

1.4 MONASH SAFE VENUES AND LIQUOR ACCORD PROGRESS REPORT

(FH:COM48)

Responsible Director: Carolyn McClean

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the progress report on the Monash Safe Venues and Liquor Accord.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the Monash Safe Venues and Liquor Accord. (The Accord)

BACKGROUND

In 2004, Council's Alcohol and Drug project led to the development of a 'Safe Venues Liquor Accord' to encourage and promote best practices in licensed premises in the Monash region. Monash Council founded this Accord in partnership with Victoria Police and Liquor Licensing Victoria (previously Liquor Licensing Consumer Affairs Victoria). The Accord is contained in Attachment 1.

The Accord aims to increase the safety of patrons, staff and the local community by promoting the responsible service and consumption of alcohol and the maintenance of high standards of behaviour in and around licensed premises.

Council decided to become a signatory of this at Council meeting 12 October 2004.

Council facilitates the Monash Safe Venues and Liquor Network meetings that draws together the licensees of hotels, Victoria Police, Liquor Licensing Consumer Affairs Victoria and the Monash City Council. This group seeks to address relevant issues and to provide a combined and committed approach to responsible serving and consumption of alcohol that will be beneficial to both licensed premises and the community.

Moansh Council recognises the importance of preventing and minimising drug and alcohol issues in the community. The Monash Municipal Public Health Plan 2007-10 reflects this concern. Under Objective 2.3 – 'Encourage positive lifestyle behaviours through collaboration, information gathering and dissemination' it is stated that Monash will strategically 'Encourage the responsible serving of alcohol in Monash.'

CONSULTATION

Discussions were held in September 2008 with key stakeholders such as Liquor Licensing Victoria about The Accord. Contact was made with other Councils to research the structure of their Accords in relation to the level of drug and alcohol issues in their municipality.

Further discussions were held in October 2008 with Victoria Police and Liquor Licensing Victoria to discuss the future of The Accord. It was decided that a meeting needed to be re-established with venues to continue the work of the Accord. Monash Council agreed to provide administrative support, Victoria Police to contact stakeholders and chair the meetings and Liquor Licensing Victoria to attend.

At the first meeting in November 2008 all stakeholders present (including: Monash Council, Victoria Police, Liquor Licensing Victoria and Monash venues) determined the focus of the meetings, their frequency and location. The members unanimously determined that:

- The meetings should be held meet bi-annually (before Easter and Christmas, the two peak seasons for drug and alcohol incidents).
- They are to be held at the Civic Centre.
- It was decided that for two meetings a year a steering group was not required. Instead all members of the Accord will be given an opportunity to suggest topics for the agenda before this is distributed.
- Meetings will include guest speakers, updates from Victoria Police, Liquor Licensing Victoria and information sharing.
- If the venue Manager cannot attend, it was agreed that an assistant/deputy manager may attend on their behalf.

An Alcohol Accord meeting was held on 28 April 2009. This meeting was well attended by Police and venues. The CEO of Liquor Licensing Victoria attended as the guest speaker.

ANALYSIS

An effective partnership with a variety of stakeholders is key to a successful strategy that aims to increase community safety. The Monash Safe Venues Liquor Accord is a collaborative effort between Council, Victoria Police and local venue operators and is an important step in encouraging responsible sale and consumption of alcohol in Monash city. Local venue operators are willing participants in this program, and creating a uniform standard which local outlets are expected to attain will lead to best practice in venues in Monash.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Administrative support provided to the Accord will be met within the existing operational budgets.

CONCLUSION

The Monash Safe Venues Liquor Accord relies on mutual cooperation and open communication between the community and agencies involved. The Accord aims to encourage operators of licensed premises to promote their obligations to the community and not contribute to public disorder and irresponsible practices that promote the excessive and uncontrolled consumption of alcohol.