

Tabled by Ms Elizabeth Tydd, Executive Director, Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing, 29 April 2013. *W. Moorhouse*

Executive Director – Speaking Notes

Legislative Council Inquiry into Strategies to Reduce Alcohol Abuse Among Young People

29 April 2013

Mr Chair... thank you for the opportunity to appear at this inquiry examining strategies to reduce alcohol abuse among young people.

A number of elements of the inquiry's terms of reference are relevant to the work undertaken by the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing.

In particular... the terms of reference relating to measures to reduce alcohol related violence in and around licensed venues... the effect of alcohol advertising and promotions on young people... and the effectiveness of harm minimisation strategies targeting young people intersect with a number of our programs.

For instance... liquor promotion guidelines issued under the liquor laws have recently been revised to ensure they capture contemporary promotions and practices that are likely to encourage people to drink excessively.

The updated guidelines include a section specifically addressing the legislative requirement that liquor promotions must not appeal to minors.

It gives examples of unacceptable practices such as promotions that use imagery... design or merchandise that primarily appeal to minors... or use interactive games or technology predominantly targeted to minors.

These updated guidelines... which are expected to be released shortly... enable compliance action to be taken where venues ignore directions by the Office to cease an undesirable liquor promotion.

One of the issues that has been taken into consideration... particularly in relation to young people... is the way liquor is promoted via social media and the internet.

My Office has increased monitoring and intervention in this space... and action is being taken where promotions are undesirable or could be associated with an unacceptable risk of alcohol-related harm.

The importance of this issue recently came to light as part of an intensive intervention undertaken in Byron Bay.

In that circumstance... promotions... photographs and comments on venue websites and social media sites raised serious questions about responsible service of alcohol practices.

Action taken by the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing caused licensees to immediately cease many of the activities that were generating concerns.

Licensees were responsive to that action... which proved to be very effective.

More recently... my Office moved to prevent irresponsible ANZAC day promotions at venues in Sydney as part of its ongoing monitoring of liquor promotions by licensed venues. (*i.e. Scary Canary at Sydney and The Ranch at Marsfield*)

The Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing has been heavily involved in the implementation of an Action Plan in Byron Bay which brings together current... future and possible actions to reduce alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour.

The plan also includes a number of proactive measures which are being trialled by the local liquor accord... including:

- a 1.30am lockout
- a ban on doubles... shots... shooters and jugs of alcoholic beverages
- a four drink limit to patrons after midnight
- the engagement of a RSA marshal after midnight on Saturdays
- a ban on the sale of takeaway alcoholic energy drinks
- a prohibition on the sale of 4² litre wine casks *below cost*
- a prohibition on takeaway liquor sales after 11pm.
- *lobby on tobacco covering purchasing*

The issues in Byron Bay extend beyond licensed premises... and the Action Plan is a cohesive effort to tackle these larger issues.

The Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing is working with all relevant stakeholders to implement the Plan and monitor its effect.

(If desired, the Byron Bay Action Plan and the associated Compliance and Monitoring Plan could be tabled as both have been provided to local stakeholders)

Mr Chair... the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing also plays a key role in the operation of the Government's Three Strikes Disciplinary scheme for licensed venues.

Thirty seven venues have incurred a strike since the scheme's inception in January 2012.

Twenty one strikes have been incurred for intoxication offences... while a further 14 strikes have been incurred for selling liquor outside approved trading hours.

One venue has incurred a second strike under the scheme... and is now just one strike away from potentially having its liquor licence suspended or cancelled.

For each strike... the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing considers the remedial action that should be taken by a venue... and is working with these venues to minimise the potential for further strikes to be incurred.

Mr Chair... the inquiry would be aware of whole of Government action that has been taken to reduce alcohol-related violence in Kings Cross over the last eight months.

The Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing has been responsible for implementing a number of measures under the Government's Plan of Management for Kings Cross.

This includes assessing compliance with strict new licence conditions that apply to Kings Cross venues... and working with venues... the City of Sydney and the local liquor accord on local strategies to improve venue safety and compliance.

Conditions applying to all Kings Cross premises include timeouts or cease liquor sales requirements... a requirement to notify police of violent

incidents... and a prohibition of the sale of high strength drinks at certain times.

Conditions applying to high risk Kings Cross venues include a requirement to operate CCTV... and at certain times... a prohibition on glass and the engagement of RSA marshals.

The Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing is continuing to support the Government in implementing measures... both regulatory and non regulatory... to minimise alcohol related harm and reduce alcohol related violence.

Again... I thank the Chair and the Standing Committee on Social Issues for inviting me here today and I look forward to the inquiry's findings in due course.

END