

# Night Venues and Entertainment Events Project (NVEEP)

## Bulletin 2010

This bulletin summarises results from the annual *Night Venues and Entertainment Events Project (NVEEP)* 2010 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, Nightclub Owner's Association, Australian Hotels' Association, 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.

### Methodology

The Project includes a comprehensive evaluation and monitoring component comprising a patron survey and a confidential observational checklist.

### Patron Survey

An annual survey of patrons aims to assess patrons' support for drug-related policies, their awareness of harms, and experiences at venues or events. This year's survey recruited a random sample of the general population aged between 14 and 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.

### Results

The patron survey recorded a 21.4% response rate with 401 respondents participating. Of these, 9.0% were aged 14–17 years, 38.4% 18–24 years, and 52.6% 25–34 years. More females (55.9%) than males participated. Approximately one in five respondents lived outside of the Perth metropolitan area (19.0%). In 2010, 74.4% of respondents had been to a night venue or entertainment event in the last month (36.2% in the last week).

In the six months prior to the survey, most respondents indicated they had been to a hotel/pub (88.8%), a nightclub (57.5%), or a licensed DJ event (51.7%) or music event (58.3%) (Figure 1). For metropolitan respondents, 64.7% had been to a venue or event in Northbridge, 29.4% in Fremantle, 29.4% in Subiaco, and 24.3% in Leederville.

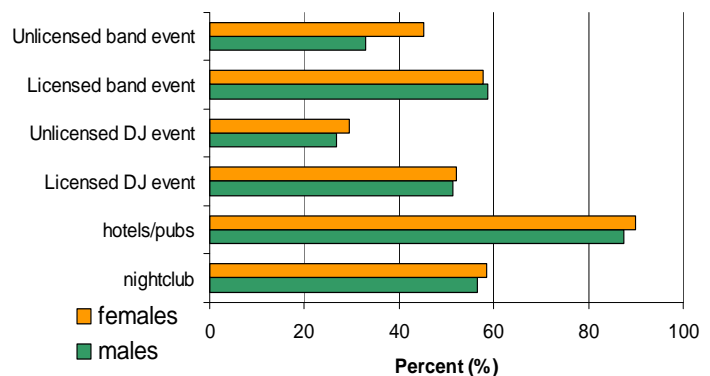
In the six months prior to the survey, over half the respondents said they had experienced at least half the time (Figure 2):

- discomfort due to overcrowding at venues (52.4%);
- difficulty getting transport from a venue (51.5%);

In addition:

- 49.1% indicated they needed to find a quiet place to 'chill out';
- 47.1% had felt uncomfortable due to overheating;
- 43.3% had difficulty accessing free water;
- 39.8% had a bad experience related to

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



another patrons' alcohol use;

- 38.6% reported observing venue staff serving alcohol to intoxicated patrons;
- 12.5% had a bad experience related to another patrons' drug use;
- 7.8% mentioned bad experiences due to their own alcohol use; and
- 2.8% indicated they had a bad experience due to their own drug use.

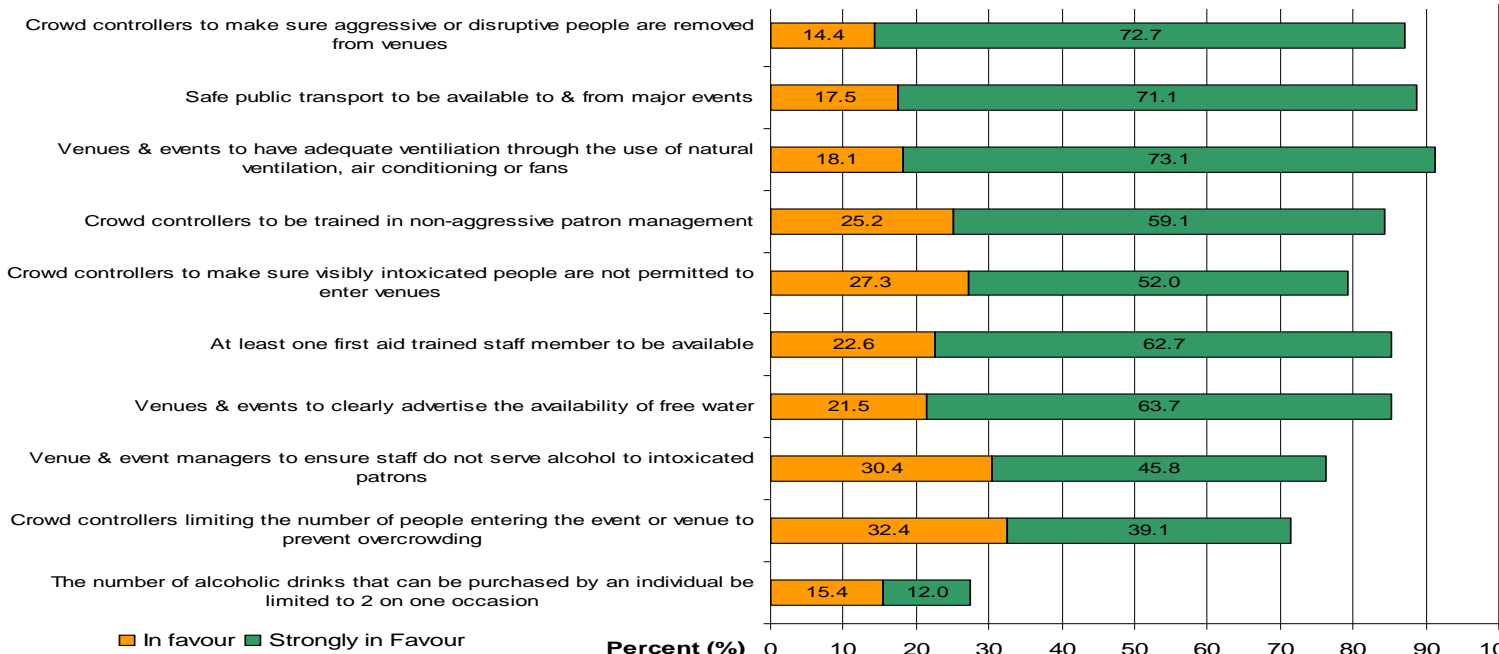
Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for drug and alcohol related policies to reduce issues at night venues (Figure 3).

In 2010, there was strong support for the majority of strategies. The most strongly supported strategies included;

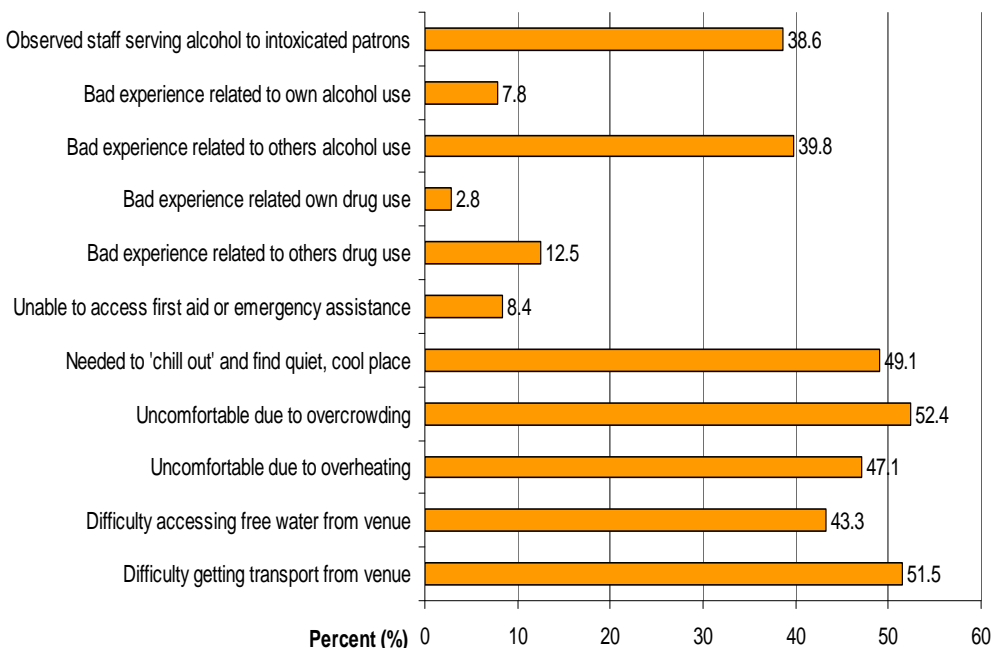
- increasing the level of ventilation at venues (91.2%);
- providing safe public transport to and from events (88.6%);
- crowd controllers to remove aggressive or disruptive people from venues (87.1%); and
- availability and access to free water (85.2%).

Respondents were also asked to rate these policies in order of importance in reducing issues at night venues or entertainment events. Nearly 28% of respondents felt that the removal of aggressive or disruptive people by crowd controllers was the most important policy. The policy for reducing the number of alcoholic drinks that can be purchased on one occasion by an individual to two drinks was listed tenth out of sixteen suggested policies. However, this policy had the lowest level of support at 27.4%.

**Figure 3. Support for drug and alcohol-related policies to reduce issues at night venues, by order of importance (highest to lowest)**



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



### Confidential Observational Checklist

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.

Three types of night venues were assessed; hotels/pubs, nightclubs and special facilities. All observational checklists were conducted during peak times (7pm to 2am).

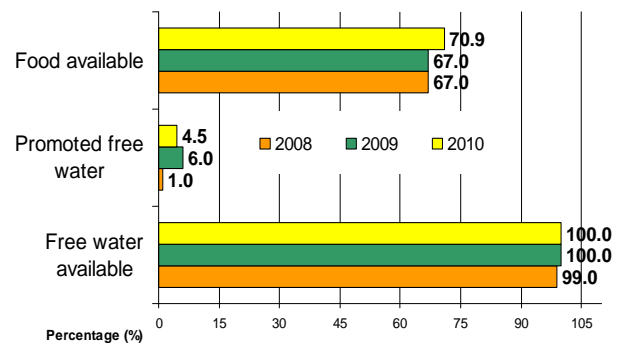
### Results

A total of 110 licensed night venues were observed, 87 in the Perth Metropolitan area and 23 in regional Western Australia. Of these, 84 were hotel/pubs, 15 were cabarets, and 11 were special facilities.

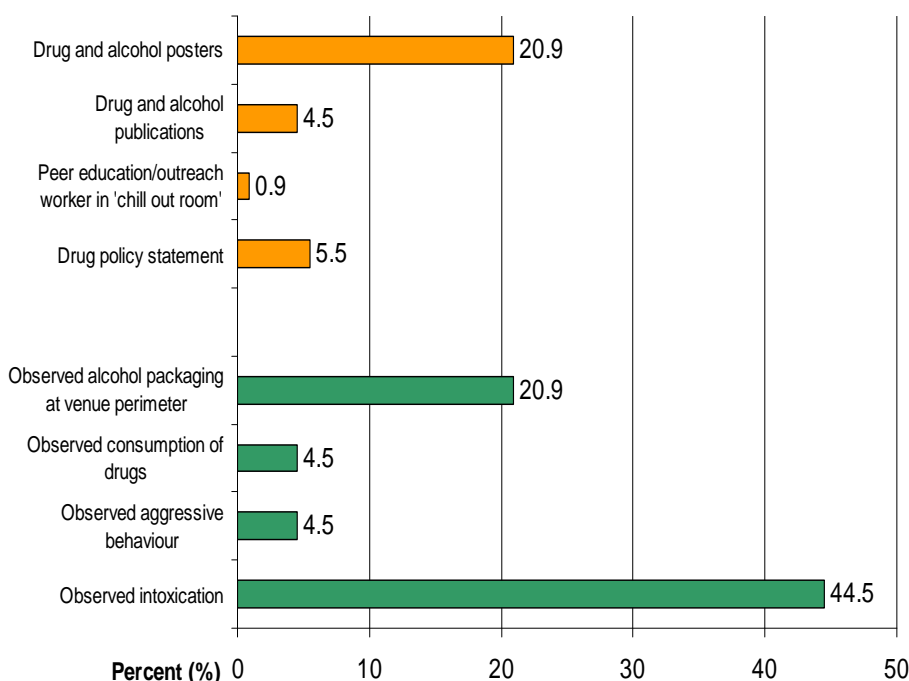
In 2010, 69.1% of night venues assessed appeared to check patrons' identification and over half (57.3%) counted the number of patrons entering and leaving night venue premises. The estimated crowd capacity at the time of observation was less than three quarters full for 76.3% of the night venues. Most overcrowding in night venues was observed near bar areas (37.3% of venues), near, or on, the dance floor (56.8%), and in thoroughfares (26.4%).

The most common temperature in night venues was 24°C near the bar, rising to 26-27°C on the dance floor. Measures to reduce overheating included the use of natural ventilation (81.8%) and air conditioning (80.0%); however, only 71.8% of those venues with air conditioning had it turned on. Other measures to reduce overheating included availability of a 'chill out' room (87.3%), breaks in music (27.3%), attentive DJs (23.6%), and staff monitoring (3.6%). One-third (31.9%) of venues had music that was very or painfully loud.

**Figure 4. Availability of water and food observed at night venues, 2008–2010**



**Figure 5. Drug policy information, and drug and alcohol-related behaviour observed at night venues**



All of the night venues assessed supplied free tap water and 70.9% of venues supplied food (43.6% packaged snacks, 52.7% light beer snacks, 49.1% substantial meals). This has increased from previous observations and may be due to the introduction of the *Liquor Control Act 1988* provisions in 2007 requiring licensees to provide free potable drinking water for patrons (Figure 4).

Obvious signs of intoxication were observed in 44.5% of night venues, whilst drug taking was observed in 4.5% (Figure 5). Another visible safety concern was the proportion of night venues that had drinks left on the dance floor (53.6%). However, 68.2% of night venues had staff collecting empty glasses and 84.5% had no

apparent fixtures or features likely to cause harm.

Of venues with a queue, 25.8% were observed to have intoxicated people lining up, and 9.6% were observed to have drug or alcohol use occurring in the queue whilst people were waiting to be admitted into the venue.

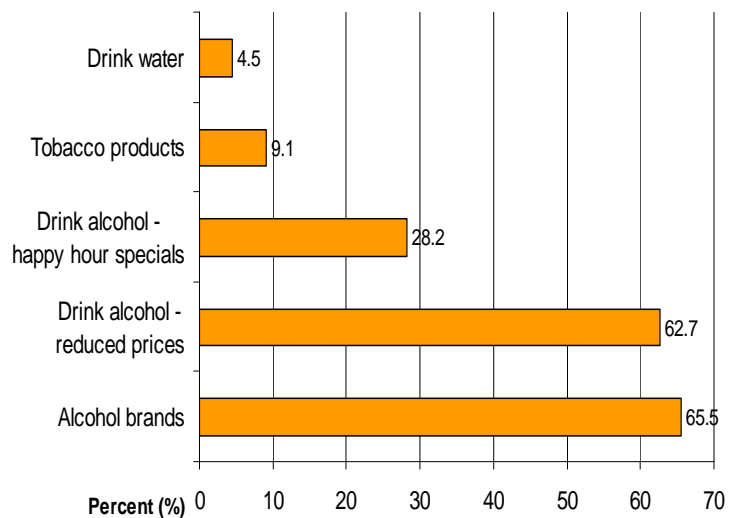
One in five night venues displayed educational drug and alcohol-related posters, the most common being posters from the Drug and Alcohol Office *Responsible Service of Alcohol* poster series – ‘will not serve intoxicated or aggressive patrons’ and the *Drug Aware*/national campaign. Less than one in twenty provided drug and alcohol publication materials. The most common publication available was a ‘Don’t Drink and Drive’ brochure.

Seventeen incidents related to intoxication were observed during the audit. Of these, venue staff noticed only 9 (or 52.9%). Of the nine incidents that staff appeared to notice, eight responded. Staff responses included removing the patron from the night venue (n = 7) and talking to the affected patron (n = 6).

An option of public transportation to and from the night venue was available in a majority of cases. Train stations or bus stops were close to 47.3% and 70.0% of venues respectively. Additionally, 69.1% of venues were close to a taxi rank, of which, 77.3% had taxis easily accessible. It should be noted that public transport services are limited in their hours of service.

The majority of promotional advertising observed in night venues was for alcohol brands (65.5%) and reduced pricing of alcohol (62.7%, Figure 6). Only 4.5% of night venues promoted drink water to patrons, and nearly one in ten night venues promoted tobacco products.

**Figure 6. Promotional material observed in night venues**



## Discussion

The tenth Patron Survey and ninth Confidential Observation Checklist for NVEEP indicate both concerning and positive results. The main concerns of patrons revolve around access to adequate transport to and from the venue, removal of aggressive or disruptive people, and adequate ventilation. The observational component of the project indicates that transportation is available for the majority of night venues, and over three in four night venues are adequately ventilated. Over half of the respondents reported feeling uncomfortable due to overcrowding. However, the observational study indicates that most night venues are less or equal to 75% of capacity at the time of observation.

It is positive to note in 2010, that all night venues supplied free tap water to patrons; however, nearly one in two patrons felt it was difficult to access free water at a venue. While 85.2% of respondents supported clearly advertising the availability of free water at venues and events, currently, only 4.5% of venues were observed to promote the availability of free water.

Of concern is the observation of obvious signs of intoxication in 44.5% of assessed licensed premises. In addition, 25.8% of venues with a queue were observed to have intoxicated people lining up, and 9.6% of venues with a queue were observed to have drug or alcohol use occurring in the queue whilst people were waiting to be admitted into the venue. These findings are supported by the Patron Survey, where 38.6% of patrons, had witnessed venue staff serving alcohol to intoxicated patrons.

The NVEEP collaboration will continue to use these results to support the night venue and entertainment event industry to help devise and implement environmental strategies to reduce the potential for drug and alcohol-related harms.

