



NSW Police Force

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Our ref: D/2015/636445

Ms Jane Thomson
Committee Secretary
Senate Economics References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Inquiry into Personal Choice and Community Impacts

Dear Ms Thomson,

I refer to your letter of 2 December 2015 regarding adverse comments made against NSW licencing police, specifically in Surry Hills and Newtown Local Area Commands. I have sought advice from these commands on the issues raised and wish to express my support for the good work being undertaken by licencing police.

The NSW Police Force encourages the safe consumption of alcohol and the reduction of alcohol related crime and works collaboratively with a range of agencies in this respect.

The NSW Parliament has prescribed offences under liquor legislation requiring compliance. Licencing police undertake frontline oversight and enforcement action with respect to the compliance of licensed premises within the provisions of the Liquor Act 2007. Their activities directly contribute to the achievement of the NSW 2021 goals to prevent and reduce the level of crime and re-offending.

The Surry Hills and Newtown Licencing Units perform their collective duty with professionalism and integrity. Since 2013 alcohol related incidents and assaults (as measured by the NSW Police Force and BOSCAR) have reduced by significant margins. For example in 2014/2015 fiscal year assaults within Surry Hills Local Area Command (Alcohol and Non DV related) were 20.3% under projected targets for the entire year. This result is remarkable considering this follows a previous significant reduction in the 2013/2014 fiscal year.

The Licencing Units promote a safe environment for all patrons at local licensed venues. Objectives and priorities are achieved with cooperative partnerships between the Licencing Units and the largest Liquor Accord in NSW, made up of approximately 125 paid members with 400 active members on the distribution list. The Surry Hills Liquor Accord states priorities of working cooperatively with police to enhance community safety by reducing alcohol related violence. This partnership is clearly alive and well and successful given the indicators achieved.

To suggest that expectations of lawful compliance amount to 'blackmail' or 'intimidation' based on hearsay is wrong. The majority of licensed premises within the Surry Hills, Kings Cross and Newtown commands readily comply with legislative requirements and express an eagerness to work with licencing police to improve or anticipate problems or issues.

Aside from Mr Koh's remarks, I am advised no complaints have been recorded against licencing police in the Kings Cross, Surry Hills or Newtown Local Area Commands, over the last two years. If Mr Koh were to provide further details, his claim would be thoroughly investigated. Left as they stand, they are an unjustified slur on hard working and committed officers.



The NSW Police Force remains committed to reducing alcohol-related crime and improving the management of intoxication both in and around licensed venues. We will continue to detect and take action against those who breach licensing legislation and will continue to provide a highly visible policing response to alcohol related crime and anti social behaviour within these commands.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to respond on the issues raised.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Scipione APM
Commissioner