

Preventing Alcohol Related Harm Policy

Category	All staff
Date of Adoption by ELT/Council	Council Meeting 9 August 2016
Directorate Responsibility	Community Services

Policy

The City of Whittlesea recognises evidence of the strong correlation between increased access and availability of alcohol in the community and a broad range of health and social harms. Council is committed to enhancing community safety, amenity, health and wellbeing in the City of Whittlesea through support for the responsible management and regulation of alcohol in the Municipality and a proactive approach to preventing alcohol related harm.

Objectives

The objectives of the policy are to :

- Ensure planning is informed by a comprehensive understanding of alcohol access and availability in the local context and data related to alcohol consumption, misuse and associated harms is monitored.
- Raise awareness of the significant harms associated with increased alcohol access and availability and build support for implementation of local, responsive evidence based harm minimisation and prevention approaches.
- Demonstrate leadership at an organisational level which supports cultural change and models social norms that support positive health outcomes for the community.
- Maximise community access to healthy inclusive, family friendly sports settings, community facilities and community events.
- Strengthen Council capacity to influence planning decisions and local liquor licencing outcomes.

Policy Principles

Evidence Council planning is responsive to community needs and the local context and is informed by evidence and good practice models.

Prevention Council has a focus on prevention. This requires a multi-level, (individual, organisational, community) multi-strategy approach and a focus on specific settings.

Harm reduction Council recognises that whilst alcohol has a valid role in our social and economic environment it is a drug with potential harmful impacts. As such, consideration of supply and availability in our local community requires more careful assessment and regulation than other retail commodities.

Consultation & Engagement Planning is informed through engagement with a broad range of stakeholders to develop responsive relevant approaches which reflect community needs.

Partnerships An integrated collaborative approach to planning across Council Departments, community organisations and the community with a broad range of relevant stakeholders is required to effect positive community outcomes. This will include but not be limited to Council departments, residents, community organisations, Victoria Police and the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Committee.

Advocacy Community engagement and awareness raising is essential to support a shared understanding of the issues and a joint approach to advocacy.

Integrated Planning Integrated planning and advocacy will support shared outcomes across Council priorities including Community Safety, Family Violence Prevention, Community Building and Prevention of Alcohol related Harm.

Context/Rationale

There is strong evidence of the correlation between increased access to and availability of alcohol in the community and significant social harms including: family violence, crime, injury and chronic disease. This provides a strong rationale for Council to develop strategies to reduce the harmful effects that can arise from alcohol availability.

The role of Council in preventing and reducing alcohol related harm is broad and may include:

- Monitoring alcohol related harms
- Support for young people and families which strengthen protective factors and minimise risk factors for early and risky alcohol use
- Awareness raising
- Planning and liquor licencing
- Community engagement
- Strengthening policy and practice in Council owned facilities and at Council events
- Workplace initiatives and policies
- Local laws to prohibit alcohol consumption in public places.

Articulation of Council's position and expectations in relation to preventing alcohol related harm is essential to ensuring a strategic approach which is responsive to the local context.

Key linkages

Shaping our Future: City of Whittlesea Council Plan 2013-17 and integrated Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

City of Whittlesea Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan (in development)

Safe in our homes Safe in our communities City of Whittlesea Family Violence Strategy 2014-2018

Better Together City of Whittlesea Community Building Strategy

Commonwealth, Victorian and Council strategies and plans that support the principles of the Alcohol Management Policy include: National Preventative Health Taskforce, the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy and National Alcohol Strategy; Reducing the Alcohol and Drug Toll, Victoria's Plan 2013-2017.

Relevant Legislation

Victorian Liquor Control Reform Act 1998.

Victorian Local Government Act 1989.

Victorian Planning and Environment Act 1987.

Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 1987.

