

Study looks for the golden ratio in crowd control

September 28 2011, By Alexandra Berriman

The Director of UTS's Australian Centre for Event Management Rob Harris and Senior Research Fellow Dr. Deborah Edwards are leading a study designed to create a decision-making tool for venue and event organisers on the optimum ratio of crowd controllers to patrons.

The work, funded by the National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund, is being undertaken in partnership with the Australian Center for [Criminology](#).

"Often, in the opinion of police, the number of crowd controllers to patrons is insufficient, especially when alcohol is being served," Mr. Harris said. "Currently organizers of events and venues determine the number of crowd controllers needed based on previous experience.

"The current 'one size fits all approach' lacks consistency. This approach can present dangers to patrons, police, licensees and crowd controllers themselves and ignores the fact that every event and venue has individual characteristics."

Dr. Edwards said the aim is to reduce the risks of excessive alcohol consumption by patrons, which can lead to anti social behavior that may impact the broader community.

"Our research will involve us talking to every relevant stakeholder, including venue owners, event coordinators, government entities, police, event organizers and industry associations, with a view to gaining

empirical evidence for our study," Dr. Edwards said.

"Each stakeholder will have a different viewpoint on crowd control but it is essential that there is greater consistency as regards decisions in this area."

Mr. Harris said the study was complex, as every venue and event has a range of variables that need to be considered when making decisions about crowd control.

"These include the scale of the event, nature of the crowd, presence of alcohol, weather, style of music being performed and past history of the event and venue," Mr. Harris said.

"Our research will ultimately lead to more objective decision making and consistency across venues and events and hopefully to safer events and venues."

The researchers are expected to present their findings in September next year.

Provided by University of Technology, Sydney

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