

## > Night Venues and Entertainment Events Project (NVEEP) 2011 Results for Western Australia

This bulletin summarises results from the annual Night Venues and Entertainment Events Project (NVEEP) 2011 Patron Survey and Confidential Observational Checklist.

### 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.

### 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. 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.

### Respondent Demographics

A total of 405 respondents participated in the 2011 survey. Of those who gave their age, 11.5% were aged 14–17 years, 37.8% aged 18–24 years and 50.7% aged 25–34 years. More females (57.5%) than males (42.5%) participated. Around one in five (19.5%) respondents lived outside of the Perth metropolitan area.

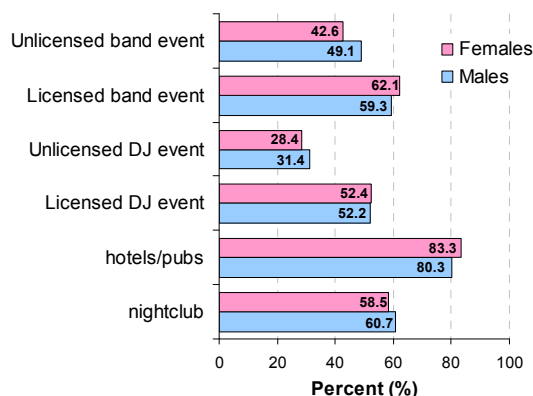
### Types of Venues Attended

In 2011, 70.9% of all respondents had been to a night venue or entertainment event in the last month (37.8% in the last week).

In the six months prior to the survey, most respondents indicated they had been to a hotel/pub (81.8%), a licensed band event (60.7%), a nightclub (59.6%), or a licensed DJ event (52.3%).

For metropolitan respondents, 60.7% had been to a venue in Northbridge/CBD, 32.4% in Fremantle, 28.9% in Subiaco, 22.2% in Leederville, 17.5% in Mt Lawley, and 13.3% in Claremont.

**Figure 1. Venues attended by all respondents in the six months prior to the survey**



## Situations Experienced at Venues

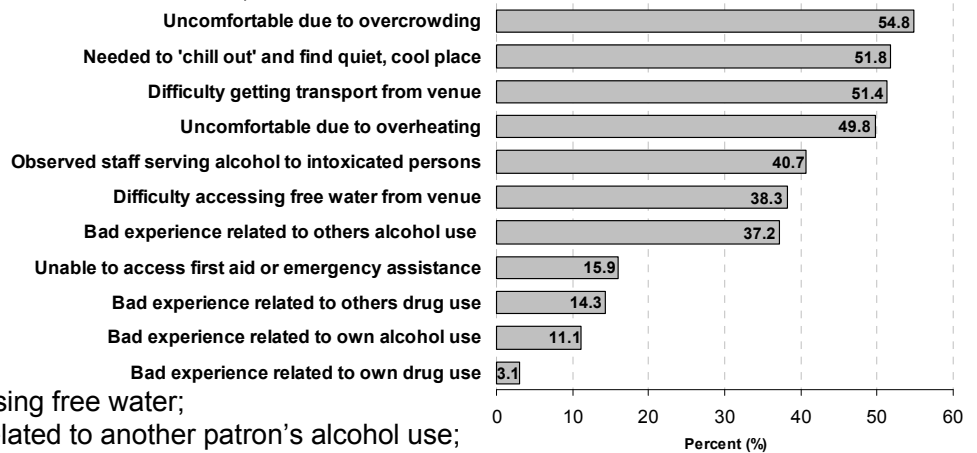
In the six months prior to the survey, over half of respondents said they experienced at least half the time (Figure 2):

- discomfort due to overcrowding (54.8%);
- needing to find a quiet place to 'chill out' (51.8%); and
- difficulty getting transport from a venue (51.4%).

In addition:

- 49.8% felt uncomfortable due to overheating;
- 40.7% observed venue staff serving intoxicated patrons;
- 38.3% reported difficulty accessing free water;
- 37.2% had a bad experience related to another patron's alcohol use;
- 15.9% were unable to access first aid or emergency assistance;
- 14.3% had a bad experience related to another patron's drug use;
- 11.1% reported having a bad experience related to their own alcohol use; and
- 3.1% had a bad experience related to their own drug use.

**Figure 2. Situations experienced by respondents at venues in the last six months, at least half the time**



## Support for Drug and Alcohol-Related Policies

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for drug and alcohol-related policies to reduce issues at night venues (Figure 3).

There was a high level of support for the proposed policies. The most strongly supported strategies included:

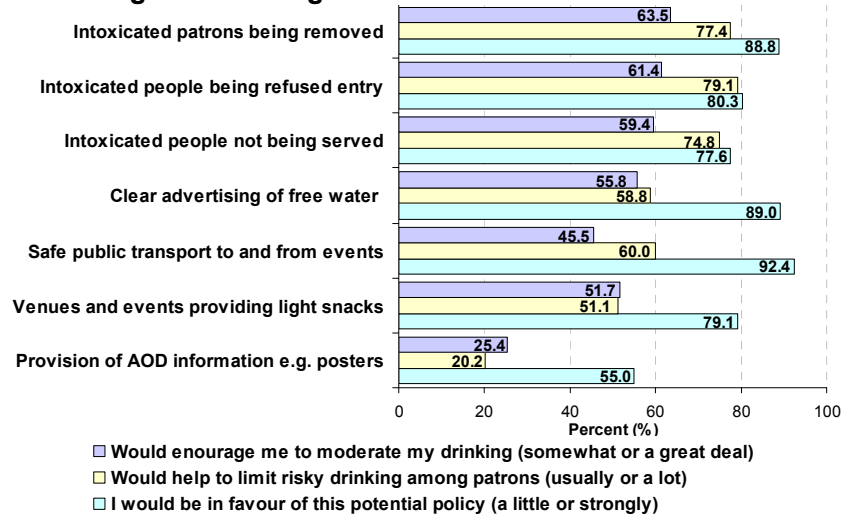
- safe public transport being available to and from major events (92.4%);
- venues and events to clearly advertise the availability of free water (89.0%); and
- crowd controllers making sure drunk or intoxicated people are removed from venues (88.8%).

Respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which these

policies would 1) encourage them to moderate their own drinking behaviour, and 2) help to limit risky drinking amongst other patrons. The strategies which received the highest levels of agreement were:

- crowd controllers making sure intoxicated people are removed from venues (63.5% and 77.4% respectively), and not permitted to enter venues (61.4% and 79.1% respectively); and
- managers ensuring staff do not serve alcohol to intoxicated patrons (59.4% and 74.8% respectively).

**Figure 3. Attitudes towards the introduction of policies as a way of reducing issues at night venues/entertainment events**



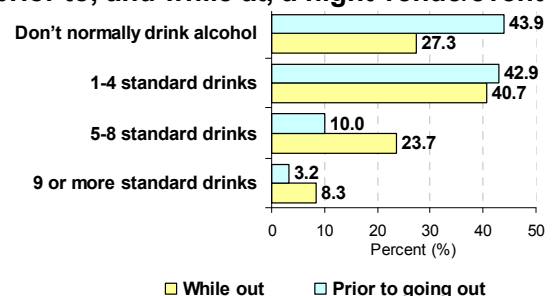
## Typical Number of Standard Drinks Consumed

Respondents were asked how many standard drinks they usually have prior to going to a night venue or event and while at a night venue or event (Figure 4).

The majority of respondents (56.1%) reported consuming alcohol prior to going to a venue. Of these, most (42.9%) consumed 1-4 standard drinks.

Around three quarters of respondents (72.7%) reported consuming alcohol while at a venue.

**Figure 4. Number of drinks typically consumed prior to, and while at, a night venue/event**



## 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 127 licensed night venues were observed, 100 in the Perth metropolitan area and 27 in regional Western Australia. Of these, the majority were taverns (45.7%), followed by nightclubs (16.5%), hotels (15.7%), special facilities (12.6%), small bars (8.7%) and clubs (0.8%).

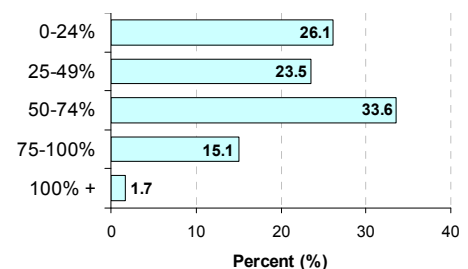
### Crowding and Checking ID

For venues that had queuing outside (23.3%), the majority (83.8%) had a clear separation between the queue and other pedestrians, and most (72.7%) had crowd controllers managing the queue and patron flow.

For all venues, a total of 64.6% appeared to check patrons' identification on entry, and around half (48.4%) appeared to be counting the number of patrons entering and leaving the night venue premises.

The estimated overall crowd capacity at the time of observation was less than three quarters full for 83.2% of the night venues (Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Estimated current capacity (% full) of the venue.**



### Measures to Increase Comfort to Patrons

The noise level was rated as being loud with loud conversation being able to be heard for around half the venues (50.8%), and as being background noise only for a third of venues (33.3%). Less than 2% of venues were rated as having a noise level that was painfully loud.

The mean temperature in the bar area was 25.3°C (range: 14.1°C to 31.8°C), and the mean temperature near the dance floor was 26.0°C (range: 15.3°C to 32.0°C). Measures to reduce overheating included air-conditioning (82.3%) and natural ventilation (71.7%). In around a third of venues, there were breaks in the music (38.5%) and DJ's were attentive and created calmer moments with the music (33.3%). Staff monitored dancers on the dance floor in most venues (60.3%) and the majority of venues (87.0%) provided 'chill out' areas.

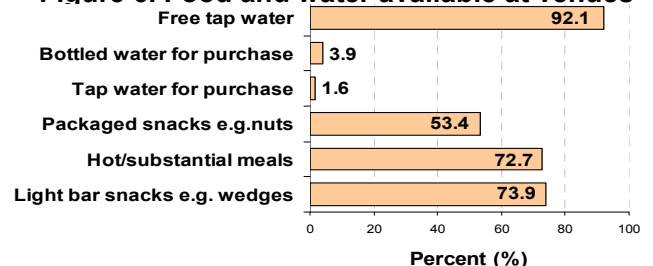
### Availability of Food and Water

The majority of venues supplied free tap water (92.1%). However, this is a decrease from 2010 where all venues assessed supplied free tap water.

A total of 1.6% had tap water available for purchase and 3.9% had bottled water available for purchase.

Food was supplied in 69.3% of venues (53.4% packaged snacks, 73.9% light bar snacks, and 72.7% hot/substantial meals).

**Figure 6. Food and water available at venues**



### Overall Safety

Plastic drinking vessels were used instead of glass in 11.0% of venues, and drinks were allowed on the dance floor in 45.7% of venues. Dancing on speakers was only observed in 1.6% of venues. Apparent fixtures/features likely to cause harm or injury were observed in 7.9% of venues.

## Signs of Drug and Alcohol Use

Overall, signs of patron intoxication were observed in 34.6% of venues. There were 18 instances where a patron was observed to be in trouble from intoxication (e.g. overdose, vomiting, confusion). Of these, venue staff were aware of the problem in 13 of the instances (72.2%), and of these 12 were responded to by staff. Staff responses including talking to the patron (n=10), removing the patron from the venue (n=7) or the police dealing with the incident (n=1).

Staff were observed serving someone who was already intoxicated in 15.3% of venues.

In 1.6% of venues, there were signs of the consumption of drugs other than alcohol, and in 1.6% of venues drug packaging was observed.

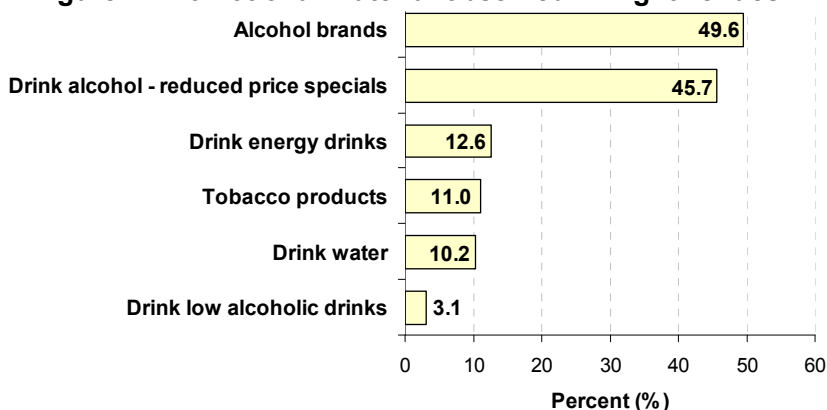
## Signage

Around half of venues (48.0%) had responsible service of alcohol posters on display. A total of 16.5% had a drug policy statement, and 22.0% had other drug and alcohol posters.

Around half of venues had material promoting alcohol brands (49.6%) and reduced price drink specials (45.7%).

One in ten (10.2%) had material promoting water, and 3.1% promoted low alcoholic drinks.

**Figure 7. Promotional material observed in night venues**



## Access to Transport

It was observed that 42.5% of venues were within reasonable walking distance from a train station, 53.5% from a bus stop, and 60.6% from a taxi rank.

## Discussion

The 2011 Patron Survey and Confidential Observational Checklist for NVEEP indicate that venues are generally compliant with checking for ID and counting numbers of patrons, having food and water available, having a noise level that is not excessively loud, providing good ventilation, and having 'chill out' areas available to patrons.

However, some concerns that arise from these results include the finding that not all venues are providing free tap water to patrons. A total of 7.9% did not provide free tap water, which is a higher proportion than previous years.

Also of concern is the observation of obvious signs of intoxication in more than a third of venues. In addition, staff were observed serving intoxicated patrons in 15.3% of venues. These findings are supported by the Patron Survey where 40.7% of respondents observed venue staff serving alcohol to intoxicated patrons. As per the *Liquor Control Act 1988*, it is an offence for any person on a licensed premise to sell or supply liquor to a person who is drunk, or permit drunkenness to take place on licensed premises. High levels of drunkenness in a venue increase the likelihood that harm will occur.

There is considerable support for removing and refusing entry to intoxicated persons. There is less support for direct controls on alcohol availability or interest in information about drugs and alcohol.

The NVEEP collaboration will continue to use these results to support the night venue and entertainment event industry to 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.