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# Skyworks booze blip

## Liquor Act doesn't apply

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Police Reporter

POLICE will be powerless to enforce alcohol limits in new designated drinking zones at Skyworks 2011 – even if revellers display drunken or disorderly behaviour.

Senior police have revealed they will be unable to seize alcohol from partygoers who bring extra drinks into BYO zones in Kings Park and on the Perth Esplanade during Australia Day celebrations.

Premier Colin Barnett announced in October that each reveller would be allowed to bring six beers or premix drinks or one bottle of wine into the allocated areas between 6.30pm and 8.30pm.

But Acting Assistant Commissioner Gary Budge said yesterday the management of drinking zones was the responsibility of the City of Perth and the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority and police had no power to step in because provisions of the Liquor Control Act did not extend to the areas during the specified two hours.

“Police do not have power to confiscate liquor in the designated drinking zones except in the case of juveniles,” he said.

“If a reveller was disorderly, police would be able to charge them with disorderly conduct, but could not seize their liquor.”

The City of Perth and Kings Park management said they would employ private security to monitor Skyworks crowds and the drinking areas, but neither would confirm how many bouncers would be on duty. Rangers would also assist, they said.

“Rangers and security staff will monitor the zone to ensure the drinking restrictions are being observed,” City of Perth acting chief executive Doug Forster said.

“They can refuse entry to people in possession of more than the agreed limit, or ask them to leave the area under provisions of the Local Government Property Local Law. The police will deal with instances of disorderly conduct and can issue move-on notices.”

A risk assessment prepared by police and issued to the Department of Premier and Cabinet in September, opposed the booze zones and warned of “large-scale civil disorder” if drinking was allowed at the trouble-plagued event.

But at the time, Mr Barnett said the approach adopted for Skyworks 2011 included “very strict limits on the amount and type of alcohol”.

Under amendments to the Liquor Control Act to be proclaimed later this month, police will be able to seize opened and unopened alcohol outside the designated Skyworks drinking zones if they have suspicion of disorderly or anti-social behaviour.

In previous years, police have applied to the Racing and Gaming Minister to have Skyworks declared a “special event” so officers had extra powers to confiscate alcohol during the show.

The booze-ban rethink comes after police heralded last year’s Skyworks a success, with 47 arrests compared with 65 the previous year.

But crowd numbers were down by 50,000 and Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi said the poor turnout, particularly among young people, was possibly because of the alcohol ban.

Mike Daube, director of the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth, said the alcohol limits for the new zones were worrying, given National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines suggesting no more than four standard drinks be consumed on any one day to reduce the risk of alcohol-related injuries.

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