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MEDIA RELEASE

Assaults on licensed premises in inner-urban areas

Just three per cent of inner Sydney hotels account for more than one quarter of all assaults on hotel premises, according to new research conducted jointly by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research and the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University (WA).

The research also revealed that only eight per cent of licensed premises accounted for nearly 80 per cent of all assaults on licensed premises in inner Newcastle while six per cent of licensed premises accounted for 67 per cent of all assaults on licensed premises in inner Wollongong.

Hotels and nightclubs are the most problematic types of licensed premises for violence. Between 81 and 91 per cent of all assaults on licensed premises in inner Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong occurred at either a hotel or a nightclub.

Late-trading licensed premises were also at higher risk for violence on their premises, with almost three-quarters of the most problematic inner Sydney hotels having authority to trade continually, 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week.

The most frequent times for assaults to occur on licensed premises were Saturday and Sunday mornings between midnight and 3am.

These two time periods alone recorded 23 per cent of all assaults on inner Sydney licensed premises, 37 per cent of all assaults on inner Newcastle licensed premises and 41 per cent of all assaults on inner Wollongong licensed premises.

Commenting on the findings, the Director of the Bureau, Dr Don Weatherburn said that they highlighted the critical importance of liquor licensing enforcement in reducing the incidence of assault on licensed premises.

'It is clear that most licensed premises in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong have no significant problem of violence on their premises. A few, however, appear to have constant problems of this kind'.

'In the next phase of our research with the National Drug Research Institute we will be examining the level and outcome of enforcement action taken against licensed premises to see to what extent the laws concerning responsible serving of alcohol are being properly enforced'.

Professor Tim Stockwell, Director of the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University suggested these data provide a basis for police, health and licensing authorities to work together in reducing the serious problem of violence on licensed premises:

Consideration needs to be given to reducing the trading hours or even suspending the licences of that small minority of licensed premises which experience repeated acts of violence.

Further enquiries:

Dr Don Weatherburn: 02 9231 9190 (wk), 0419 494 408 (mob)