



15 July 2016

Liquor & Gaming NSW  
NSW Department of Justice  
Level 6, 323 Castlereagh Street  
HAYMARKET NSW 2000  
idscanner.review@olgr.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

### **SUBMISSION TO THE KINGS CROSS ID SCANNER REVIEW**

On behalf of the NSW ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance (NAAPA), I welcome the opportunity to provide a submission the opportunity to a submission to the Kings Cross ID Scanner Review.

NAAPA is an alliance of 48 health, community, law enforcement, emergency services and research organisations working to promote evidence-based actions to prevent alcohol-related harms in NSW and the ACT. Members include the Australian Medical Association NSW, the Police Association of NSW, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and residents' groups from across NSW.

Kings Cross has historically exhibited unacceptably high levels of alcohol-related harm. It is important that recent measures including the 3am last drinks and 1.30am lockouts aimed at reducing harm in the Kings Cross region are maintained to support the continued safety of revellers, tourists and residents.

Alcohol abuse is associated with a host of short and long-term harms to drinkers, their friends and family, government and society more broadly. In addition to adverse outcomes in the short-term, such as assault<sup>1,2,3</sup> and injury,<sup>4</sup> dangerous patterns of alcohol consumption can result in a range of chronic disease and disabilities across the lifetime.<sup>5</sup> Each day in NSW, alcohol is responsible for 32 emergency department presentations, 149 hospitalisations and four deaths.<sup>6</sup>

The scale and variety of harm that alcohol causes to innocent third parties distinguishes it from other health and lifestyle risks, such as smoking and gambling. These harms include street and family violence,<sup>7,8,9</sup> road traffic accidents,<sup>10</sup> and child maltreatment.<sup>11</sup> Alcohol is involved in between 23 per cent<sup>12</sup> and 65 per cent<sup>13</sup> of family violence incidents reported to police. Between 2002-03 and 2011-12, 36 per cent of perpetrators of intimate partner homicides had used alcohol.<sup>14</sup> In addition, more than one fifth (22 per cent) of Australian children are negatively affected by the drinking of others.<sup>15</sup>

For these reasons, it is important that alcohol sales are regulated in an appropriate and consistent manner to reduce the harm associated with alcohol consumption. Policy development should be based on evidence to ensure that the harm from alcohol is minimised. Although ID scanners are commonly supported by a variety of stakeholders, their effectiveness in reducing alcohol-related harm is limited. For this reason, they

must not be considered an alternative to more effective policy measures, such as regulation of outlet density and trading hours. The data collected by ID scanners does present opportunities for evidence-based policy development and evaluation. For this reason, deidentified data should be made available to researchers in order to facilitate research and guide alcohol policy.

### **Effectiveness of the ID scanners**

It has been suggested that ID scanners may be used to reduce harm associated with on-premise alcohol sales. Some have proposed that use of ID scanners may deter antisocial behaviour by reducing the anonymity of patrons.<sup>16</sup> Theoretically, ID scanners may also facilitate banning orders on individuals and improve venues' ability to collaborate to refuse entry to intoxicated individuals.<sup>17</sup> In practice, however, research has identified several factors that undermine the effectiveness of ID scanners in reducing alcohol-related harm.<sup>18</sup> In particular, their effectiveness is reduced as a result of the disinhibition that results from alcohol intoxication and the inconsistent standards with which the ID scanners are employed.

The spontaneous nature of alcohol-related assaults is likely to reduce the effectiveness of ID scanners in deterring patrons from antisocial behaviour as a result of less anonymity.<sup>19</sup> That is, while ID scanners increase authorities' capacity to identify perpetrators, alcohol-fuelled violence will be less influenced by this knowledge due to the impulsivity associated with alcohol intoxication and violence. As such, ID scanners are more likely to be used to identify and punish perpetrators rather than being effective in deterring and preventing antisocial behaviour.

Another factor that undermines the effectiveness of ID scanners in reducing alcohol-related harm is the inconsistent manner in which they have been implemented. Research has demonstrated that scanners have regularly been used selectively.<sup>20</sup> This may result in the details of perpetrators, victims and witnesses not being collected. Venues have been observed choosing not to scan females and friends of security staff. The extent to which security staff maintain scanning procedures has been observed to decline markedly with long queues. Consistent with the limitations described above, research examining the impact of ID scanner implementation in Geelong did not find their introduction to be associated with significant change in either assaults or emergency department presentations.<sup>21</sup>

**Recommendation 1:** Maintain ID scanners in Kings Cross as part of the broader suite of reform (including 1:30am lockouts and 3am last drinks) to ensure continued alcohol-harm reduction.

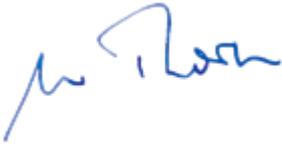
### **Future policy directions in relation to ID scanners within the precinct**

The data collected by ID scanners presents opportunities for evidence-based policy development and evaluation. Currently, the legislation allows the Secretary of the NSW Department of Justice to nominate an approved system provider to manage the Kings Cross precinct ID scanner system. However, the data contained within the system has not been made publically available. To facilitate analysis by researchers, which may guide policy development and evaluation, deidentified data should be made available either upon request or through the NSW Open Data Portal. At a minimum, these data should include a record for each new entry and banning order, including the venue, its capacity, the individual's date of birth and place of usual residence (by Australian Statistical Geography Standard, electorate, Local Government Area and suburb), as well as a randomly generated identifier. This may facilitate investigation of such things as patterns in attendance of licenced venues, movement between venues over the course of an evening and trends in patronage by population cohorts.

**Recommendation 2:** Allow researchers access to deidentified ID scanner data to facilitate evidence-based alcohol policy development and evaluation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the review. Please do not hesitate to contact Mr Anthony Harrison, Senior Policy Officer at the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), on (02) 6122 8600 or [anthony.harrison@fare.org.au](mailto:anthony.harrison@fare.org.au) if you wish to discuss matters further.

Yours sincerely



MICHAEL THORN  
**ON BEHALF OF NAAPA**

## REFERENCES

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