

City of Sydney

# Street Drinking Strategy

2006 - 2011

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Who are the Street Based Drinkers?	6
1.2 Street drinking activity in the inner-city of Sydney	6
BACKGROUND	7
2.1 Street Drinking Working Group 2005-6	7
2.2 The Role of Local Government	7
2.3 Legislation	8
2.4 Policy	8
2.5 Guiding Principles of the Strategy	9
STREET DRINKING STRATEGY	10
3.1 Aim and Objectives	10
3.2 Key Priorities	11
3.2.1 Health and Social Impacts on the Individual	11
3.2.3 Public Safety and Amenity	11
3.3 Key Actions	12
3.3.1 Services to People who are Homeless and/or Disadvantaged	12
3.3.2 Design, Regulation and Management of Public Space	14
3.3.3 Working with the liquor industry to enhance their participation in finding solutions to street drinking	17
3.3.4 Research, Advocacy, Monitoring and Evaluation	18
APPENDIX 1      Consultation	20
APPENDIX 2      Key Terms	21

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## SUMMARY VISION

To reduce the social impacts of street drinking and improve the health of individuals as well as increase public safety and amenity.

## KEY PRINCIPLE

The City recognises that street drinkers are amongst the most vulnerable people in our society. The City supports an approach of social inclusion and maintains a commitment to reducing the impact of alcohol on our most vulnerable populations such as young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people who are homeless.

The City recognises the NSW State Government Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places. The City acknowledges the rights of all members of the community to use public spaces, whilst also recognising their responsibility towards other members of the community who have the right to live in a safe and peaceful environment.

## KEY PRIORITIES

- Health and social impacts on the individual.
- Public safety and amenity.

## KEY ACTIONS

### Provision of services to street drinkers

- Services provided by the City of Sydney.
- Links with other services for people who are homeless and street drinkers.
- Promoting flexible approaches.
- Targeting Refractory Alcohol Addiction in Street Drinkers (TRAASD).
- Development of protocols in emergency department for responding to inebriated persons.
- Partnership with Redfern Waterloo Authority to establish a day centre and residential facility for people with alcohol dependence in Redfern.

## **Design, regulation and management of public space**

- Urban Design
- Waste and Cleansing Protocol
- Implementation of Alcohol Free Zones
- Identification and implementation of Alcohol Prohibited Areas
- Working with Local Police
- Public Space Liaison Officer (PSLO)
- Hotspot management and response

## **Working with the liquor industry to enhance their participation in finding solutions to street drinking**

- Working with licensed premises
- Liaison with liquor industry peak bodies

## **Research, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation**

- Research

Advocate to other levels of government for enhanced responses to alcohol related problems

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

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The City of Sydney has a strong commitment to addressing both individual and systemic issues contributing to the incidence and impacts of street drinking. In line with the move toward addressing public intoxication as a health rather than criminal matter, the Street Drinking Strategy aims to ensure that vulnerable people with alcohol dependency have access to the services that are appropriate to helping them. The Strategy also acts to reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour and other community impacts that are related to the consumption of alcohol in public space.

The Strategy provides the basis by which state, local and community agencies and consumer advocates can collaboratively plan responses to manage the impacts of street drinking in the existing low impact areas and reduce activity in sensitive locations within the local government area (LGA). This will be achieved within a framework of shared responsibility for finding equitable solutions. The Strategy has been developed through a process of consultation with a number of stakeholders. This was achieved through regular meetings of the Street Drinking Working Group since November 2005 and the sub-groups that emerged to act on issues raised within that forum.

### **National Initiatives**

In May 2006 all State and Territory governments endorsed The National Alcohol Strategy 2006-2009 in recognition of the substantial economic and social impacts of excessive alcohol consumption on Australian society. Within that Strategy, four priority areas are identified for action:

- Intoxication
- Public safety and amenity
- Health impacts
- Cultural place and availability of alcohol.

In terms of policy engagement with this issue, responsibility for addressing the economic and social impacts of excessive alcohol consumption is embedded at the Federal, State and Local levels of government. Whilst each layer of government differs in responsibility and response to this issue the approaches of different government bodies occur within a complementary framework that encompasses collaboration between various layers of government and government departments, non-government bodies, industry partners and the broader community. Such collaboration aims to strengthen not only overall national and state approaches but also the efficacy of local responses.

Whilst The National Alcohol Strategy 2006-2009 encompasses all areas where alcohol consumption impacts negatively on society, the City of Sydney's Street Drinking Strategy focuses on the issue of alcohol consumption in the public domain by individuals or congregations of social groups. For the purposes of this Strategy street drinking and the issues arising from this activity are distinct from the activities of drinkers who congregate on footways outside licensed venues. The impacts generated by this group are addressed through the City of Sydney's Drug & Alcohol Strategy, in development as of September 2006, to which this document is linked.

The Street Drinking Strategy aligns itself with the objectives and priorities of the National Alcohol Strategy 2006-2009, in particular the first three priority areas of: intoxication, safety and amenity and health outcomes.

The strategies outlined in this document represent a holistic approach. Singular strategies implemented in isolation could result in the displacement rather than resolution of the problem and a failure to resolve the needs and concerns of different stakeholders involved, including the street drinkers themselves. The result of this would be the further isolation and increase in vulnerability of street drinkers and subsequent impacts on social, health and criminal justice systems.

## **1.1 Who Are The Street Based Drinkers?**

The term 'street based drinker' includes a diverse group of people who consume alcohol in the public domain in the inner city of Sydney.

The average street drinker typically experiences one, usually several, of the following factors:

- Is homeless or marginally housed.
- Is alcohol dependent.
- Combines alcohol consumption with the use of other prescribed or illicit drugs.
- May have other forms of psychiatric illness as well as alcohol dependence.<sup>1</sup>
- Has a poor state of health with untreated acute and chronic illnesses.
- Has been a victim of or is vulnerable to assault.
- Is excluded from many accommodation services due to active substance abuse, or is unable to maintain a tenancy for the same reason.
- Is alienated from family and socially isolated.
- Is in frequent conflict with the law.
- Is a frequent user of emergency and other medical services.
- Is a frequent user of social and community services.

## **1.2 Street drinking activity in the inner-city of Sydney**

### **1.2.1 Street Based Drinking 'Hotspots'**

A street drinking location is identified as a 'hotspot' when street drinking is consistent with the following factors:

- The activity occurs regularly over a period of time in a specific public location.
- The activity leads to tension between street drinkers and other stakeholders over the shared utilisation of that space.
- The activity leads to public perceptions of reduced safety.
- The activity has a negative impact upon amenity in that location
- The activity contravenes by-laws that prohibit this activity in that location.

As at September 2006, known major street drinking hotspots within the City are:

- Talbot Place, Bourke Street Park, Tommy Uren Square and Walla Mulla Park, Woolloomooloo.
- Shannon Reserve (off Crown Street) and nearby streets, Surry Hills
- Albion Street and Frog Hollow, Surry Hills.
- Bourke, Flinders and Short Street, Surry Hills.
- Springfield Mall and nearby streets, Kings Cross.
- Taylor Square, Oxford Square and nearby streets, Darlinghurst.
- Central Railway Station and Belmore Park, Sydney.
- Old Police Headquarters on College Street opp. Hyde Park.
  - St Andrews Square (between Town Hall and St Andrews Cathedral), Sydney.
  - Harmony Park, James Hilder Reserve and surrounding areas, Surry Hills.
  - The Block, Redfern and adjacent streets.

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<sup>1</sup> Substance addiction is a recognised form of psychiatric illness under the DSM IV

At various times other locations are used by individuals and groups of street drinkers. Of concern to the City is the potential for 'displacement and relocation' of street drinkers from one area to another when responses to street drinking are enacted in isolation. An example is 'move on' orders without offering people the opportunity to be referred to appropriate health or other support services.

### **1.2.2 Scale of the Activity**

There is no specific data to measure the prevalence of street based drinking and the numbers of people engaging in this activity. This is due in part to the transient nature of the people who engage in this activity.

Whilst this data would be useful to inform strategic responses, the need to develop such a response is generated by the impacts of the activity rather than the numbers involved at any one time.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

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### **2.1 Street Drinking Working Group 2005-6**

In November 2005 the City of Sydney established a Street Drinking Working Group (SDWG) to develop a multi-faceted response to street drinking and to reduce the adverse impacts arising from this activity. The Working Group included representatives from: homelessness services, NSW Police (relevant Local Area Commands and the Liquor & Licensing division), the Liquor Industry, the Redfern-Waterloo Authority, the Bligh Electorate Office, the Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service, NSW Health and the Department of Community Services (DOCS).

The Strategy has been developed by the City in consultation with Working Group members and with other agencies that work directly with street based drinkers.

### **2.2 The Role of Local Government**

The Commonwealth and State governments have legislative responsibility for policing and the primary role of funding and providing services to people who are homeless and people who have drug and alcohol and/or mental health issues. The role of local government, although different, is complementary to health and law enforcement roles. Local government bears the impacts at a local level and is also ideally located to respond directly to those impacts whilst advocating for a response from other tiers of government at the same time.

The role of local government in responding to the issues around alcohol and the public domain includes: direct service provision and funding for community services; recreational and community facilities; information and awareness raising; planning and development; public space management and compliance and regulation including co-enforcement with other regulatory bodies. Local government is especially concerned with alcohol related issues where they impact upon the public domain, particularly in the areas of public amenity and the regulation and oversight of public space. Of the three tiers of government, public expectation for the resolution of problems arising from street drinking is directed most often at local government.

Local government responses to the issue of street drinking are generated by a number of factors including:

- Legislative requirements and obligations under Federal, State and Local law (Alcohol Free Zones, parks ordinance, planning consent)

- Support for and funding of services to vulnerable and marginalised people through the homeless outreach team, the state wide information and referral service for homeless people and via the City's community grants program.
- Community expectations governing response

### **2.3 Legislation**

The City's charter under **the Local Government Act (1993)** requires Council to take responsibility for managing public land. By implication, this can mean that Councils have a duty of care in relation to people who use public land. The Local Government Act gives Councils the power to issue and enforce orders that aim to prevent activities that place members of the public at risk.

A range of other legislation such as the **Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979)** and **the Roads Act (1993)** also provide Council with a range of responsibilities and functions including public health and safety.

**The Children (Protection and Parental Responsibility) Act (1997)** provides a statutory basis for the development of community safety or crime prevention plans with Local Governments taking the lead agency role. The Act recognises the importance of community safety activities that draw upon local knowledge and services in adopting a strategic partnership approach to addressing local community safety issues.

### **2.4 Policy**

#### **Federal – Draft National Alcohol Strategy 2006 - 2009**

The National Alcohol Strategy is a plan for action developed through collaboration between Australian governments, non-government and industry partners and the broader community. The document outlines priority areas for coordinated action to achieve a reduction in alcohol related harm in Australia.

#### **State – The Protocol for Homeless People**

The City is an observer to The Protocol for Homeless People (The Protocol). The Protocol exists to guide State Government agencies on how to relate to homeless people in public places. The New South Wales Government introduced the Protocol to help ensure that homeless people are treated appropriately and receive the services they need or request.

#### **Local - City of Sydney**

The Street Drinking Strategy has links to the following City of Sydney documents: Social Plan 2006–2011, Draft Local Action Plans, Draft Drug & Alcohol Strategy, Draft Homelessness Strategy, Draft Street-based Sex Work Strategy, Draft Safe City Strategy, Draft Open Space and Recreational Needs Study, Draft Waste Management Strategy, Draft Oxford Street Safety Strategy. At September 2006, some of these documents are under review or in their development phases.

## **2.5 Guiding Principles of the Strategy**

### ***Meeting the needs of vulnerable people***

The City recognises that street drinkers are amongst the most vulnerable people in our society. The City supports an approach of social inclusivity and is committed to reducing the impact of alcohol on our most vulnerable populations such as young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people who are homeless.

### ***Indigenous People***

The City recognises the special relationship that Indigenous people have with public space and that they may also have specific cultural needs in accessing a range of appropriate accommodation, drug and alcohol and other support options.

### ***Right of access to Public Space***

The City recognises the NSW State Government Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places. The City acknowledges the rights of all members of the community to use public spaces, whilst also recognising their responsibility towards other members of the community who have the right to live in a safe and peaceful environment.

### ***Addressing negative impacts***

The City is committed to responding to the issue of street drinking in order to improve actual and perceived safety for street drinkers, City residents, businesses and visitors.

### ***Providing for Healthy Communities***

The City is committed to improving economic, social and health standards by managing and facilitating programs and activities that contribute to physical and mental wellbeing. The City is active in advocating for and improving access to health, mental health and drug and alcohol services for all people in the city, including people who are homeless and other vulnerable members of the community. The City is committed to harm minimisation as well as recovery options.

### ***Integrated, multi-faceted approaches***

The City recognises the need for integrated and multi-faceted responses to complex issues. The notion of working in partnership is implicit at each stage of the Street Drinking Strategy. The City acknowledges that singular, stand alone responses do not generally solve complex alcohol related issues. We must engage simultaneously at many stages of the cycle including; prevention, reduction, regulation, containment and management.

### ***Integration with State and Federal approaches***

The City supports integrated responses to alcohol related problems that complement both State and Federal Government approaches as well as existing regulatory and health structures. The City links its Street Drinking Strategy with existing and emerging national and state/territory initiatives such as the National Alcohol Strategy 2006-2009 and with related themes and priorities of the 2006 Draft of the State Plan for NSW.

## 4. STREET DRINKING STRATEGY

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### 3.1 Aim and Objectives

The **Aim** of the Strategy is:

- To reduce the health and social impacts of street drinking and improve public safety and amenity.

Thus, the **Objectives** of Strategy seek to:

1. Increase the capacity of agencies and stakeholders to develop responses to the health and safety needs of street based drinkers and to improve the coordination of support and service provision to street drinkers.
  2. Improve the design, management and regulation of public spaces to improve overall amenity, reduce the level of street drinking and to manage impacts in hotspots.
  3. Increase the capacity of the liquor industry to respond to street drinking and encourage their ongoing participation in the development and implementation of strategies to respond to street drinking.
- Advocate to the State and Commonwealth government for better resources and improved service delivery for people with alcohol dependence.

KEY PRIORITIES	KEY ACTIONS			
	Provision of services to people who are homeless and/or disadvantaged	Design, Regulation and management of public space	Work with the liquor industry to enhance their participation in finding solutions to street drinking	Research, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation
Health and social impacts on the individual	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public safety and amenity	✓	✓	✓	✓

## **3.2 Key Priorities**

### **3.2.1 Health and Social Impacts on the Individual**

Since being intoxicated in public was decriminalised in NSW there has been a move toward dealing with public intoxication as a public health issue rather than a criminal justice problem. Street based drinkers undertake an activity which, combined with its location in the public domain, poses unique health and safety challenges for the individual drinker. These include:

- Health problems: arising from the impact of excessive alcohol consumption and associated issues. These may be related to chronic, often untreated, health conditions such as dependence, diabetes and liver disease.
- Housing problems: not all street drinkers are homeless but many have difficulty accessing stable accommodation and many who have housing struggle to maintain it.
- Conflict with the police: as a result of contravening by-laws.
- Safety problems: risk of physical violence and other dangers of being in an intoxicated state in public space such as an increased risk of being in a pedestrian traffic accident. The ability of drinkers to minimise risk is significantly hindered by the state of intoxication.
- Isolation: the breakdown of family and social relationships resulting in social isolation and exclusion from community life.

It is important to note the particular circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the role their needs play in the drafting of this Strategy. Whilst a lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples drink alcohol than the general population, those who do drink generally consume alcohol at more harmful levels than non-indigenous people (National Alcohol Strategy 2006-09).

Street drinkers with alcohol dependence are less likely to access essential support than other members of the community. Inner-city services report that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are even less likely to access those support services. The health and homelessness services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander informants attribute this lack of access to the lack of culturally sensitive services.

A strategy to reduce street drinking must address the health, housing and social needs of street drinkers as well as the act of drinking itself. The variety of services required to meet these needs must be provided in a carefully planned and coordinated manner that is culturally sensitive where appropriate. Anecdotal evidence suggests that access to such a continuum of care can lead to a reduction in the level of alcohol consumed.

### **3.2.3 Public Safety and Amenity**

Significant impacts on amenity arise where street drinking becomes concentrated in a high impact location, or 'hotspots'. The amenity impacts generated by street drinking in the public domain include:

- Environmental impacts: littering, urination and defecation, and general disturbance caused by excessive noise
- A decreased level of community safety: both actual and perceived
- Obstruction of business and residential doorways, fire exits and public footways

Street drinkers are often perceived as aggressive or as a public nuisance despite the fact that the behaviour of most street drinkers does not warrant this perception and

there is little evidence to substantiate any real threat to public safety. However, the more visible street drinkers attract attention through behaviours such as: general disturbance, shouting and arguments; aggression; property damage; begging; staggering and obvious intoxication and sleeping in public space. In addition their sometimes unkempt appearance can elicit a perception of threat however unwarranted this may be.

An expectation persists that Council, the police and other responsible bodies should 'do something'. This strategy addresses the personal needs of the street drinkers whilst responding to public concerns and perceptions around people who drink in public space.

### **3.3 Key Actions**

#### **3.3.1 Services to People who are Homeless and/or Disadvantaged**

##### **Rationale**

Not all people who drink on the streets are homeless and not all homeless people have an alcohol dependence. Notwithstanding, many street drinkers are homeless and many of them live in temporary or marginal housing. Many others who do have stable housing struggle to sustain it and this leaves them at risk of homelessness.

Although the Commonwealth and State governments have the primary role of funding and providing services to assist people who are homeless and/or disadvantaged, such as those with drug and alcohol dependence, the City acknowledges that the entire community, including the Council, shares a responsibility to act on preventing, reducing, and managing these issues.

##### **Services provided and/or supported by the City of Sydney**

The City funds and supports a range of services that provide assistance to people who are homeless and/or disadvantaged, including street drinkers:

- The Homeless Persons Information Centre (HPIC) is a state-wide information and referral agency that links people to accommodation and other forms of assistance. In 2005 HPIC took more than 50,000 calls for information and assistance.
- The City provides a Brokerage program that can purchase short-term accommodation and other assistance for people with low to moderate needs who are homeless. This is currently provided under contract to the City by the YWCA. Referrals to the program are made through HPIC.
- In 2006, the City and the Department of Housing began jointly funding a new Outreach service for homeless people across the entire LGA. The Inner-City Homelessness Outreach and Support Service (I-CHOSS) is provided by a consortium of the Haymarket Foundation and Mission Australia.

I-CHOSS is particularly well placed to provide assistance to street drinkers as the service is based on a model of regular street patrols throughout the LGA as well as intensive work in particular locations. In addition to the general roles of Outreach and Support I-CHOSS employs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) workers and specialists who focus on drug & alcohol, mental health, living skills and general counselling. People who accept assistance from the team can be linked to a range of services such as drug and alcohol, other health, housing and social welfare services. The support team provides intensive support to people who accept assistance from the service, as well as providing ongoing support once people are housed.

### **Links with Other Services for People who are Homeless and Street Drinkers**

In addition to City supported services, the City maintains active relationships with community agencies that provide services to street drinkers. The City's Homelessness Unit has developed specific referral mechanisms for working with those services where a need for intervention is identified, particularly in hotspot areas. This includes referral to:

- Crisis intervention and transportation for intoxicated people
- Intoxicated Person's Units (IPUs)<sup>2</sup>
- Homeless outreach services that can provide long term intensive support
- Detoxification and rehabilitation services as well as other health and mental health services
- Day drop-in centres that provide meals, showers, laundry, recreational activities and other forms of social assistance
- Accommodation services
- Women, youth and ATSI specific services

### **Promoting Flexible Approaches**

Many different services exist for meeting the needs of homeless and alcohol addicted persons. However, despite the range of services available many street drinkers struggle to access services that will effectively meet their needs. This might result from a lack of resources (beds, detoxification and rehabilitation facilities etc) or systemic blockages resulting from limited service flexibility around the provision of services to people who maintain an active alcohol dependence. For example, people who are not ready to engage in recovery options face substantial difficulties accessing and maintaining stable accommodation.

The City's Homelessness Team actively promotes and facilitates innovative and flexible service delivery within existing service frameworks and works with homelessness services and funding bodies to explore ways in which this might be achieved.

### **Targeting Refractory Alcohol Addiction in Street Drinkers (TRAASD)**

The TRAASD project is an example of the City's approach to flexible service delivery. In partnership with St Vincent's Drug & Alcohol Services, the Albion Street Lodge (an IPU), and the Darlinghurst Community Health Centre, the Homelessness Unit has developed a pilot project targeting the needs of chronically homeless people with a longstanding alcohol dependence that has not yielded to intervention and/or treatment. This group commonly move between the IPUs or sleep on the streets, have significant and sometimes life threatening health issues, are frequent victims of crime and are often in conflict with the criminal justice system. They are amongst the most marginalised and isolated members of society.

TRAASD is an innovative initiative that works from an approach of pre-emptive case management and 'massaging' clients into the health system in preparation for long-term intervention. Although in its early stages, the pilot project has achieved substantial success with a small number of individuals who have been homeless for ten years or more accessing and maintaining stable accommodation.

### **Development of Emergency Department Protocols for Responding to Inebriated Persons**

Vulnerable and/or homeless persons with an alcohol dependence are frequent users of Emergency Departments. This presents a unique opportunity for coordinated intervention involving health promotion and prevention as well as treatment. The City

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<sup>2</sup> Also known as Sobering Up Centres

will work with Area Health Departments to establish formal protocols to proactively respond to people with chronic alcohol dependence involving assessment, referral and treatment.

### **Partnership with Redfern Waterloo Authority**

Various Federal and State bodies and other community advocates have recognised the need for responses to alcohol dependence that recognise the particular needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people.

The City of Sydney and the Redfern Waterloo Authority have established a partnership to seek funding from the Commonwealth Government for the establishment of a service for ATSI people in the Redfern Waterloo Area who experience alcohol dependence.

The service aims to provide opportunities for Aboriginal men to engage with each other in a culturally supportive environment that is alcohol-free and encourages either abstinence or a reduction in harmful levels of alcohol consumption.

The proposed service model incorporates three service streams:

- Short to medium term accommodation for men who choose to abstain from the consumption of alcohol and who require support to achieve that goal.
- A day centre providing material support (food, showers etc), recreational activities, cultural support and linkages to various health and social supports.
- Community meeting space for the Aboriginal Men's Group.

### **3.3.2 Design, Regulation and Management of Public Space.**

#### **Rationale**

Street drinking can have high noise and waste impacts and may have accompanying anti-social behaviours or lead to public perceptions of reduced safety. In addition to its direct and indirect support to people who are homeless, the City directly provides a range of services that respond to the impacts of street drinking on the public domain.

#### **Urban Design**

Good public design and the provision of appropriate public facilities can have a moderating impact on street drinking. In known, long-term street drinking hotspots, the City will implement the following actions:

- Enhance park design to comply with principles of 'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design' (CPTED). CPTED assesses such things as street lighting, landscaping and the location and design of public facilities. CPTED will enable the containment of some street drinking activity into parks where there are fewer residential, business and public safety conflicts.
- As at September 2006, the City is preparing an Open Space and Recreational Needs Study that includes a plan for the placement of park toilets in strategic locations throughout the inner-city. This plan has been informed in part, by the need to manage amenity in locations frequented by congregations of street drinkers.
- The City is developing a series of individual Local Action Plans (LAPs) that include a list of high level, priority improvement projects across the local government area. These LAPs have been developed based on extensive community consultation over seven months.
- The City recognises that street lighting can reduce feelings of vulnerability and enhance feelings of safety. Effective street lighting can attract people to a site

subsequently optimising opportunities for casual surveillance and thus reducing anti-social behaviour. Council has adopted the Public Domain Interim Sydney Lights Design Code which will establish minimum levels of lighting in the public domain.

- Safety Audits: the City undertakes Safety Audits to respond to community, Police or Council concerns about design issues that may be contributing to real or perceived safety issues in certain locations.

### **Waste & Cleansing Protocol**

The City has a Cleansing Protocol that has been developed between the Homelessness Team and the Waste and Cleansing Unit. The Protocol is designed to respond to issues of amenity that arise from the use of public space by rough sleepers, drug users and street drinkers. Specifically the Cleansing Protocol:

- Incorporates criteria for identifying the need to establish regular (as opposed to episodic) cleansing and waste removal.
- Implements a schedule of cleansing in consistent hotspots
- Includes protocols for collaboration between City Units and external services such as I-CHOSS and other outreach services.
- Involves external services and other stakeholders in the identification and management of amenity issues.

### **Implementation of Alcohol Free Zones**

In response to requests from residents and local police, the City of Sydney has established Alcohol Free Zones (AFZs) in a number of streets in the City Central, Kings Cross, Leichhardt, Newtown, Redfern and Surry Hills Police Local Area Commands. It is an offence to drink alcohol on any street or footpath where an Alcohol Free Zone exists, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for a period of up to three years. Alcohol Free Zones aim to reduce alcohol related crime and anti-social behaviour in identified locations in order to help create a safer environment for residents, businesses and visitors. The NSW Police are responsible for enforcing Alcohol Free Zones.

### **Identification and Implementation of Alcohol Prohibited Areas**

Alcohol Prohibited Areas (APA) are designated under section 332 of the Local Government Act, 1993 and relate to public places that are parks. These locations are indicated by standard ordinance signage prohibiting the consumption of alcohol. Both NSW Police and Council Rangers can enforce an APA.

### **Working with Local Police**

NSW Police play a key role in ensuring public order and safety that includes the regulation of public space in accordance with State legislation and local ordinance. The City will lobby for a higher police profile and activity in hotspots but will also work with the police to encourage them to take a preventative and proactive rather than punishment approach through the referral of street drinkers to appropriate services. In pursuit of this goal the City will:

- Provide inner-city Police Local Area Commands with a training kit aimed at new recruits that contains information and raises awareness about homelessness issues and appropriate responses when dealing with vulnerable people including intoxicated people.
- Provide NSW Police with a resource kit providing details of services where intoxicated persons can be referred to for the purposes of accessing assistance. This information will be uploaded on the Police intranet and available to all general duties officers. The resource list will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

The aim of this collaboration is to decrease impacts and increase opportunities for street based drinkers to access services that may assist them. It is hoped that these actions will result in a reduction in police and legal resources taken up with responding to street drinking and a reduction in people entering the criminal justice system as a result of activities occurring whilst under the influence of alcohol.

### **Public Space Liaison Officer (PSLO) – a pilot role**

The City will establish a PSLO position within the Council by the end of 2006. The objective of the role will be to engage with street drinkers, the homeless and other disadvantaged groups who use public space, and work with them to encourage responsible behaviour. The PSLO position is concerned with the management of public space and is distinct from the role of street outreach workers who are directly concerned with the welfare of people who are homeless.

The PSLO will liaise with different departments within Council and external stakeholders and will assume an active role in linking people with support services when appropriate.

Specifically a PSLO will:

- Take an engagement before enforcement approach.
- Act quickly to respond to issues that are raised by business owners, residents, city staff and other stakeholders (e.g. police) relating to public space.
- Provide advice to and raise awareness amongst City Rangers on appropriate responses relating to homelessness and facilitate coordination between relevant areas of council and other stakeholders such as the police and outreach services.
- Enable early identification of issues relating to the use of public space by the homeless and street drinkers and facilitate referral to appropriate parties.
- Enable a two-way exchange of information between public space users and other stakeholders to promote responsible use of public space and foster an environment of inclusivity.

### **Hotspot Response and Management**

Whilst the Strategy creates the means by which the City can respond immediately when issues are identified relating to street drinking, there are certain locations, hotspots, where a coordinated and ongoing response is required to achieve sustainable outcomes for all stakeholders, including the street drinkers.

Where a hotspot is identified, the City will assess the specific issues attached to the activity of street drinking in that space and develop a response that coordinates separate elements of the overall Strategy within an integrated and location specific strategy that will be ongoing until the situation is resolved. This might vary in different locations according to the needs of the street drinkers and community members who share that space.

The City will:

- Develop a series of indicators to identify existing and emerging hotspots.
- Undertake a mapping exercise of consistent hotspots.
- Establish standard protocols for responding to hotspots that combine various elements of the overall Strategy in a coordinated response.
- Monitor activity within hotspots and the effectiveness of responses.

## **The Development of Protocols for the Joint Management of Public Space with other Statutory Land Owners**

There are a number of sites throughout the LGA where public space that is owned by the City is co-located with, or adjacent to, the property and land of other statutory bodies such as the Department of Housing, State Rail and the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority. How one area is managed will often have an impact on adjacent areas. In order to reduce the potential displacement of street drinkers between City owned space and space owned by other statutory bodies the City will negotiate with other statutory land owners to develop and implement a series of Protocols for the joint management of public space in relevant areas. These Protocols will incorporate other aspects of the Street Drinking Strategy such as Hot Spot Response and Management and the role of the Public Space Liaison Officer.

### **3.3.3 Working with the Liquor Industry to enhance their participation in finding solutions to street drinking**

#### **Licensed Premises**

Street drinkers purchase their alcohol from licensed premises that are stand alone bottle shops or have bottle shops attached and/or sell over the counter 'takeaways'. The City will work to improve the regulation of liquor supply to street drinkers via the following means:

Liaison with licensed premises (particularly those operating in identified hotspots) to:

- Encourage licensed premises to ensure that compliance with Responsible Service of Alcohol legislation is applied to bottle shop and takeaway sales as well as on premise consumption.
- Participate in Individual Licensing Accords that respond to specific issues impacting upon their local area and ultimately their own business. Individual Accords might assess such things as opening hours, the sale of alcohol in glasses and pricing structures.
- Becoming proactive in notifying Council of problems arising from street drinking and working with council and other stakeholders to respond to those problems.

#### **Liaison with Liquor Industry Peak Bodies to:**

- Encourage their members to actively participate in campaigns to reduce street drinking.
- Participate in awareness raising and education of licensees around the management of street drinking and opportunities to participate in strategies to reduce the impacts of street drinking.
- The distribution of information and educational materials through off-licensed sales.
- Promote best practice guidelines that are inclusive of a response to street drinking.

### **3.3.4 Research, Advocacy, Monitoring and Evaluation**

#### **Rationale**

By virtue of its relationship to the people who live and work within or visit the LGA, its role as a service provider, its responsibility as a statutory body and its links to the State and Federal Government, the City is opportunistically placed to:

- Advocate for the allocation of resources and the development of policy to respond to social issues such as drug and alcohol dependence.
- Carry out research at a local level to reinforce the need for this to occur

#### **Research**

The City, through the provision of the state-wide information and referral service for people who are homeless, HPIC, and its funding of the street based Inner-City Homelessness Outreach and Support Service (I-CHOSS), has access to information about the needs and characteristics of people who are seeking or in need of assistance. Whilst maintaining the integrity of personal information and the confidentiality of individuals, aggregated data will be used to inform the City's policy development and direct service provision to people who are homeless and vulnerable groups including street drinkers. The City will combine this resource with other sources of information to ensure that staff apply evidence-based solutions to its policy, advocacy and direct service provision.

#### **Advocate to Other Levels of Government for Enhanced Responses to Alcohol Related Problems**

The City will advocate for improved service provision for people with long term and severe alcohol dependence. This to include:

1. Advocacy to the State Government for a response to the Social Issues Committee's 2004 Review of Inebriates Act (1912).
  2. As per the recommendation of the Review of the Inebriate's Act, that it be repealed.
  3. Following the State Government response to the review of the Inebriate's Act, that Council staff review the response and advise Council on further action and advocacy on appropriate services to chronic street drinkers.
  4. The City advocate to the State Government to provide for improved options, including Activity Centres, for chronic street drinkers.
- Provision of additional resources for drug and alcohol services such as detoxification services, in-patient and out-patient rehabilitation services, dual diagnosis approaches and flexible accommodation options for people with substance abuse problems.
  - The government support and resource homelessness service providers to continue reforming services to focus on long-term improvements as well as providing for immediate crisis accommodation needs.
  - The establishment of a detoxification and rehabilitation service within the inner-city or Redfern Waterloo area for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
  - Provision of homeless health outreach services that address health issues relating to drug and alcohol, mental health and primary health needs.
  - Support for the implementation of recommendations made in the Draft National Alcohol Strategy 2006 – 2009, especially as they relate to local government.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Street Drinking Working Group, originally established by the City of Sydney to consult in the drafting of the Strategy, will be invited to reconvene at regular intervals to report back on ongoing issues related to street drinking. The Terms of Reference of the Working Group will be formatted to reflect their new role as monitoring agents against the implementation of the Strategy.

The objectives for the re-formatted Street Drinking Working group will include:

- To identify ongoing street drinking issues in the LGA and monitor trends as they relate to street drinking.
- The establishment of coordinated responses to alcohol related issues in the LGA.
- The development of a Local Level Agreement between participating partners identifying collective and individual responses to street based drinking.
- To establish formal linkages with local Community Drug Action Teams (CDATs) to coordinate the implementation of the Strategy with the activities of the CDATs.
- The establishment of sub-groups, with a focus on action, to respond to specific issues
- To oversee the implementation and monitor the efficacy of the Strategy.

# APPENDIX 1

## CONSULTATION

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The formal aspect of the street drinking consultation process commenced in November 2005 when the first meeting of the street drinking working group was held. This process culminated in the first draft of the Street Drinking Strategy, 2006. The following groups participated in the formulation of the Strategy outlined within this document:

Bernard Cronin	Haymarket Foundation, Executive Officer
Patricia Worwood	Haymarket Foundation, Albion Street Lodge, Manager
Sue Chant	Inner City Homelessness Outreach & Support Service, Manager
David Pocklington	Wesley Mission, Edward Eagar Lodge, Executive Officer
Anthony Stratford	Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre, Coordinator
Brian Woods	Salvation Army, Foster House, Intoxicated Person's Unit, Manager
Robin Pullen	Salvation Army, Samaritan House, Manager
Daniel Petsalis	Mission Australia, Missionbeat, Manager
Claire Armstrong	Mission Australia, Missionbeat, Welfare Officer
Vibeke Vistisen	Mission Australia, A Woman's Place, Drug & Alcohol Counsellor
Tasi Aufai	Mission Australia, A Woman's Place, Manager
Zed Tintor	City Women's Hostel, Manager
David Kennedy	Society of St Vincent De Paul, Matthew Talbot Hostel
Veronica Eldridge	Society of St Vincent De Paul, Matthew Talbot Hostel
Megan Groves	Society of St Vincent De Paul, Matthew Talbot
Lorna Dee-Carter	Society of St Vincent De Paul, Vincentian Village, Manager
Brad Freeburn	Aboriginal Medical Service, Manager, Drug and Alcohol Service
Christine Pollacini	Sydney South West Area Health Service
Keren Kiel	Sydney South West Area Health Service
Bronwyn Crosby	Saint Vincent's Drug & Alcohol Services, Deputy Director
Jenny O'Mahony	Social Work, Emergency Dep. St Vincent's Hospital, Team Leader
Anthony Shannon	Department of Community Services, Partnerships & Planning, Mgr
Alan Armstrong	Central Sydney Police Local Area Command (LAC)
Ben Purvis	Rocks LAC, Crime Prevention Officer
Brett Degenhardt	Surry Hills LAC, Crime Prevention Officer
Georgie Israel	Redfern LAC, Crime Prevention Officer
Stephen Evans	NSW Police, Drug & Alcohol Coordinating Unit, Coordinator
Mark Molloy	Liquor Licensing, Redfern LAC
Nathan Kitchener-Moore	Liquor Stores Association NSW, Chief Executive Officer
David Elliot	Australian Hotels Association, Executive Officer
Roy Bishop	Office of Member for Bligh, Electoral Officer
Aldo Pennini	Redfern Waterloo Authority, Reforming Human Services, Director
Don Stewart	Redfern Waterloo Authority, Reforming Human Services, Prjct Mgr
Norma Ingram	Redfern Waterloo Authority, Reforming Human Services
City Staff from:	Social Policy and Programs, Community Support and Access, Homelessness, Design Management, Place Management, Parks & Open Spaces, Waste Management

# APPENDIX 2

## KEY TERMS

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### **Alcohol Free Zones**

It is an offence to drink alcohol on any street or footpath where an Alcohol Free Zone exists, 24 hours a day, seven days a week for a period of up to three years.

### **Alcohol Prohibited Areas**

Alcohol Prohibited Areas (APA) relate to public places that are parks. These locations are indicated by the presence of standard ordinance signage prohibiting the consumption of alcohol.

### **Detoxification**

The process an individual goes through when withdrawing from alcohol. Usually is done under guidance of medical personnel.

### **Harm minimisation**

Alcohol use and abuse is primarily a public health and social issue and people must be provided with the knowledge, support and skills necessary to make informed decisions about high risk behaviours.

### **Homelessness**

The term homelessness broadly refers to people without conventional accommodation. The commonly accepted definition of homelessness includes:

Primary homelessness: people who have no shelter (eg. living in cars, sleeping rough);

Secondary homelessness: people who move between various forms of temporary shelter (eg crisis accommodation or staying with friends or relatives); and

Tertiary homelessness: people who live in accommodation which is without security of tenure, unsafe or inappropriate to their needs.

### **Hotspots**

A street drinking 'hotspot' is a particular location consistently favoured by congregations of street drinkers where this activity influences public perception of safety, has a negative impact upon local amenity and/or contravenes by-laws that prohibit this activity in that location.

### **Impaired decision making capacity**

By virtue of intoxication or some other form of mental or cognitive condition a persons ability to make a decision in a way that comprehends impacts on self or other is impaired.

### **Intoxicated Person's Unit (IPU)**

Is a safe place where a person who is under the influence of an intoxicating substance may be taken to 'sober up' and recover from the effects of that substance.

### **Mental Health Problem / illness**

A psychiatric illness, diagnosed or undiagnosed, that may result in significant impairment of an individual's cognitive, affective or relational abilities.

**Move on**

The direction given by a police officer, under the powers of the NSW Summary Offences Act, 1998.

**Public Intoxication**

Public intoxication refers to a person who is under the influence of intoxicating substances in public space.

**Public Space**

Space that is accessible to members of the community as a matter of right or invitation.

**Refractory Alcohol Addiction**

A 'stubborn' dependence on alcohol that does not yield to intervention or treatment.

**Street drinking**

Street drinking is where the consumption of alcohol, by individuals or congregations of social groupings, takes place in public spaces such as parks and streets. For the purposes of this strategy street drinking and the issues arising from this activity are distinct from the activities of drinkers who congregate on footways outside licensed venues who create a distinct set of alcohol related issues that is addressed through the City's Draft Drug and Alcohol Strategy to which this document is linked.

**Street drinkers**

A street drinker is a person who consumes alcohol to intoxication in the public domain, as described above.