

Stricter enforcement of licensed premises is more effective than blanket 'lock-out' laws, finds Australian study

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A joint study published by the NSW Bureau of Crimes Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) and the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC), UNSW Sydney, has found that more than 72% of Australians aged 14 years and over support stricter enforcement of the

law against serving drunk customers. A further 61% support strict monitoring of late-night licensed premises.

Lead author of the study, published today in the *Crime and Justice Bulletin*, is Professor Don Weatherburn from NDARC and UNSW Medicine & Health.

"The results show that a [policy](#) of sanctioning licensed premises that breach the conditions of their liquor license would be far more effective and far less intrusive than policies that impose blanket restrictions on [trading](#) hours in certain suburbs but not in others," Prof. Weatherburn said.

The study examined data from the National Drug Strategy Household Survey between 2001 and 2019 and outlined changes in public support for various liquor licensing restrictions.

Public support for stricter enforcement of responsible [alcohol](#) service laws has remained consistently high over the past two decades, and [public support](#) for strict monitoring of late-night premises has remained strong.

"Support for other policies such as reduced trading hours and outlets was lower," said Prof. Weatherburn.

Forty-five percent of Australians support restricting late-night trading of alcohol, down from its peak of 55% between 2010 and 2013. Only 26% of Australians support reduced trading hours, down from its peak of 43% in 2010. Public support for reducing the number of outlets that sell alcohol has doubled since 2001 but remains low at 33%.

Demographic differences between city and country

The study also found support for reduced outlet and trading hours was significantly higher among women and older Australians, with people over 60 two and a half times more likely to support such policies than those aged 30–39.

Support was also high among those who drink alcohol less frequently and people who had been assaulted, threatened with [assault](#) or made fearful by someone under the influence of alcohol in the past 12 months.

"There are marked differences between jurisdictions and between city and country dwellers in the liquor licensing controls they support. This argues against any 'one size fits all' approach to liquor licensing policy," Prof. Weatherburn said.

Those living in remote, regional and [rural areas](#) were more supportive of restricting late-night trading than those living in major cities, but less supportive of stricter law enforcement against serving drunk customers.

More information: Changes in and correlates of Australian public support for liquor licensing restrictions.

www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bo...ng-restrictions.aspx

Provided by University of New South Wales

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