Although alcohol is present at almost all of our important social occasions; it is also the most widely misused drug in the country and contributes to a number of major problems within our community.

Alcohol misuse affects many aspects of community life. It is strongly associated with crime and anti-social behaviour, assaults in and around licensed premises, family and domestic violence, property damage, drink-driving and other offences. It is also one of the main factors impacting on perceptions of public safety and amenity for the community.

Alcohol intoxication is one of the major factors driving demand for police resources. Research indicates that it is a factor in approximately 60 per cent of calls for police attendance, and 90 per cent of calls between the hours of 10pm and 2am.

For these reasons, WA Police places a high priority on its role in contributing to addressing alcohol-related crime. However, there are many causal factors in relation to the misuse of alcohol, and addressing these factors requires a whole-of-community response. There needs to be a contribution from other government agencies, non-government organisations and appropriate community groups.

To achieve this role, we will ensure that alcohol policing plays a prominent part in the WA Police planning process and that we work closely with stakeholders to integrate our contribution with the other effort to target alcohol misuse. We will also ensure that our contribution is in line with the WA Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2005-09, the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plans and other State Government and Australian Government initiatives.

Surveys indicate that the WA Police has strong community support to address alcohol-related crime, and liquor licensing issues in particular. Recent survey results suggest that a large majority of the community support new or stronger enforcement of liquor licensing laws. The successful implementation of this Strategy will mean that the WA Police is doing as much as possible to meet these community expectations.

Karl O’Callaghan APM
Commissioner of Police
Why have an Alcohol Policing Strategy

Alcohol itself doesn’t cause crime and many people drink safely without a problem. However, intoxication due to the heavy use of alcohol is closely associated with a range of crimes. Some key facts are:

- nationally, 25 per cent of charges involving interviewees in the Drug-Use Monitoring Australia (DUMA) program are alcohol-related
- 20 per cent of adult male prisoners interviewed said alcohol intoxication or dependence was the reason they were imprisoned and 11 per cent of female prisoners say alcohol was a factor in their imprisonment
- violence, property damage and disorder charges are the more likely to be attributed to alcohol
- in WA, approximately 60 per cent of DUMA interviewees at the Perth Watch House had consumed alcohol in the 24 hours prior to arrest.

A significant proportion of the crime and anti-social behaviour associated with alcohol intoxication occurs in and around licensed premises. The behaviour of intoxicated people erodes public confidence in community safety and security. The impact of assaults and other incidents extends beyond the victim, to witnesses of the behaviour and, through media reports, the general public.

Research conducted in 2007 indicated that in the previous 12 months:

- 4.3 million Australians aged 14 years and over reported that they had been verbally abused by a person believed to be intoxicated
- more than 2.2 million had been put in fear by the behaviour of an intoxicated person
- more than three quarters of a million had been physically assaulted by an intoxicated person.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the WA Police Alcohol Policing Strategy are to:

- reduce the incidence of alcohol-related crime
- increase compliance with the Liquor Control Act 1988 and associated legislation
- increase the community’s sense of safety and security due to a lower incidence of alcohol-related violence and other crime.

FOCUS OF THIS STRATEGY

- Ensure a high visibility presence around licensed outlets, at entertainment events and in public open spaces.
- Collaborate with the liquor and entertainment industry, other government agencies, non-government organisations and community groups to reduce alcohol-related harm.
- Use technology, intelligence and specialist skills to identify and target police resources for maximum impact.
- Respond to requests from rural and remote communities to develop approaches to restrict the supply of alcohol.

Our Priorities

**POLICING LIQUOR LICENSING**
- Conduct expanded liquor licensing operations statewide, with a particular focus on the most problematic outlets and licencees.
- Initiate applications to the Director, Liquor Licensing for new and stronger license conditions for licensed outlets and public events.
- Support local alcohol accords, Rethink Drink and other alcohol-related community education initiatives.

**AIM:** Combine deterrent and enforcement activities to increase awareness of unsafe and illegal alcohol supply practices, and to increase licensed premises’ compliance with legislative requirements.

**ALCOHOL AND YOUNG PEOPLE**
- Support a coordinated Government and community approach to Leavers Week celebrations.
- Adopt high visibility policing to reduce under-age drinking and binge drinking during Leavers Week including initiating enforcement measures in relation to the drinking in public areas and sale of alcohol to under-age persons.
- Conduct controlled purchase operations to identify outlets selling or supplying liquor to under-age persons.

**AIM:** Reduce the incidence of under-age drinking, binge drinking and poly drug-use.

**BUILD THE CAPACITY OF WA POLICE TO RESPOND TO ALCOHOL-RELATED CRIME**
- Continue to monitor and review existing policy and legislation to ensure frontline officers have the necessary tools and powers to address alcohol-related crime, and liquor licensing in particular.
- Expand intelligence collection and analysis to identify trends, problem locations and licensees and specific alcohol-related issues.
- Support frontline officers, by ensuring that specialist operational, intelligence, policy and research is provided by the Licensing Enforcement Division.

**AIM:** Review the business model for district alcohol and drug coordinators to enable the most effective use of resources.

**How this will be achieved**

This Strategy has been formulated within the context of the WA Police Strategic Plan 2007-2010. The effort applied to reducing the impact of alcohol-related crime on the community will be supported by a number of areas across the WA Police.

**WHOLE-OF-AGENCY**
Much of this effort will be facilitated by the Licensing Enforcement Division with district coordinators assisting in integrating initiatives into practical frontline actions.

**FRONTLINE**
Within WA Police, districts will be primarily accountable for enforcement of legislative provisions that are most likely to reduce harmful alcohol consumption.

The focus of this effort will be to proactively support the effective enforcement of relevant legislation, as well as collaborating with relevant state and national bodies to achieve a holistic approach that focuses on:
- the right policies and legislation
- the right information and resources
- the right partnerships and stakeholder relationships
- the right training and awareness.
PUBLIC SAFETY AND AMENITY

- Provide high visibility policing in public areas and at major events.
- Support the implementation of measures to reduce the incidence of alcohol-related violence and promote safety in public areas. These could include the use of lock-outs at licensed premises, the mandatory installation of metal detectors and use of CCTV in night clubs.

**AIM:** Reduce the likelihood or impact of problems relating to alcohol abuse on the community and increase perceptions of safety and security.

WORKING WITH RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES

- Work with Indigenous communities and regulators to develop the best mix of local approaches to restrict the supply of alcohol.
- Reduce sly-grogging in rural and remote communities.

**AIM:** Reduce the incidence of alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour in rural and remote communities.

CONTRIBUTE TO STATE AND NATIONAL ALCOHOL AND DRUG STRATEGIES

- Promote national approaches, learning from other jurisdictions, and pooling expertise in relation to alcohol and poly drug-use, crowd controllers and other issues.
- Recommend new or strengthened measures to reduce alcohol-related crime at state and national levels.
- Collaborate with the Australian Government and other states and territories to support the outcomes of the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy Report to the Council of Australian Governments on options to reduce binge drinking.

**AIM:** Contribute to the achievement of outcomes of state and national alcohol and drug strategies.

Districts will be responsible for the implementation of action plans that address local issues, in line with the WA Police Strategic Plan 2007-2010, the WA Police Alcohol Policing Strategy, WA Police Annual Business Plan, the Western Australian Alcohol Plan 2006-2009 and the National Alcohol Strategy 2006-2009.

Districts will be supported in addressing enforcement activities, legislative change, policy and liaison with key partners through the activities of the Licensing Enforcement Division and district coordinators.
2009-2011 ALCOHOL POLICING STRATEGY