



Media Release

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Expert says stricter enforcement and monitoring of licensed premises more effective than blanket 'lock-out' laws

More than 72 per cent of Australians aged 14 years and over support stricter enforcement of the law against serving drunk customers, according to a joint study published by the NSW Bureau of Crimes Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) and the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), UNSW Sydney.

A further 61 per cent support strict monitoring of late-night licensed premises.

'The results show that a policy of sanctioning licensed premises that breach the conditions of their liquor license would be far more effective and far less intrusive than policies that impose blanket restrictions on trading hours in certain suburbs but not in others,' said lead author Professor Don Weatherburn from NDARC.

The study examined data from the National Drug Strategy Household Survey between 2001 and 2019, and outlined changes in public support for various liquor licensing restrictions.

Public support for stricter enforcement of responsible alcohol service laws has remained consistently high over the past two decades, and public support for strict monitoring of late-night premises has remained strong.

'Support for other policies such as reduced trading hours and outlets was lower,' said Professor Weatherburn.

Forty five per cent of Australians support restricting late-night trading of alcohol, down from its peak of 55 per cent between 2010 and 2013.

Only 26 per cent of Australians support reduced trading hours, down from its peak of 43 per cent in 2010 .

Public support for reducing the number of outlets that sell alcohol has doubled since 2001 but remains low at 33 per cent.

Demographic differences

The study also found support for reduced outlet and trading hours was significantly higher among women and older Australians, with people over 60 two and a half times more likely to support such policies than those aged 30-39.

Support was also high amongst those who drink alcohol less frequently and people who had been assaulted, threatened with assault or made fearful by someone under the influence of alcohol in the past 12 months.

'There are marked differences between jurisdictions and between city and country dwellers in the liquor licensing controls they support,' said Professor Weatherburn.

'This argues against any 'one size fits all' approach to liquor licensing policy.'

Those living in remote, regional and rural areas were more supportive of restricting late-night trading than those living in major cities but less supportive of stricter law enforcement against serving drunk customers.

The full article is available in the Crime and Justice Bulletin:

http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_publication/Pub_Summary/CJB/CJB253-Liquor-licensing-restrictions.aspx

Ends

Media contacts:

To organise an interview with Professor Don Weatherburn, please contact NDARC's media team on 0401 713 850 or ndarc.media@unsw.edu.au.

For reference: When reporting on drugs and alcohol, we encourage consultation of the Mindframe guidelines on '[Communicating about alcohol and other drugs](#)' and '[Communicating about suicide](#)', and the '[Language Matters](#)' guide published by the NSW Users and AIDS Association.

We also encourage inclusion of the following helpline information in all reporting:

People can access free and confidential advice about alcohol and other drugs by calling the National Alcohol and Other Drug Hotline on 1800 250 015.