

> Night Venues and Entertainment Events Project (NVEEP) 2011 Results for the Western Australian South Metropolitan 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 South Metropolitan 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 25 licensed night venues were observed in the South Metropolitan health region of Western Australia. Of these, two were hotels, four nightclubs, four special facilities and 15 were taverns (no small bars or clubs were observed).

Overcrowding

The estimated overall crowd capacity at the time of observation was less than three quarters full for 68% of venues. Bottlenecking in bar areas was observed in 28% of the venues.

Measures to increase comfort for patrons

Overall, the noise level was observed to be loud to very loud in 40% of venues. 'Chill out' areas were clearly visible in 92% of venues.

Overall safety

Twelve per cent of venues used plastic drinking vessels instead of glass. Eight percent of venues had fixtures/features likely to cause harm/injury and seventeen (68%) venues allowed drinks on the dance floors.

Signs of drug and alcohol use

Intoxicated patrons (slurred speech, poor balance/co-ordination and loud speech/aggression) were observed in 32% of venues. No signs of drug dealing were observed, while the consumption of drugs other than alcohol was observed in one venue.

Availability of food and water

Free tap water was available in all of the venues. Food was available in 76% of venues. Of the venues that sold food, 63% sold packaged snacks, 79% light bar snacks and 74% had hot/substantial meals available to patrons.

Promotional materials

Responsible service of alcohol posters were observed in 56% of venues. Alcohol brands were promoted in 48% of venues. Thirty-six per cent promoted alcohol promotions/specials to patrons and 20% promoted drinking 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, 326 respondents were from the Perth metropolitan area. The results described in this section only include responses from metropolitan participants. More females than males participated (57.1% and 42.9% respectively) and approximately half (52.2%) of the respondents were aged 25–34 years (10.3% aged 14–17 years and 37.5% aged 18–24 years). More than two in three respondents (70.5%) had been to a night venue or entertainment event in the last month (38.0% in the last week).

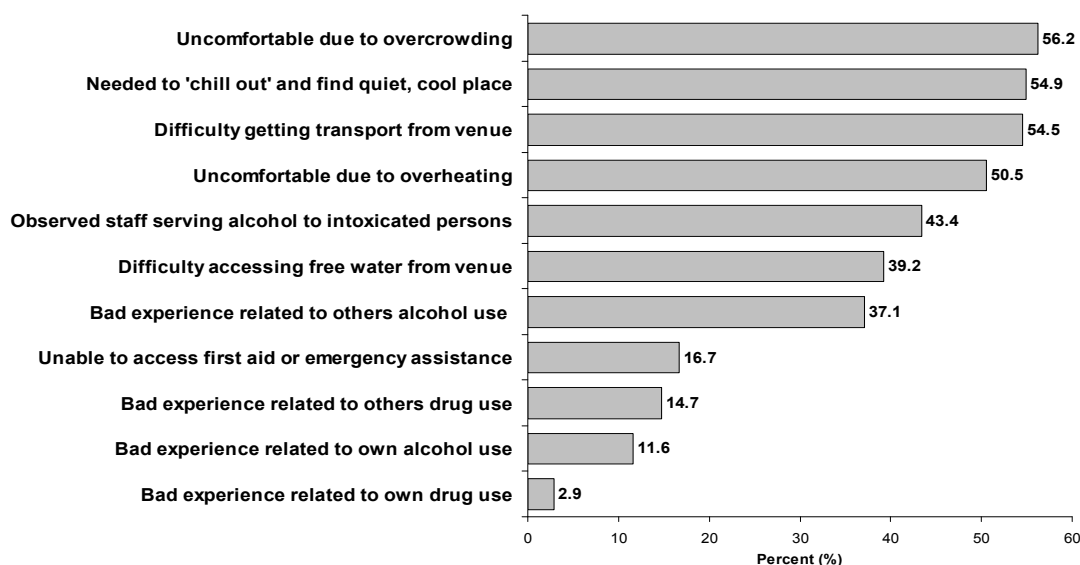
In the six months prior to the survey, over half of metropolitan respondents said they experienced at least half the time (Figure 1):

- discomfort due to overcrowding (56.2%);
- needing to find a quiet place to ‘chill out’ (54.9%);
- difficulty getting transport from a venue (54.5%); and
- discomfort due to overheating (50.5%).

In addition:

- 43.4% observed staff serving alcohol to intoxicated persons;
- 39.2% reported difficulty with accessing free water from the venue; and
- 37.1% had a bad experience related to another patron’s alcohol use.

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



There was a high level of support 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 (91.5%); crowd controllers making sure drunk or intoxicated people are removed from venues (89.2%); and venues and events to clearly advertise the availability of free water (88.2%).