



Media Release

20 December 2017

Council's bottle shop position to reduce alcohol harm in community

Moves to limit the number of bottle shops to two per local shopping centre in the City of Cockburn has received support from the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA).

The City of Cockburn adopted a position to limit the number of bottle shops to two, in or adjacent to, local shopping centres, at its final meeting for 2017 on 14 December.

The recommendation received unanimous support from all Elected Members present at the meeting, to prevent an increase in alcohol availability at levels likely to be detrimental to public health, according to compelling results in several Australian studies published on the issue.

PHAA CEO, and World Federation of Public Health Associations, Michael Moore AM said there was very strong evidence on the link between increased alcohol outlet density and a wide range of harms from poorer health outcomes, to assault and family violence.

"The (Cockburn) Council's documentation shows clearly that there is already ample access to liquor outlets in the area," Mr Moore said.

"The City of Cockburn should be supported in adopting an evidence-based approach to ensuring that the community is protected from these harms."

Cockburn Environmental Health Manager Nick Jones said bottle shops had more than doubled, from nine to 20, in the City since 2000, with eight approved in the last six years.

In the same period, total liquor outlets increased by 48%, from 30 to 82, equating to one accessible liquor outlet for at least every 1,700 residents.

Currently only two of the existing 25 local shopping centres – Beeliar and South Lake – have two bottle shops.

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But it is likely a third bottle shop application will result from the Aldi currently under construction next to the proposed Vale Tavern, which will likely include a drive-through bottle shop, at Beeliar shopping centre.

Without the Aldi proposal, the current bottle shop and the proposed drive-through would take the packaged liquor outlets at the centre to a maximum of two, now adopted as part of the City's new position statement.

Mr Jones said if the current growth rate of bottle shops continued, it would be a concern to the community and from a public health perspective, could be argued that the City is reaching the point where on behalf of the community, it should declare that the density is adequate and should not be increased.

"While it is a difficult position, because a poll would probably result in more people for than against more bottle shops, it is a scenario where Elected Members have the responsibility to consider the overall health of the community, rather than popular opinion," Mr Jones said.

A recent study published by *Dr Michael Livingston* from the Centre for Alcohol Policy Research at Melbourne's La Trobe University, found the availability of packaged liquor was associated with increased rates of assault, domestic violence, chronic disease and heavy drinking.

"Research showed that for every 10,000 additional litres of pure alcohol sold by off-site outlets, domestic violence rose by 26 per cent in that area," Dr Livingston said in March this year.

The City also cited the Foundation for Alcohol Research Annual Alcohol Poll 2017 which found:

- 78% of people believe Australia has a problem with excessive drinking or alcohol abuse,
- People are most worried about alcohol-related road traffic accidents (78%), violence (76%) and child abuse and neglect (71%),
- 92% of Australians think there is a link between alcohol and family and domestic violence, and



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- 80% of these people think governments should be doing more to address the role alcohol plays in family and domestic violence.

The City will now inform the Director of Liquor Licensing (DLL) of its position, and consider lodging objections with the DLL and refusing planning applications where more than two bottle shops are proposed for any local shopping centre.

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