



VICTORIA POLICE

**Local Area Commander for Yarra
North West Metro Region**

18 September, 2019

Attention
Vijaya Vaidyanath, CEO Yarra City Council
Mayor Danae Bosler, City of Yarra

217-225 Church Street
Richmond 3121
Victoria, Australia
DX 212450
Telephone (03) 8420 3610
Facsimile
Email anne.rudd@police.vic.gov.au
www.police.vic.gov.au

Re: Proposed Consumption of Liquor in Public Places Local Law No. 1 of 2019

Victoria Police is committed to reducing alcohol related harm in our community and promotes the responsible, safe use of alcohol.

Victoria Police is supportive of the overall objectives of the proposed Consumption of Liquor in Public Places Local Law No. 1 of 2019 ('the proposed local law') which generally speaking prohibits the consumption of liquor in public and carrying of alcohol in open containers, except for some public places known as prescribed areas and at designated times and places to facilitate festivals and events.

It is noted that the proposed local law includes a narrower definition of a 'public place' than the definition present in the current Consumption of Liquor in Public Places Local Law No. 8 of 2009. With the exception of the narrower definition of a 'public place', Victoria Police is supportive of the proposed local law.

The City of Yarra has over 700 licensed venues for people to consume alcohol in a controlled, regulated, legislative environment. Additionally, the proposed local law allows for the responsible consumption of liquor in prescribed areas including parks, gardens and reserves in recognition of the special use of these places by the community for social occasions.

Victoria Police acknowledge the rights of all members of the community to use public spaces, whilst also recognising our responsibility towards other members of the community who have the right to live in a safe and peaceful environment.

In recent times it has become evident that the City of Yarra, in particular, the North Richmond precinct, is experiencing challenges with anti-social behaviours and crimes committed against persons (assaults, robberies) that involve large groups of intoxicated non-residents congregating on the grounds of the Richmond housing estate. The narrower definition in the proposed local law will remove the ability of police to request groups of non-residents congregating in the grounds of the housing estate, to cease drinking and seal the container if possible or dispose of the alcohol.

To minimise the high risk of alcohol related harm that adversely impacts perceptions of safety, public order and crime, Victoria Police support the proposed local law however request the Yarra City Council consider amending the definition of a 'public place' to remove reference to clause (b) 'any land that is owned, managed or otherwise controlled by Council'.

Victoria Police has a clear vision for reducing alcohol related harm in the community which is outlined in the *Policing Alcohol in Victoria 2014-2024* strategic plan and in the *Blue paper: A vision for Victoria Police in 2025*. We know that alcohol significantly contributes to road trauma, assaults and sexual assaults, family violence, property damage, child abuse, victimisation and public disorder.

Reducing the harms associated with alcohol is not the sole responsibility of Victoria Police. In assessing the impacts of public drinking laws, the academic research of Pennay, Manton, Savic, Livingston, Matthews and Lloyd¹ (2013), recommends that public drinking laws should remain the discretion of local councils and local council's should work closely with police to design and enforce public drinking laws specific to the sensitivities and needs of the individual community.

Local police members in Yarra respond to alcohol harm in the community through a range of approaches including the effective policing of licensed premises, promotion of responsible service of alcohol and by targeting alcohol fuelled violence and antisocial behaviour.

Since the commencement of the current local law 8 in 2009, Victoria police members have been encouraged to use discretion when enforcing the provisions of the local law in recognition that street drinkers may be among the most vulnerable people in our society.

Victoria Police will continue to work with our partners in health, justice, the not-for-profit sector, business and academia towards a consolidated whole of government approach to develop new and flexible approaches to respond to the challenges of alcohol misuse.

I would be pleased to speak to this submission at the Ordinary Council Meeting on the 8th of October 2019.



Anne RUDD
Inspector
Local Area Commander
Yarra Police Service Area
North West Metro Region

¹ <http://www.ndlrf.gov.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/bulletins/research-bulletin-01.pdf>