mal Meninga, to more broadly promote the DrinkWise moderation message.

"The Gold Coast Titans are dedicated to the pursuit of excellence and sustainable success as a professional rugby league club," said Titans CEO Steve Mitchell.

"A major part of that is being aware of the responsibilities that come with our position as representatives and ambassadors for the people of the Gold Coast and rugby league itself."

"We are committed to making sure all Titans' players, staff and the leadership team understand the expectations we have set as a club."

"A major part of that is ensuring that we make positive decisions rather than poor choices. So we are proud to be the first club to undertake the DrinkWise education program to educate our players, officials and fans about the importance of drinking in moderation."

"Partnering with DrinkWise allows us to reinforce the drink in moderation message with individuals and groups we come into contact with to help make a positive difference to their lives."

Mal Meninga played an integral role in organising the first DrinkWise session and was among the speakers at the education session.

DrinkWise.

“As a former player, and now coach and administrator, I have seen many situations in professional sport – not just rugby league – where promising careers have been derailed by individuals making poor choices,” Mr Meninga said.

“I think the modern professional athlete, like people in wider society, now understand that you don’t need to drink to have a good time with your mates, and certainly drinking to excess is seen as anti-social behaviour.

“The important message from the DrinkWise education sessions is that, if you do choose to drink, maintaining control of your actions by drinking in moderation will ensure you do not lose sight of your responsibilities to the people that depend on you – like your teammates and loved ones.

“One poor choice can have long-lasting effects on an individual, their future, and the people around them.

“This is an important message that needs support from everyone in our sport, so we can use the power and influence of rugby league to lead the way in our attitudes towards alcohol and set a positive example for the wider community that look to the game’s players as role models.”

In addition to the education sessions, the DrinkWise partnership with the NRL also includes an advisory role where a senior DrinkWise official will sit on one of the NRL’s Wellbeing and Education advisory groups specifically focused on drug, alcohol and gambling issues.

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ABOUT DRINKWISE

DrinkWise is an evidence-based social change organisation dedicated to changing the Australian drinking culture to one that is safer and healthier. We do this through national education campaigns, partnerships with community leaders and organisations, and the development of practical strategies and resources that better support the community in relation to the responsible use of alcohol. DrinkWise is funded through voluntary industry contributions across the alcohol sector and has previously been in receipt of funding from both Coalition and Labor governments.