TEENS, GROG AND PARENTS

The long-term consequence of current binge-drinking, I predict, will be a higher degree of alcoholism in future adults than we currently see. This is based on the fact that the developing teen brain tends to hard-wire prominent behaviours they are engaged in, which is why teenagers and addiction go hand-in-hand. Professionals in fields of mental health, education and psychology are now questioning the notion of parents introducing alcohol to teenagers at home below the age of sixteen.

This is at a time when increasingly parents are purchasing alcohol for young people to take to parties in the belief that they are going to drink anyway so if they buy it for them they are less likely to get smashed.

As Paul Stanley father of Matt, who died a violent death at a party in Queensland recently and member of that state’s government youth taskforce says: “The research is telling us that this (i.e. supplying young people with grog prevents them getting drunk) is rubbish. We want to see a situation where parents are not dropping their 15 year-olds off at parties with crates of beer. It is happening and it is irresponsible and it is wrong.”

A recent Federal Government report released this year showed 37 per cent of young people aged from 12 to 17 got their most recent drink from their parents. The supply of alcohol to young people is an easy option and one that needs to be moderated.

Another recent Australian study shows that parents believe it is safer to introduce their children to alcohol than to let them get it from other sources, usually their friends. This is a simplistic notion and somewhat flawed as an assumption.

Parents maybe better off teaching children about the negative consequences of alcohol and not provide alcohol for them at home until they are very close to the legal drinking age. They should definitely not provide alcohol to young people when they are under age to take to parties, ‘schoolies week’ or wherever they will consume it. If recent proposals become law then parents will be prosecuted if caught doing so in the state of Queensland in the future. That is not such a bad thing.

We need to revolutionise our thinking in terms of young people and alcohol and the role that parents play in promoting responsible drinking. Indeed, maybe teenagers and responsible drinking is an oxymoron and we need to present ‘NO’ as an option, just as parents of past generations did.