

> Night Venues and Entertainment Events Project (NVEEP) 2011 Results for the Western Australian Mid West Health Region

This bulletin summarises results from the annual Night Venues and Entertainment Events Project (NVEEP) 2011 Patron Survey and Confidential Observational Checklist for the Mid West health region of Western Australia.

Project Overview

The Prevention Branch of the Drug and Alcohol Office coordinates the NVEEP. This is a collaborative initiative between the Western Australia Police, Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor, WA Nightclub Association, Australian Hotels' Association (WA Branch), WA AIDS Council, National Drug Research Institute (NDRI), Western Australian Substance Users' Association (WASUA), and Industry.

The objectives of the Project are to monitor, develop and implement venue practices and policies that promote responsible attitudes towards drugs and alcohol and to implement environmental strategies to reduce drug and alcohol-related harms. People attending night venues and entertainment events, the entertainment industry and young people are targets of this initiative. The Project includes a comprehensive evaluation and monitoring component comprising a patron survey and a confidential observational checklist.

Observational Checklist Results

An independent research group conducted the observational checklists, with individual venues not publicly identified. The observations involved assessing and recording the behaviour of venue staff and patrons, together with various physical aspects of the venue. A structured checklist was used to assess the degree to which strategies that can reduce drug and alcohol-related harm are implemented. The structured checklist is designed to minimise observer bias and enhance reliability and validity of the data. However, some of the checklist items require subjective assessments to be made and in this respect, standardised training is provided for the auditors.

Six types of night venues were assessed: hotels, taverns, nightclubs, small bars, clubs and special facilities. All observational checklists were conducted during peak times for specific venues (e.g. 7pm to 2am).

Venues Observed

A total of three licensed night venues were observed in the Mid West health region of Western Australia.

Overcrowding

Crowd capacity was estimated to be less than a quarter full for 66.7% of night venues. There was no bottlenecking or overcrowding observed at any of the three venues.

Measures to increase comfort for patrons

Overall, noise level was observed to be loud in 66.7% of venues. Two thirds of venues had lounges, tables/chairs available for patrons to rest. 'Chill out' areas were not clearly visible.

Overall safety

None of the venues used plastic drinking vessels instead of glass. Drinking on the dance floors was observed in one third of the venues. There were no apparent fixtures/features likely to cause harm/injury observed at the venues.

Signs of drug and alcohol use

Intoxicated patrons (slurred speech, poor balance/co-ordination and loud speech/aggression) were observed in 33.3% of venues. There were no signs of drug dealing or consumption of drugs other than alcohol in any of the venues observed.

Availability of food and water

Free tap water was available in all venues observed. Two thirds of the venues had food available. One venue sold packed snacks, two light bar snacks and two provided hot/substantial meals.

Promotional materials

Responsible service of alcohol posters were observed in 66.7%. None of the venues promoted alcohol promotions/specials, while 66.7% promoted alcohol brands. None of the venues promoted the drinking of water.

Patron survey – results

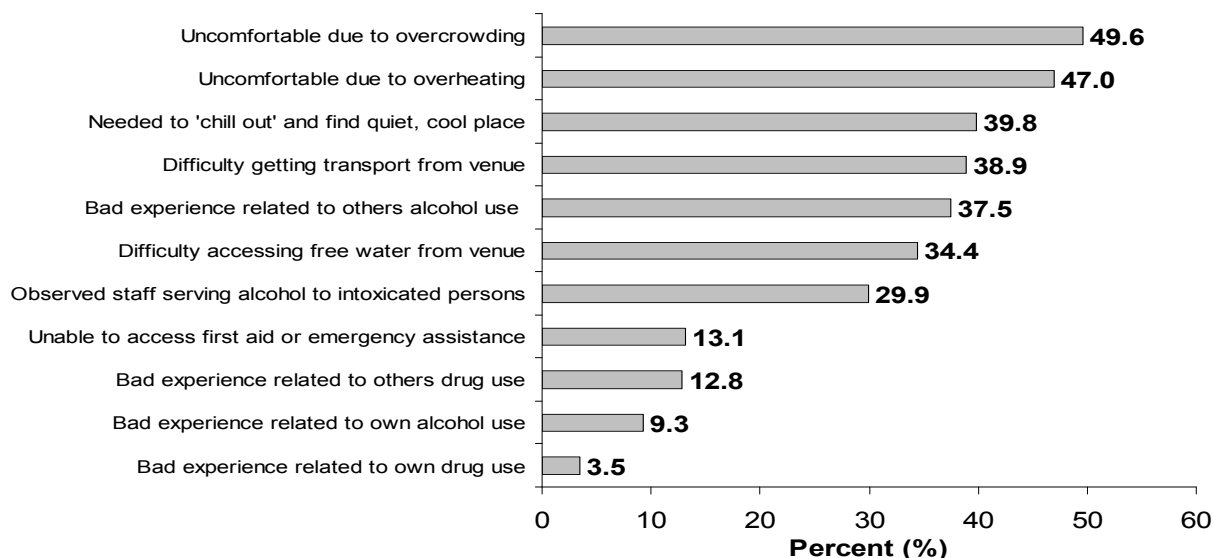
An annual survey of patrons aims to assess their support for drug-related policies, their awareness of harms, and experiences at venues and/or events. As some events are targeted to “all ages”, patrons under the age of 18 are likely to attend. Therefore patrons aged under 18 years are included in the survey sample. This year’s survey recruited a random sample of the general population aged between 14-34 years, both in metropolitan and regional Western Australia via an online survey. An independent research company was commissioned to collect and analyse the responses.

A total of 405 respondents participated in the 2011 survey. Of these, 79 respondents were from non-metropolitan areas in Western Australia. The results described in this section only include responses from non-metropolitan participants. More females than males participated (59.5% and 40.5% respectively) and nearly half (43.9%) of the respondents were aged 25–34 years (16.7% aged 14–17 years and 39.4% aged 18–24 years). More than two in three respondents (72.1%) had been to a night venue or entertainment event in the last month (36.7% in the last week).

In the six months prior to the survey, more than a third of non-metropolitan respondents said they experienced at least half the time (Figure 1):

- discomfort due to overcrowding (49.6%);
- discomfort due to overheating (47.0%);
- needing to find a quiet place to ‘chill out’ (39.8%);
- difficulty getting transport from a venue (38.9%);
- a bad experience related to another patron’s alcohol use (37.5%); and
- difficulty accessing free water (34.4%).

Figure 1. Situations experienced by non-metropolitan respondents at venues in the last six months, at least half the time



There was a high level of support by non-metropolitan respondents for proposed policies to reduce issues at night venues. The most strongly supported strategies included:

- safe public transport being available to and from major events (96.1%);
- venues and events to clearly advertise the availability of free water (91.9%); and
- crowd controllers making sure drunk or intoxicated people are removed from venues (87.6%).