

# AUSTRALIAN DRUG FOUNDATION

## Background Statement

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### Alcohol Data Collection

In order to effectively identify, develop and introduce strategies which will reduce the harm caused by alcohol in the community, it is essential to collect relevant data on the patterns of alcohol consumption and the harms arising. Two major areas which do not have data consistently collected are: wholesale alcohol purchase data and data linking licensed premises with alcohol related crimes.

#### Facts:

- Only WA and the Northern Territory currently collect statistics on the volume of wholesale purchases made by licensed premises. All states and territories collected the data until a High Court decision in 1997 ruled the States could not levy taxes on alcohol.
- Collection of this data is essential in estimating per capita consumption of alcohol beverages associated with high risk patterns of consumption e.g. cask wine, full strength beer, RTDs (DCPC 2006).
- The Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee in Victoria has called for the reinstatement of collection of this data.
- A recent report by Chikritzhs et al demonstrates how this data can be used effectively to inform better licensing decisions. The authors claim that a national approach to gathering alcohol sales data was the key to applying the liquor licensing model Australia-wide.
- Data which helps to identify licensed premises which generate the most alcohol related incidents allows police and other licensing authorities to focus their attention and energies on those problematic premises.
- The NSW Alcohol Linking Program has trialed this approach and it has now been introduced across NSW. Data gathered includes:
  - was alcohol consumed?
  - what is the level of intoxication?
  - where was the alcohol consumed?
  - who purchased the alcohol?
- Results from the NSW Alcohol Linking program showed an average drop of 15% (up to 60%) in alcohol related incidents.

#### Recommendations:

- Collection of wholesale alcohol purchase data should be reinstated across all states and territories.
- The NSW Alcohol Linking Program should be replicated across all states and territories.

#### References

DCPC (2006) Inquiry into strategies to reduce harmful alcohol consumption- Final Report. Parliament of Victoria  
Chikritzhs, T., Catalano, P., Pascal, R. and Henrickson, N. (2008). *Predicting alcohol-related harms from licensed outlet density: A feasibility study. Monograph Series No.28.* National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund, Hobart, Tasmania.  
ISBN: 978-0-9803794-8-8 [M69]

Alcohol Linking program brochure (downloaded on 23/4/08)

[http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/community\\_issues/alcohol/key\\_issues/alcohol\\_linking\\_program](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au/community_issues/alcohol/key_issues/alcohol_linking_program)