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Packaged Liquor as a Driver of Crime

Assistant Commissioner Luke Cornelius APM

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The Context of Alcohol Harm



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- **Current outcomes in the Southern Metro Region**
- **What is the impact of alcohol harm in the Region?**
- **How can Victoria Police best respond to alcohol harm problems?**
- **How can partners work together to reduce alcohol harm?**
- **The need for relevant evidence that identifies the issues**
- **How can we change public and community attitudes to excessive alcohol consumption?**
- **The need to change public policy**

Immediate : Hotels / Clubs / Pubs

Violence, behaviour at licensed premises, drink driving

Transferred: Packaged Liquor Outlets

Homes, sporting events, public places

The Impact?

- **Police**
- **Ambulance**
- **CFA / MFB**
- **Councils**
- **Communities**

Family Violence & Alcohol Harm in the SM Region



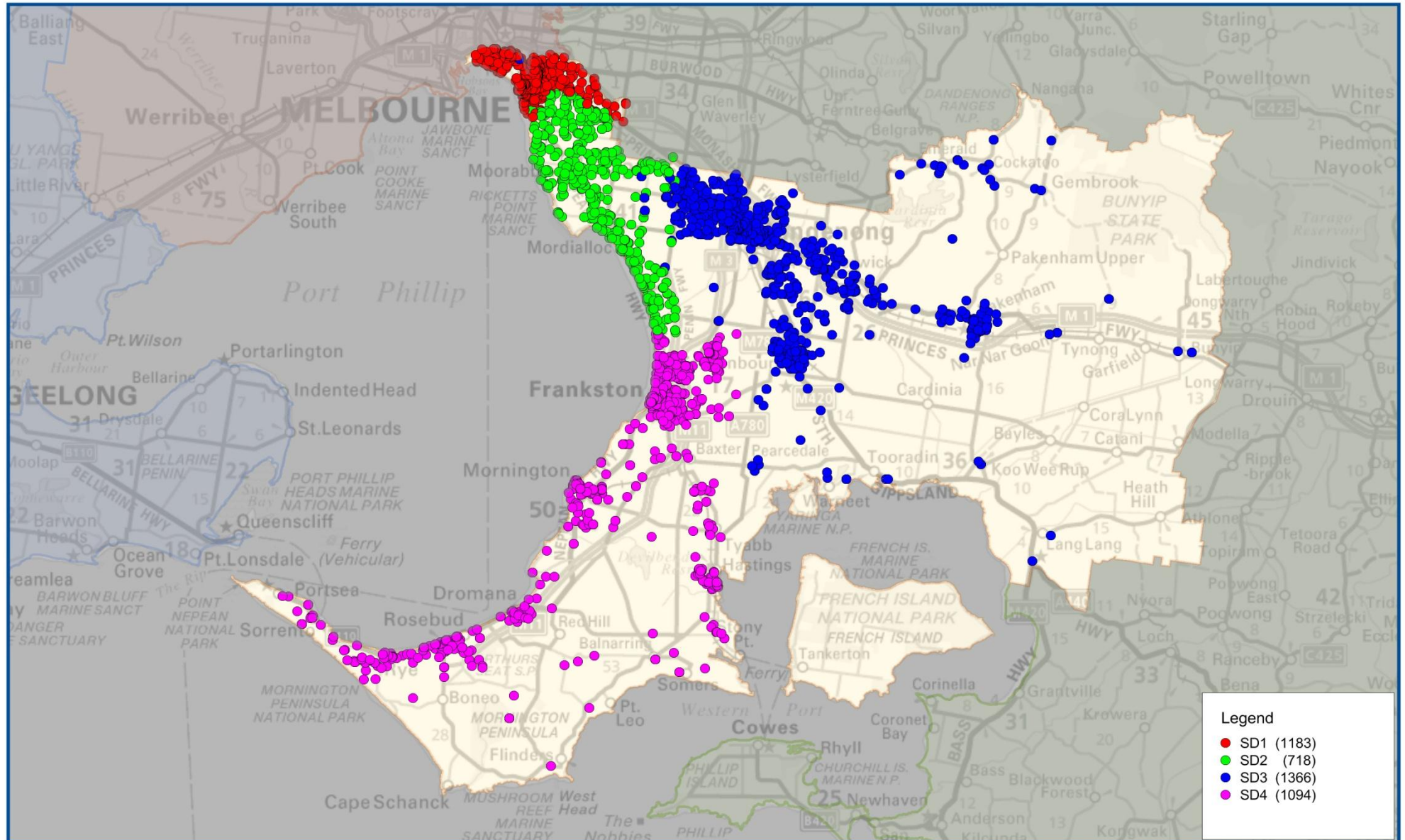
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- In 2007-2008, Family Violence cost Victoria Police \$9.9 billion and has increased annually (Frost 2009) to 13.6 billion in 2013 - 2014
- On a yearly basis, Alcohol Harm is estimated to cost the Victorian Government and community \$4.3 billion (Frost 2012)

The impact of alcohol harm in SMR

Assaults involving Alcohol

01-JUL-2009 to 30-JUN-2014 (94% Geocoded)



Alcohol as a driver of crime



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- Almost half of all crime in the last 12 months was committed by an offender processed for an alcohol-related offence they had been charged with in the previous five years
- One in three alcohol offenders are Family Violence offenders
- Excessive consumption is a driver for Family Violence assaults, property damage and justice procedure offences
- In 2012/13, alcohol was identified as a possible or confirmed factor in 43% of all Family Violence incidents attended by Police

Alcohol as a driver of crime



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- 53% of alcohol related offences occur in domestic dwellings and in public places, while 19% of alcohol related offences occur in licensed premises
- 48% of reported assaults occur in domestic dwellings
- Clearly, alcohol consumed in domestic premises and public places is sourced from packaged liquor outlets

Licensed Premises in the SMR



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In SMR:

- There are currently 3,474 active licensed premises (VCGLR 2014)
- Hotels and clubs make up 28% of all licensed premises
- Packaged outlets are 10.2% of the total of licensed premises
- VicHealth indicates 75% of all alcohol sold in Victoria is from packaged liquor outlets (2011)
- Packaged Liquor outlets comprise only 10% of licensed premises, but account for 75% - 78% of alcohol sales

Licensed premises by type



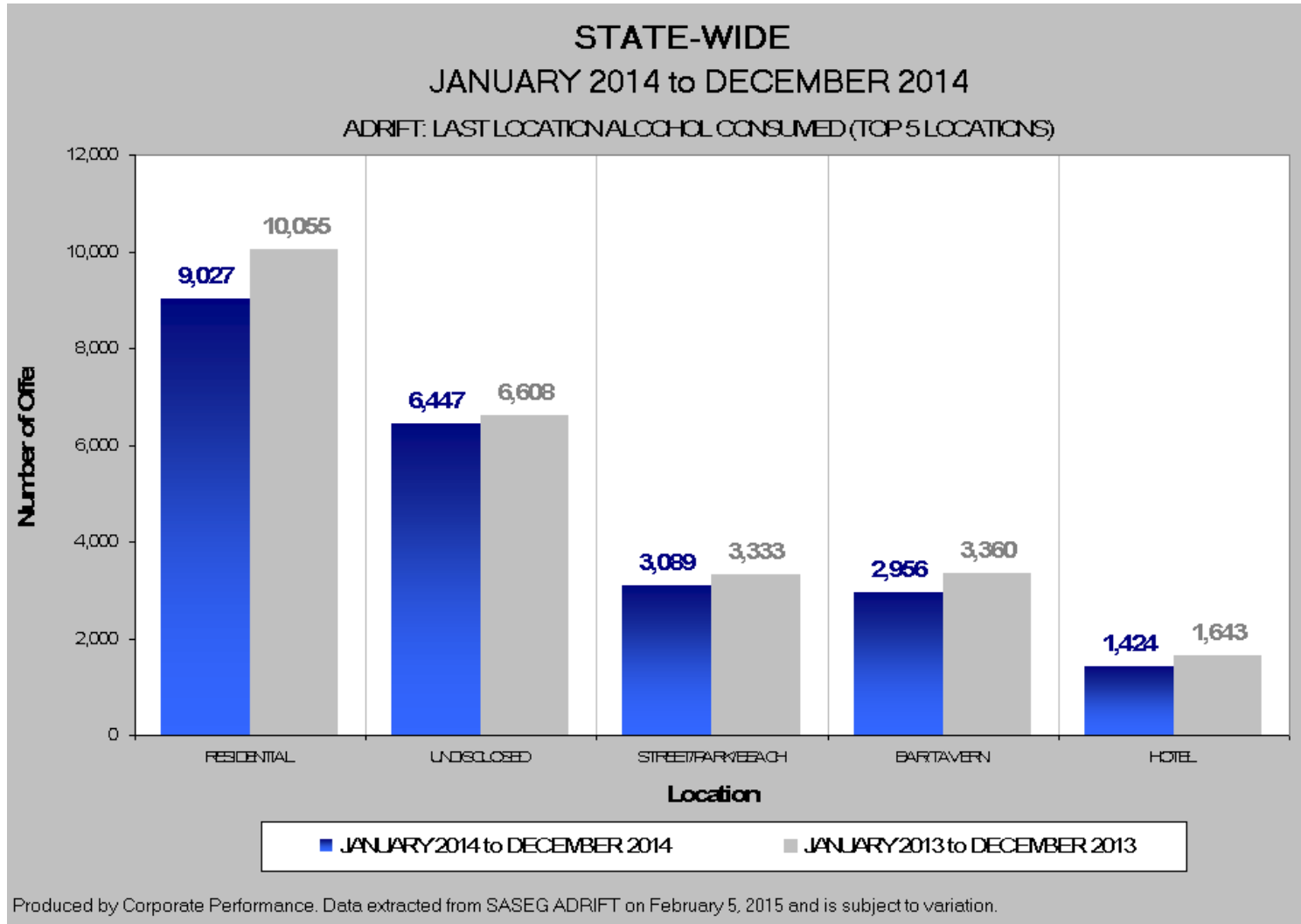
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Crime related consumption by location



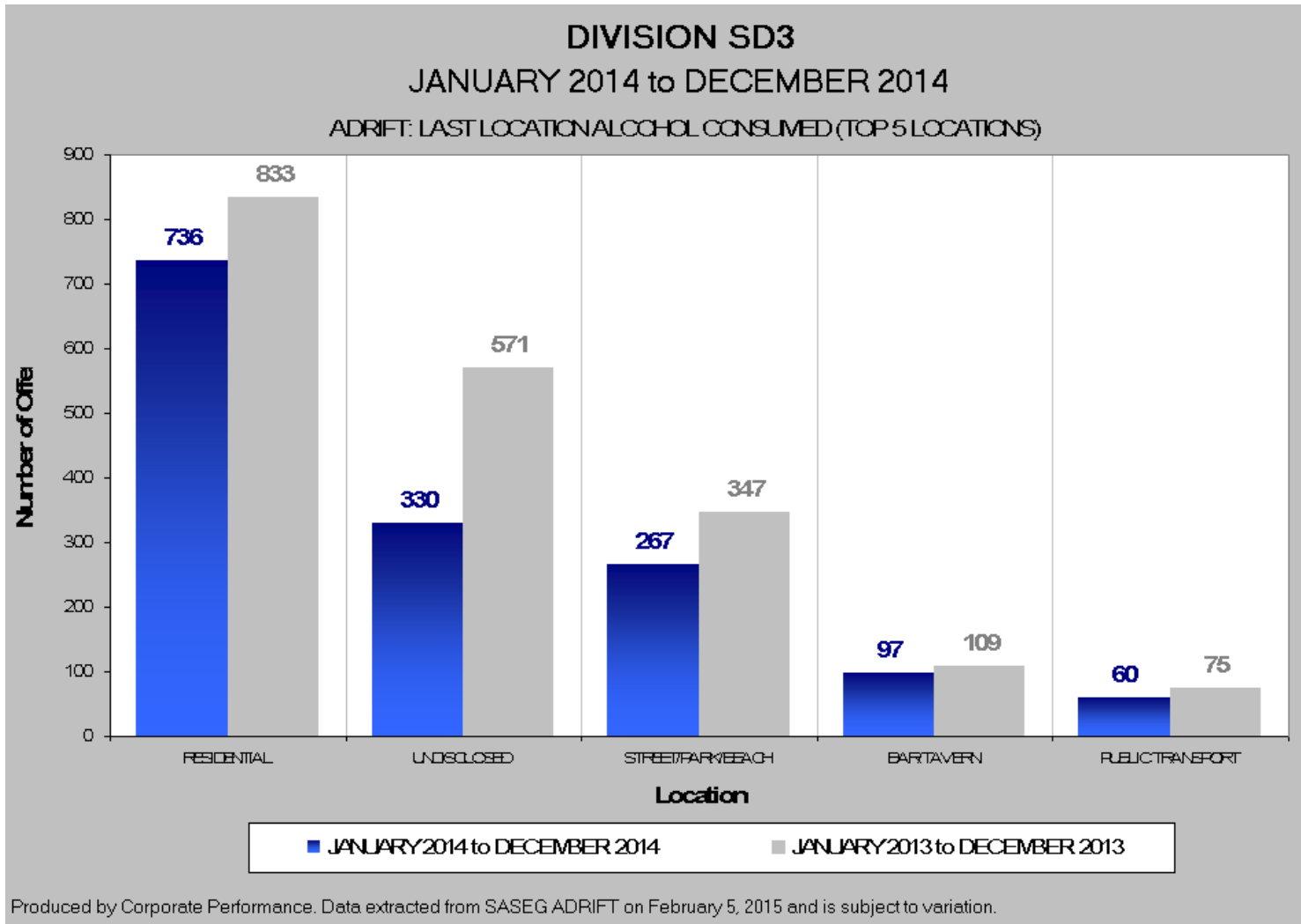
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Crime related consumption by location



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Packaged Liquor



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Australian and international research suggests

- **Packaged liquor outlets in neighbourhoods may contribute to increased assaults and Family Violence in the home (Vichealth 2013)**
- **That when grocery stores in Finland began selling alcohol, there was a sharp increase in alcohol-related harm (Makela 2002)**
- **On-premises venues, eg, hotels, clubs and nightclubs do not appear to contribute significantly to Family Violence, but packaged liquor outlets do (Frost 2012)**

Current enforcement focus



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- PIN data indicates enforcement focus is on patrons, not licensees
- There is clear opportunity to re-focus enforcement on licensees (SMR RIMU)
- ADRIFT data clearly shows the majority of alcohol-related offending occurs in domestic dwellings and public places
- Our liquor enforcement focuses on bars, clubs, taverns, with very limited enforcement on packaged liquor outlets

Enforcement and regulation



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- Despite the predominant impact of excessive consumption of packaged liquor as a driver of community harm, our enforcement and regulatory activity focusses on the behaviour of patrons and licensees of premises licensed for on premises consumption.
- Responsible sale of alcohol and related codes of conduct focus on regulation of premises licensed for on premises consumption.
- These provisions / codes are largely silent with respect to the supply of packaged liquor.

What do we do about it?



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- **Build the evidence base**
- **Shift our regulatory and enforcement focus to where most of the harm is**
- **Enhance regulation of packaged liquor outlets to mitigate scale and adverse impacts of package liquor outlets**
- **Strengthen the basis for local government and police to object to and mitigate the impacts of proposed outlets at the planning stage**

The need for an evidence base



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2009 research by Frost determined

- The increased reporting of short-term alcohol harm over 10 years indicated that mitigation strategies were not successful
- The extent of alcohol harms are understated because of shortcomings in data collection, analysis and dissemination
- Effective strategy depends on a clear policy position, timely responses and a robust evidence base
- There is a need for more collaborative approaches to data collection and strategic planning

The need for an evidence base



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- **The provision of point of sale data from individual outlets must be provided to police and Local Government if we are to be able to conclusively track the relationship between volume of supply and the impact that volume has on the drivers of harm in the community serviced by those outlets.**
- **Otherwise we are left to rely on proxy measures for sales volume and the evidential burden of proving the link between output from a specific premises and the harm that output causes in the community**



Before there is any noticeable impact in the reduction of alcohol harm, there must be a change in the current approach to strategy development, licensing and enforcement (Frost 2012)

Joint strategies, partnerships and collaboration between all stakeholders is the Best Practice approach to reduce alcohol-related harm in the community (Doherty and Roche 2003, Bullock, Erol, Tilley 2006)

Mitigate harm through better regulation



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- Limited opportunities exist to object to / negotiate the size of a proposed packaged liquor outlet at the application stage
- Application of the “amenity” test by the VCGLR imposes on the objector, the evidential burden of proving the proposed outlet will adversely affect social amenity. Given the prospective nature of this argument, it is near impossible to make out
- When harm becomes evident after a license is granted, it is then very difficult to prove harm derives from a specific outlet, due to the absence of sales data.

Mitigate harm through better regulation



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- Applications are considered on a case by case basis, with little room in package liquor outlet applications, to introduce evidence of cumulative adverse impacts and socio economic disadvantage
- As a result, most objections are lost and most applications to reduce volume of supply are successfully resisted

Mitigate harm through better regulation



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- These outcomes indicate a clear imbalance in the regulatory scheme and reflects a broader public policy failure with respect to the marketing and supply of packaged liquor, to the point where excessive consumption in family homes and public places has become the norm for alcohol related offending

How can we best respond to alcohol harm?



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The issue cannot be solved by arresting our way out of the problem

There needs to be

- **A combined approach between all stakeholders**
- **More education about excessive alcohol consumption impacts**
- **Greater alcohol industry engagement in reducing the harm**
- **Increased public and community understanding of the impacts**
- **'Third Voices' undertaking relevant research and strong advocacy for Alcohol Harm and Family Violence reduction**
- **Better regulation**

How can we best work together?



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- **The development of a holistic, alcohol management model requires a range of collaborative strategies between all relevant stakeholders to reduce alcohol-related harm** (Holder, Gruenewald, Ponicki et al, 2000)
- **The SEM Project has already created a unique model of partnerships**
- **We have the opportunity to test the existing legal system's approach to alcohol regulation and the potential to make the alcohol industry more accountable for alcohol harm in the community**
- **The Project can create a platform for future thinking in the public domain and raise more awareness of alcohol harm**

Early results from collaboration



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- **The following couple of slides demonstrate how collaborative research can give us a better line of sight on the harm drivers and so build the case for change.**
- These slides are drawn from presentations made to the SEMCA Research Project.
- Acknowledgement to Dr Michael Livingston (UNSW): Alcohol Outlet Density and Alcohol Related Problems

Summary findings of TP studies

	Pubs	Bottle Shops	Restaurants/Bars
General assault	↑	↑	
Family violence		↑	
Youth heavy drinking		↑	
Chronic disease		↑	↑
Socio-economic disadvantage	↓	↑	

Impact

- **10% increase in pubs ->**
 - 3% in assaults (Police)
 - 0.6% in assaults (hospitalisations)
 - 1% in family violence
- **10% increase in packaged liquor outlets ->**
 - 1% in assaults (Police)
 - 0.5% in assaults (hospitalisations)
 - 1.9% in chronic disease
 - 3.3% in family violence
- **Some evidence that alcohol effects vary across different postcode types**
 - Inner-city pubs / suburban bottle shops more problematic

Victoria Police and the SEM Project

A Unique Partnership



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Victoria Police SMR PhD on
Packaged Liquor and Family Violence

Thank You



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