

**CRITICS' CHOICE 2008  
EVALUATION REPORT**

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**For Quit Tasmania - A Smoking & Health Campaign Inc.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Originating in British Columbia, Canada in 1998 the Critics' Choice was adopted by the Australian Network on Young People and Tobacco (ANYPAT) in 2000. In its first year in Australia, the program was utilised in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. Quit Tasmania also conducted Critics' Choice in 2001, but ceased using the resource again until 2006.

Critics' Choice is a free, innovative anti-tobacco resource whereby students watch and critique anti-smoking commercials from around the world. In 2008 advertisements from Australia, United States of America, United Kingdom and New Zealand were included. Students nominate which television advertisement is most likely to prevent them from taking up smoking or encourage smoking cessation. The Critics' Choice targets upper primary and secondary school students and can form a part of the curriculum for a range of school subjects including health, social studies and English. Participation in 2008 was open to all Tasmanian schools and colleges.

According to the 2005 Australian Secondary Schools Alcohol and Drug Survey it is estimated that 4,300 young Tasmanians smoke, representing 12% of the population under the age of 18 years<sup>2</sup>. Almost 90% of long term smokers start smoking prior to the age of 18 and an estimated 50% of long term smokers die prematurely from smoking related illnesses<sup>1</sup>. These figures highlight the importance of youth specific tobacco education in an effort to prevent youth from commencing smoking and encouraging the early cessation of smoking.

The 2008 Critics' Choice resource was created in the form of a DVD. The DVD included 12 anti-smoking television advertisements from around the world and a teacher resource file. The teachers' resource included classroom activities around the topic of smoking, statistics and background information on smoking, a student grading sheet and a teacher participation and evaluation form. Distribution of the 2008 Critics' Choice DVD was free to all Tasmanian primary, secondary and tertiary government and non-government schools, totaling 291 schools. A further 56 requests for the Critics' Choice resource were made during the program's run from schools requesting additional resources, various youth organisations and TAFE Tasmania.

Incentives were offered to schools encouraging the return of completed evaluation forms and student grading sheets. Of all student-voting forms received, one was randomly drawn to receive a \$100 music voucher and a further six were drawn to receive a \$50 music voucher. In addition, from the returned teachers' evaluation forms one was drawn randomly to receive a \$300 sporting equipment voucher for their school.

Quit Tasmania received 1577 student votes from 37 schools, using the resource in 49 individual classes. 29 teachers returned an evaluation of the Critics' Choice program. The results of the 2008 Critics' Choice are detailed in this report.

## STUDENT RESULTS

### Participant Demographics

A total of 1577 votes were received from Tasmanian students from 37 statewide schools participating in this year's Critics' Choice program. Primary school participation represented 49% of those schools (n=18). Participation from secondary schools and tertiary colleges was 41% (n=15) and 11% (n=4) respectively. 31 contributing schools were government schools and the remaining 6, non-government schools. The breakdown of participation between primary, secondary and tertiary schools is represented in Table 1 below. A comparison of 2008 participation and 2007 participation is represented in Table 2 below. The distribution of male to female participation in this year's Critics' Choice was relatively equal, with 50% (n=785) of respondents being males, 49% (n= 767) females and 1% (n=27) not indicating gender on the student grading sheet.

Table 1

Student Participation 2008

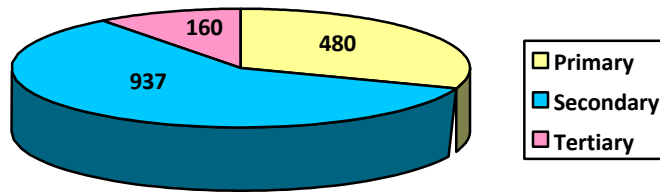
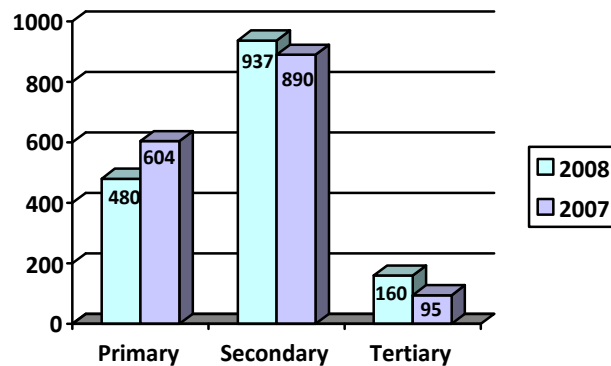


Table 2

Comparison of 2007 and 2008 participation



## **Student Voting**

The Critics' Choice DVD contained 12 anti-smoking advertisements which students were asked to view, comment and vote on which advertisements would most likely prompt them to either quit smoking or to abstain from starting smoking. The advertisement titled 'What if Girl,' developed by the Washington State Department of Health, was the winning advertisement receiving 36% of the overall votes (n=565). 'Didn't Listen,' produced by The Cancer Council WA, was second with 18% of votes (n=283) closely followed by 'Voice Within,' from the Cancer Institute NSW with 17% of votes (n=277) and 'Test Tube,' from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing with 16% of the votes (n=257). The least popular advertisement 'There for a Reason,' by the Vermont State Department of Health, received no votes at all. A breakdown of votes is represented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3**

Order of Preference	Advertisement Name	Number of Votes	% of Votes	Country of Origin
1	What if Girl	565	36%	USA
2	Didn't Listen	283	18%	AUS
3	Voice Within	277	17%	AUS
4	Test Tube	257	16%	AUS
5	Smoking Kids	82	5%	UK
6	Frog	51	3%	USA
7	Which Disease?	28	1.8%	AUS
8	Black Magic	21	1.3%	UK
9	Not our Future	7	0.4%	NZ
10	Jessica Mauboy	4	0.2%	AUS
11	The Pitch	2	0.13%	USA
12	There for a Reason	0	0%	USA

The most popular advertisement amongst primary school participants was 'Didn't Listen,' followed by 'What if Girl,' with 136 and 126 votes respectively. The most popular advertisement amongst secondary students was 'What if Girl,' with 384 votes, followed by 'Voice Within,' with 173 votes. This remained the same with tertiary colleges, with the most votes given to 'What if Girl,' closely followed by 'Voice Within,' with 47 and 46 votes each.

The comparison between male and female voting on the advertisement 'What if Girl,' was quite disproportionate with 309 votes received from females (63%) and 183 (37%) from males. Females also voted more for 'Voice Within' with 148 votes versus 106 votes from males. Male participants voted more heavily for 'Test Tube,' with 141 votes versus 117, and 'Didn't Listen,' with 133 votes compared to 121 votes from females. Aside from the distinct difference in voting for 'What if Girl,' the distribution of votes relatively equal amongst the genders.

Students were asked to provide rationale for their advertisement choice. Some comments included;

*"Because when they cut the lung it was showing what can really happen and that these things are real and that it could happen to anyone."*

**Sophie aged 11 in response to 'Didn't Listen.'**

*"Because it shows what smoking can do and it toys with our emotions."*

**Dominic aged 14 in response to 'Voice Within.'**

*"It shows that smoking can not only affect your health, it can also affect your friends and family as well."*

**Natalie aged 17 in response to 'Voice Within.'**

*"Because I thought it was the most effective as it was confronting and disgusting. If I knew I would look like that if you smoked, I'd never do it."*

**Frances aged 17 in response to 'What if Girl.'**

*"Because I don't want people looking at me and I don't want an ugly face with black stuff coming out of my face."*

**Demi aged 10 in response to 'What if Girl.'**

*"Because it makes people think about what is going into their body when they smoke."*

**Rebecca aged 14 in response to 'Test Tube.'**

## **TEACHER EVALUATIONS**

Of the 37 Tasmanian schools that participated in the 2008 Critics' Choice, 29 teacher evaluations were returned and the following results are based on this data.

### **Use of Critics' Choice Resource**

The Critics' Choice resource was utilised in 49 classes of the 29 schools returning evaluations. The resource was predominantly employed as a part of a drug awareness, personal development health activity, with 45% (n=13) of the returned evaluations indicating this. 31% (n=9) of teachers used the resource as a one/off activity and the remaining 24% of teachers used the Critics' Choice as a part of an English or other essential learning stream (n=7). Of the participating teachers, seven (24%) had previously used the Critics' Choice resource and 100% of respondents indicated that they would partake in the Critics' Choice in future years.

### **Classroom Discussion**

93% (n=26) of teachers indicated that the use of the Critics' Choice resource initiated classroom discussion on tobacco related issues. All 29 respondents stipulated the resource was effective in engaging students with 72% (n=21) indicating the resource was highly effective in engaging students.

In addition to commonly discussing the most effective advertisement, issues such as health effects of smoking, the content of cigarettes, impacts on children and the power of advertising companies were highlighted by teachers as frequently discussed topics. A notable observation from teachers' discussions is the 'shock' the visual affects some of the advertisements created amongst students. This was considered a significant prompt for classroom discussion. Reflectively, some teachers indicated that the girls in their classes were more affected by the advertisements that focused on a changed appearance such as 'What if Girl,' whereas the boys engaged when seeing the visually "gross" advertisements. As reported by teachers, some students were empathetic towards some of the advertisements particularly 'Voice Within.' As a result of the resource, many students indicated that they would never smoke and that smoking is no longer considered to be cool. One student's participation in the Critics' Choice and subsequent discussion at home prompted both of his parents to quit smoking.

### **Teachers Resource and Grading Sheets**

Teachers were asked how useful and clear both the advertisement grading sheets were and the teachers' resource. In regards to the grading sheets, 16 teachers indicated it was very useful, 12 indicated it was useful and 1 indicated that the grading sheets were somewhat useful. 18 teachers indicated that the grading sheet was very clear, 10 indicated it was clear and 1 indicated it was somewhat clear.

48% of respondents indicated that the teachers resource was very useful, 27% indicated it was useful, 20% indicated it was somewhat useful and one teacher indicated the resource was not very useful at all.

55% of teachers indicated the resource was very clear, 31% indicated the teachers' resource was clear and the remaining 14% indicated that the resource was somewhat clear.

### **Appraisal for the Critics' Choice 2008**

All of the 29 teachers who submitted an evaluation made comments on the positive aspects of the Critics' Choice resource. The most frequently referred to observation was how the resource easily engaged the students and initiated classroom discussion on a variety of smoking related issues with 14 teachers noting this. Also liked by teachers was the variety of advertisements used in the Critics' Choice DVD particularly that the advertisements were from a variety of nations. Other commonly referred to remarks included;

- Clear and easy to use resource
- The empowerment of the students as they could relate to an aspect of smoking in their lives
- Quick and to the point activity
- The power of advertising, product placement and target audiences
- The ability to discuss smoking without the perceived 'lecture' factor

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

41% of teachers made suggestions for improving future Critics' Choice programs. Common suggestions included;

- Clearly identify each advertisement by name on the grading sheet
- Increase the 'shock' value and including more of the health risks of smoking
- No changes to be made – excellent resource
- A dedicated website for the Critics' Choice with 'kid friendly' text

## **COMPETITION WINNERS**

All partaking schools received a certificate of participation in recognition of their contribution to the 2008 Critics' Choice. Entry in the Critics' Choice competition was open to all students who completed a student grading sheet and returned the results to Quit Tasmania. The first prize of a \$100 music voucher was won by a year 6 student who was the first randomly picked winner. The six prizes of a \$50 music voucher have been given to the remaining six randomly picked entries. Teachers who submitted an evaluation summary were also eligible to go into the draw to win a \$300 sports voucher for their school. The randomly picked winner of the teachers' prize and the student prize winners are included in the table below. Winners were randomly picked through the use of an independent website that randomly selects number sequences. The website's address is; [www.random.org:80/integers](http://www.random.org:80/integers).

**Table 4**

STUDENT	SCHOOL	PRIZE
Year 6 Student	St Anthony's Primary School	\$100 music voucher
Year 5 Student	Lenah Valley Primary School	\$50 music voucher
Year 10 Student	Leighland Christian School	\$50 music voucher
Year 8 Student	Reece High School	\$50 music voucher
Year 5 Student	Dodges Ferry Primary School	\$50 music voucher
Year 5 Student	New Town Primary School	\$50 music voucher
Year 8 Student	Launceston Church Grammar School	\$50 music voucher
Teacher	Rose Bay High School	\$300 sports equipment voucher

## **DISCUSSION**

A total of 347 Critics' Choice DVD's were distributed to schools and youth organisations throughout the state. Quit Tasmania received responses from 39 of those schools/organisations with votes collected from 1577 students in 49 individual classes. Overall involvement in the 2008 Critics' Choice was in line with the participation level set in 2007, with the resource being utilised in 50 individual classes.

In Tasmania, each school receives a copy of the Critics' Choice resource free of charge; schools are not asked to register for the program. Given the level of distribution, it is disappointing to see that only 8% of schools receiving the resource completed the program and returned their results to Quit Tasmania. One possible contributing factor to the relatively low return rate is the method in which the resource is distributed in-house once it is received by the school. Several requests were made by different teachers at the same school for further Critics' Choice resources, indicating that the DVD is not being passed onto the appropriate teacher/s when it is delivered to each school office. It is unknown if the Critics' Choice resource was used within the classroom setting but without sending student votes onto Quit Tasmania.

'What if Girl' and 'Didn't Listen' were voted as being the most influential advertisements by Tasmanian students with 'Voice Within' and 'Test Tube' closely following. The voting difference between the second and fourth voted advertisements is only 2%. The distribution of voting between the age groups highlighted some interesting variations. Primary school students responded more to 'Didn't Listen,' closely followed by 'What if Girl.' Comments made by primary school students were focused around the 'shock' value and 'visually disturbing' images of the effects of smoking with a lesser importance placed on the non-visual health effects of smoking. Secondary students gave the highest ranking to 'What if Girl,' with many students commenting on the effects on visual appearance as being a motivator for not smoking. It was also the highest voted advertisement for females. Boosting votes for "What if Girl" was a female only school, with 37 out of their 79 votes going to 'What if Girl.' Tertiary students voted equally for 'What if Girl' and 'Voice Within.' Comments on their rationale for their choices including reference not only to the health effects of smoking on the individual but also the effect it has on the family and friends of a smoker as evident in 'Voice Within.' The distribution of votes amongst the differing ages of students highlights the younger students are engaged more by the visually disturbing advertisements that focus on the visual effects of smoking with less emphasis placed on the internal and social impacts of smoking. Secondary students were more concerned about appearances in terms of the physical changes caused by smoking. Older, tertiary students expressed empathy for the internal health effects of smoking and the broader individual and family consequences of those health complications. The results of the 2008 Critics' Choice will be correlated nationally to aid in the development of youth specific campaigns to prevent the uptake and to encourage the early cessation of smoking.

Overall, the response from teachers in regards to the use of the Critics' Choice resource was very positive. 59% of teachers who used the Critics' Choice resource returned an evaluation of the program. The highest praise for the program was the diversity of the advertisements and the DVD's ability to generate classroom discussion on a range of topics, namely health issues of smoking and also more

broadly on issue such as tobacco companies and the advertisement of cigarettes. Most teachers found the resource age pertinent, clear and easy to use. For most of the teachers, it was their first time using the Critics' Choice resource and all but one teacher indicated that they would definitely utilise this resource in future years. Few comments were made regarding negative aspects of the Critics' Choice. Future recommendations included more advertisements containing a 'shock' value.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendations from the 2007 Critics' Choice**

Several recommendations for future Critics' Choice programs were made following the 2007 Critics' Choice. The suggestions were made with the aim of increasing the number of participating students. Many of the recommendations were considered and utilised in the implementation of this year's Critics' Choice. Despite this however, the number of students participating was slightly less than the number in 2007. The recommendations were;

- Increase schools awareness of the Critics' Choice through letter, email and website advertising.
- Increase the number of participating students from each school.
- Increase the number of teacher evaluations returned.
- Increase the number of teachers who utilise the classroom activities.

### **2008 Critics' Choice**

#### **1. Increasing schools awareness of the Critics' Choice**

In an effort to increase the number of participants, an article was created promoting the 2008 Critics' Choice and was posted on the Tasmanian Government Department of Education's website. This prompted several requests for a Critics' Choice DVD. Several teacher evaluations indicated that they were informed of the Critics' Choice through the Department's website.

Schools were firstly informed of the upcoming Critics' Choice program in early May 2008. This email included a description of the program and suggestions for its use within the classroom setting. The DVD's were sent to all Tasmanian schools in the week beginning 19<sup>th</sup> May 2008. This was also followed

by a further email reminding schools that the resources would be arriving, suggestions for the resource's use and contact details for further information. A further three emails were sent throughout the duration of the Critics' Choice program, reminding teachers of its use and closing dates. Following each email, there were numerous requests for further copies of DVD.

### **Recommendations**

- Advertise the Critics' Choice Program on the Department of Education's website again in 2009.
- Remain in contact with schools throughout the entire duration of the Critics' Choice program, including prior to the program start date. It is recommended that contact be maintained on a four weekly basis.

### **2. Increase the number of participating students in each school**

Similarly to last year, several requests were made by the same school for additional Critics' Choice DVD's, indicating that the original DVD was not being circulated throughout the entire school. Although there were sufficient resources to enable those schools to receive an additional DVD, this may not be the case in future years. A system needs to be established to ensure that the DVD is being passed onto the appropriate teachers. Indicated in the teachers evaluations are that the resource was mostly used in a health class, followed by social sciences and English. The 2007 Critics' Choice report suggested the use of a 'tick and pass on' system for ensuring the resource is used and then passed on appropriately. This was not used in this year's Critics' Choice however the need for its use is now evident.

### **Recommendations**

- Create a 'tick and pass on' tab for insertion into the front cover of the DVD, acting as a prompt for teachers to pass the resource on. See table 5 below.
- Include a letter with each DVD with recommendations of which classes the resource can be utilised in. This will be helpful for office staff if they are determining where to send the DVD on its arrival to the school.
- Ask that the emails sent to schools are forwarded onto the Head's of the English and Health Departments to ensure they are aware of the program.

**Table 5**

<b>Use, Tick and Pass on Critics' Choice DVD</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>PRINCIPAL</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>HEAD OF HEALTH SCIENCES</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>HEALTH SCIENCES TEACHERS</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>HEAD OF ENGLISH</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>ENGLISH TEACHERS</b>

### **3. Increase the number of teacher evaluations returned**

Teachers were reminded throughout the program of the potential prize that they could win for completing an evaluation form. The number of teacher's returning an evaluation increased marginally from the previous year from 34 to 37 returned evaluations.

#### **Recommendation**

- Continue to highlight with teachers the benefits of returning an evaluation, particularly their potential to win a prize.

### **4. Increase the number of teachers who utilise the classroom activities**

It did not form part of the 2008 evaluation to ask teachers if they utilised the classroom activities suggested with the resource, therefore there can be no comment made on this.

### **5. Student grading sheets**

Many of the received voting forms from students were unable to be included in the prize draw due to student's names missing from the forms. Several names were also crossed out on the form. This may be due to the students concern about providing their personal home address as requested on the grading sheet. Several grading sheets were also illegible in terms of which advertisement had been chosen. Many students also gave several 'highest votes' to more than one advertisement and then failed to

indicate which of those advertisements was their number one choice. These votes were unable to be counted in the overall tally. It was at times difficult to ascertain if a name belonged to a male or female student as many names are now common for both genders. This is also the same for students from backgrounds other than Australian.

### **Recommendations**

- Indicate the importance of the student's name being correctly entered on the student grading in order for the student being eligible to win a prize.
- Omit asking the student's for their postal address and simply ask for the name of their school. Contact can be made with the student through the school if they are a prize winner.
- Include a section for the student's gender.
- Provide the name of each advertisement on the grading sheet rather than country of origin to eliminate student confusion with the voting process.
- Ask students to rank the advertisements from 1-12, with 1 being the advertisement most likely to prevent them from taking up smoking and number 12 being the advertisement that would influence them the least. This would replace the current system of numbering the advertisements 1-5 dependent on their influential factor.

### **6. Resources**

500 Critics' Choice DVD's were ordered by Quit Tasmania. Despite this number being higher than the required amount of 350, the cost for the larger order was insignificantly increased. Of the resources Quit Tasmania received, a total of 390 were distributed. This included the copies sent to all schools as well as the numerous requests for further resources made throughout the program. Quit Tasmania has 100 unused DVD's in stock. The copyright on the resource expires at the end of 2008, rendering these extra resources useless.

### **Recommendation**

- Avoid over ordering of resources, even if the unit price becomes cheaper for a larger order.

## **CONCLUSION**

The use of the media to educate young people on the health and social effects of smoking has been proven to be a highly effective tool. The aim of utilising a program such as the Critics' Choice is to prevent young people from the uptake of smoking and to encourage those young people who do smoke to quit. It is estimated that 50% of long term smokers will die prematurely because of their tobacco use<sup>1</sup>. This figure strengthens the need to focus smoking cessation education on young people in an attempt to prevent long term smoking use and smoking uptake. On reflection, many teachers comment on the resources ability to engage students and evoke classroom discussion on the important issue of smoking without the perceived 'lecture' factor.

Several recommendations have been made in this report in an effort to more efficiently execute future Critics' Choice programs. The recommendations in respect to the student grading sheets, DVD contents and teacher evaluations have been passed on to the ANYPAT group for their review in the development of future Critics' Choice resources. Recommendations on distribution and promotion of the resource have been highlighted for future project officers undertaking the Critics' Choice at Quit Tasmania.

The 2008 Critics' Choice received positive feedback from both teachers and students and was as equally successful in 2008 as it was in 2007. Despite prediction, student participation did not increase in this year's program but remained on the same level to the previous year. It is hoped that with the recommendations made in this report and the increasing awareness in schools of the Critics' Choice resource that participation will increase in subsequent years. This report recommends the continued use of The Critics' Choice as an excellent educational resource for school children of all ages in increasing the awareness of the health and social effects of smoking and the benefits of quitting smoking without the perceived lecture format.

## **REFERENCES**

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2. The Cancer Council of Tasmania. *Prevalence of cigarette smoking among Tasmanian secondary school students in 2005 and trends over time*. September 2006.