

## **WA LIQUOR CONTROL ACT REPORT WELCOMED – IMPORTANT MOVE TO IMPROVING ALCOHOL CULTURE**

The report released today of the Independent Review Committee on the Liquor Control Act 1988 is overall an excellent report with recommendations that if implemented could do much to reduce alcohol harms and improve the alcohol culture in Western Australia.

Director of the McCusker Centre for Action on Alcohol and Youth, Professor Mike Daube, said, “We welcome this report which is a strong and serious effort to address Western Australia’s alcohol problems and present a comprehensive strategy that will reduce alcohol harms while ensuring continued access by those who consume sensibly. There are some reservations, notably about increasing scope for restaurants to serve alcohol without food, but the overall thrust of the report is about protecting young people and the community”.

“The report recognises the harms of alcohol and the need for change, while not impinging on the community’s capacity to enjoy sensible alcohol use.”

We congratulate the committee on its focus on protecting children and young people.

Measures proposed by the committee include legislation not only on secondary supply, but also on controlled purchase operations. The committee also recommends public education programs, curbs on inappropriate alcohol promotion, and other measures to protect children and the community.

Other important areas where action is recommended include: making community objections to liquor license applications easier; curbs on undesirable products; potential for action on energy drinks; controls on telephone ordering of alcohol; proper consideration of outlet density in liquor licensing processes; and maintaining good sales data information.

The report does not recommend any significant changes to trading hours and notes that the right to sell alcohol is a privilege, not a right.

There are some areas of concern, particularly around increased capacity for restaurants to sell alcohol without food where we would urge caution, and Sunday trading in country areas.

Overall, however, this is a strong, balanced report. The committee deserves great credit for a thorough and important report.

We urge the government to act as speedily as possible on its key recommendations.”

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