



# Fact Sheet

## Alcohol Action Plan

October 2008

Council has initiated and supported many activities to reduce alcohol-related harm in our community and recognises that there is more that can be done. We want to maintain the City of Port Phillip's reputation as one of Australia's most exciting nightlife destinations, but we also want to reduce the negative impact alcohol has on our residents, businesses and visitors.

### **What are the main Alcohol Related Harms in Our Community?**

Even though alcohol-related harms are not unique to the City Of Port Phillip, we have one of the heaviest concentrations of licensed venues in Australia. The number of licensed venues has tripled since 1994 to over 600: more than double the State and Southern Metropolitan Region average. Each month hundreds of thousands of visitors come to Port Phillip for a good night out, although not all leave with that experience.

Our community is subjected to alcohol-related assaults, drink driving offences and alcohol-related hospital admissions that are much higher than the State average and numerous complaints about amenity issues such as excessive noise, vandalism and alcohol-related litter and exposure to spills of human body fluids.

### **What can Council Do to Reduce Alcohol Related Harm in Our Community?**

Alcohol is a complex issue that requires the coordinated support of many participants. Many of the most successful interventions that reduce harms are addressed by other organizations. For example, other issues are the primary responsibility of the:

- ◆ State Government (e.g., policing, public transport, liquor licensing permits, alcohol counselling and withdrawal services, schools, lock-out trials, alcohol taxation, minimum purchasing age, regulating alcohol promotion, law reform)
- ◆ Federal Government (e.g., alcohol taxation, regulating alcohol promotion, law reform)
- ◆ Licensees (e.g., creating a safe environment for their patrons, responsible service of alcohol, venue security, reducing the impact of noise and disruption on neighbours)
- ◆ Patrons (e.g., abiding by the law and being responsible for the effects of their behaviour on others)

The areas that Council has most impact on are:

- a) Building, Planning and Infrastructure
- b) Coordinating Shared Responsibility for Reducing Alcohol-related Harm
- c) Cleaning
- d) Local Laws

## What does our Community want?

We recently consulted with our community and received more than 500 responses, including a wide spectrum of strong opinions.

**Public Drinking Bans** - Council's position of banning night-time public drinking was supported by most people in all population groups (ie. 56% overall; 59% among residents). This aims to target night drinkers and crowds at large events such as the St Kilda Festival, Grand Prix and New Year's Eve, rather than people having picnics or the daytime chronic street drinkers. It was more than three times as popular as the next most favoured: no bans at all (18%; 16% among residents). Only 11% supported 24 hour bans, either everywhere or only in main streets (same figure overall and for residents).

**Result:** Council will expand the hours banning the public consumption of alcohol from 8 hours per day (11pm – 7am) to 13 hours per day (8pm – 9am).

**Venue Density** - Most people agreed that Council should develop guidelines to restrict the planning permit of a new licensed venue on the grounds that there are too many in the area already (ie. 46% in favour, 41% against, 12% don't know).

**Result:** The City of Port Phillip will work in conjunction with other Councils to prepare a strong position on this topic, so that guidelines are consistent and supported by other planning authorities.

**Support for Other Community Interventions** - The majority of respondents (63%) opposed the lockouts as a solution to reducing alcohol-related harm. This was extremely strong among patrons of licensed venues (94%).

- Very strong support was provided for additional public transport at night and safe taxi ranks, Licensees' Accord, Responsible Service of Alcohol programs and more treatment & intervention for drinkers.
- Strong support was provided for more street cleaning, more public toilets and increased policing and enforcement.
- Opinions were more divided on options such as public advertising, restricting the number of alcohol outlets & bottle-shops, community education, and restricting alcohol promotion.
- The strongest opposition was mounted against interventions such as self regulation by the alcohol industry and restricting trading hours further.

**Result:** Council has committed to adopting the interventions under its control with strongest community support among the 35 actions in its Alcohol Action Plan.

## How to get more information

[http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/drugs\\_alcohol.html](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/drugs_alcohol.html)

[http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/licensees\\_accord.html](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/licensees_accord.html)

## Contact details

ASSIST 9209 6777