

**Submission
No 20**

PROVISION OF ALCOHOL TO MINORS

Name: The Hon Don Page MP
Position: Minister for Local Government and Minister for the North Coast
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The Hon Don Page MP
Minister for Local Government
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Clr B Notley-Smith MP
Committee Chair
Legislative Assembly Social Policy Committee
Parliament House, Macquarie St
SYDNEY NSW 2000

31 JUL 2012

Bounce,
Dear Clr Notley-Smith

Thank you for your letter of 22 June 2012 requesting a submission to the Inquiry into the provision of alcohol to minors being conducted by the Legislative Assembly Social Policy Committee.

Having carefully considered the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, I can provide the following information about the role councils can play in the management of liquor in public places. My comments relate to Terms of Reference item (a), and in educating local communities about liquor-related problems and appropriate use of liquor, relate to Terms of Reference item (d).

The *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) allows local councils to establish alcohol-free zones (AFZs) and alcohol-prohibited areas (APAs). These are the key regulatory tools available to councils to promote the safe use of all public places, including parks, reserves, roads, footpaths and public car parks without interference from anti-social behaviour caused by the public consumption of alcohol.

Council officers have 'tip out' powers in AFZ and APAs, the object of which is to provide an early intervention measure to prevent the escalation of irresponsible drinking to incidents involving anti-social behaviour and serious crime. Where necessary, NSW Police have powers to deal with more serious offences in such areas.

Councils may also set conditions on the consumption of alcohol through other means, such as by imposing conditions on the hiring of council halls and other community facilities.

Ministerial Guidelines on Alcohol Free Zones have been issued by the Division to provide guidance to councils that are considering establishing or re-establishing an AFZ, as well as providing advice about councils' responsibilities under the provisions of the Act.

Many councils are also involved in local liquor accords, which are voluntary, industry-based partnerships working in local communities to introduce practical solutions to liquor-related problems. Most liquor accords also include members from the local business community, police, government departments and community organisations.

While liquor accords are primarily used to reach agreements on ways to improve the operation of licensed venues so that entertainment venues and precincts are safe and enjoyable, they may also be used to address other liquor-related problems, such as appropriate drinking practices in public places. Such issues may also be considered by Community Safety Committees, which have been established by numerous councils to address a variety of issues including the public consumption of alcohol and the promotion of alcohol-free venues and events.

I would also highlight the important role that council Community Services staff play in implementing programs for young people to address alcohol-related issues, often working in cooperation with local Police and State and Federal Government agencies. Examples of programs implemented by councils in this area include targeted alcohol-awareness programs and the distribution of alcohol-related information through local libraries and on council websites.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely

Don Page MP
Minister