

## BIZARRE CANBERRA DISCOVERY

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## 11 underage drinkers taken home in one weekend

# Teen booze crackdown

By TOM SEBO

**P**OLICE have put Goulburn's boozing teens on notice, with the announcement of a new operation targeting youth crime and underage drinking.

The Local Area Command dispatched the Youth Intervention Truck, an unmarked police vehicle, to cruise the streets last Friday and Saturday nights, looking for intoxicated kids.

The operation took place between the hours of 6pm and 4am and over the two nights officers took 11 children home, issued seven move-along notices, conducted 10 person searches and confiscated six lots of alcohol as well as cigarettes.

Youth Liaison Officer, Senior Constable Barbra Beard, told the *Post* that in the past four years underage drinking had become worse in Goulburn, with the number of children being caught with alcohol increasing, while the average age of offenders was decreasing.

"There are more 13 and 14-year-olds out on the streets whereas (a few years ago) it was 14 and 15-year-olds. So the ages are coming down which is a concern..." Senior Constable Beard said.

"The (other) problem is that the younger ones are hanging around the older ones. You have 13-year-olds and 14-year-olds hanging around 17-year-olds... there is a big difference when you are that age. It obviously isn't when you're 20 and 23 but at 13/14 to 17, that's huge."

Senior Constable Beard said that the older teens often led the younger ones astray.

"The 17-year-olds will use the 13-year-olds to do the dirty work. So if they are planning to do anything criminally wrong they will use them. They are almost grooming them."

Underage drinking can lead to not only risky situations but also serious crimes, most commonly malicious damage. In recent times, there have been a number of incidences of teens breaking into abandoned or empty dwellings and causing significant damage.

On New Year's Eve, a number of youths were dealt with under the Young Offenders Act after they broke into a house, which was only empty because the owner was away on holidays, and trashed it during a wild two day party.



**Continued page 2 ACTION:** Youth Liaison Officer Senior Constable Barbra Beard says Police will use the Youth Intervention Truck, an unmarked police vehicle, to target underage youth crime and underage drinking on Friday and Saturday nights.

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