

Bottom up on liquor licensing

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"The purpose of liquor licensing should not be to look after the wellbeing of the liquor industry; they can do that pretty well themselves. It should above all be to look after and protect the interests of the community."

He believes a liquor licence is a privilege, not a right.

"When you get a liquor licence it is on the basis that you will sell responsibly a product which, when

"The minister and the department are both very well intentioned, but if they are not asleep at the wheel, their eyes are not wide open."

- Mike Daube

not properly used, can be an enormous force for harm. The first priority should always be the health and wellbeing of the community," Professor Daube says.

He says Mr Waldron is "asleep at the wheel" when it comes to liquor legislation and control.

"We know that the more access there is, the more people will consume, the more they consume, the more harm there will be - more harm in the community and more harm in those areas where there are liquor outlets," Professor Daube says.

'Raising the Bar', a look at the implementation of key provisions in the Act.

The report was critical of the Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor and the WA Police.

"Neither agency has comprehensive information on the patterns and causes of incidents in and around licensed premises," the report says.

"Neither agency undertakes any significant level of monitoring of whether alcohol is served responsibly in licensed premises. DRGL does not conduct activities in this area because it considers it does not have the resources or powers to do this effectively, while WA Police focus their efforts in other areas."

The state government's plan to curb alcohol-fueled violence in WA focuses on targeting 'trouble-makers' directly with either prohibition notices for what it calls 'upper end, criminal acts or bawling notices, aimed at the 'lower end of the fence'.

"The balance I am trying to find and the state government is trying to find is to allow people to go out, enjoy a good night without being hurt or assaulted," Mr Waldron told *Business Clazs*.

"It is about targeting troublemakers - I am confident that is the right way to go."

But Professor Daube believes it is the licensees who need to be more closely monitored.

Mr Waldron admits it's difficult to manage the range of views within major political parties and the wider community on how to govern and control liquor licensing, and more generally the consumption of alcohol.

"Generally out there in the community there are wide-ranging



SPACE RACE: Evan Hall says open public space, such as the Northbridge Piazza, is the key to broadening the appeal of inner-city Perth. Photo: Grant Curral

As the minister and as a government we have the responsibility to try to find the right balance," Mr Waldron says.

"Balance is quite often a matter of opinion, things change. Our society changes, it will continue to change and it will be a challenge for all governments to meet those changes and try to strike the right balance."

and monitoring a more comprehensive approach to monitoring pricing, access and promotion is required to firmly set the boundaries in WA.

"The balance at the moment is swinging heavily in favour of those who sell and promote the product, there is no constraint on alcohol sponsorship ... no constraint on promotion, alcohol tax is a dog's breakfast and we are getting tre-

enforcement and that should focus not so much on a few drunks out the front, that is for the police to handle, but on the people who are selling them the grog.

"I have absolutely no wish to demonise the industry on a whole, but there is a lot of irresponsibility around.

"The minister and the department are both very well intentioned, but