



Planning and Strategy Committee of the Whole

8 August 2018

**UNDER SEPARATE COVER
ATTACHMENTS**

ITEM 4.8

Item 4.8	Alcohol Prohibited Area for Ernie Beaver Park - 6 Gilmore Place, Queanbeyan West	
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Simon Upward
Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council

256 Crawford Street
Queanbeyan NSW 2620

RE: Submission relating to the implementation of an Alcohol Prohibited Area for Ernie Beaver Park, Queanbeyan.

Thank you for consulting the Monaro Local Area Command in relation to the establishment of an Alcohol Prohibited Area within Ernie Beaver Park, Queanbeyan, NSW 2620.

This submission is divided into two sections :-

1. Crime Prevention and Community Safety principles which influence the foundational beliefs upon which police base their support for the establishment of Alcohol Prohibited Areas.
2. Alcohol Prohibited Areas: Statistical and anecdotal information provide in support of the establishment of the Alcohol Prohibited Area.

Notes:

1. Statistical information provided in this proposal is a reflection of past irresponsible behavior arising from the consumption of alcohol within/near the nominated area.
2. Anecdotal information has been obtained about the nominated area.
3. Police proposed the Alcohol Prohibited Area be enforceable 24/7. Council obviously have flexibility surrounding the hours and dates of operation and the ability to exempt any area for special functions or events.
4. The Monaro Police District gives a commitment to enforce the Alcohol Prohibited Area if it is established by council.
5. Officers such as the Crime Prevention Officer and Licensing Officer for Monaro are also dedicated to assist in other community programs such as education, awareness and harm minimisation programs surrounding laws relating to alcohol prohibited areas.

Crime prevention principles, community safety principles and perceived social costs

The prohibition of alcohol consumption in public areas is an important and ongoing strategy adopted by many councils within New South Wales to help curb antisocial behaviour and alcohol related crime in specified areas. Many Regional Councils, including Armidale, Tweed Heads and Tamworth have established alcohol prohibited areas.

People who frequent established alcohol prohibited areas become accustomed to, and largely abide by, the laws that prohibit them from consuming alcohol within the area. When this pattern of behavior is established it assists in developing a culture within the community that fosters responsible drinking habits.

The Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs had stressed the importance of reducing the supply of alcohol within regional areas. The National Drug Strategy document mentions the importance of local council's involvement in campaigns to help shape the culture of young people and their acceptance of alcohol ⁽¹⁾. Further the document identifies the importance of alcohol harm reduction and encourages strategies that help to reduce harm to individuals ⁽²⁾. One of the good practice examples includes creating safer settings such as 'dry areas' through the establishment of Alcohol Free Zones and Alcohol Prohibited Areas.

The National Institute of Justice state the consumption of alcohol (and drugs) by people impact on crime indirectly because it effects their behaviour and is associated with violence and other illegal activity ⁽³⁾. The Australian Drug Foundation produced a report in 2012 indicating alcohol consumption is strongly related to a wide range of crimes, including antisocial behaviour and interpersonal crime ⁽⁴⁾.

The National Crime Prevention Framework cites crime prevention principles that can reduce the long-term costs associated with crime and can reinforce social cohesion within communities ⁽⁵⁾. The conclusion reached is that the implementation of Alcohol Free Zones and Alcohol Prohibited Areas assists in reducing the amount of alcohol consumed within public areas and thus assists in reducing the likelihood of crime occurring.

The signage displayed upon the establishment of Alcohol Prohibited Area's enables law enforcement officers to actively reduce the amount of alcohol consumed within the public sphere. It also has the effect of informing community members and visitors that the town does not welcome 'street drinkers'.

Signs are an 'ownership' cue and are a principle associated with Crime Prevention through Environmental Design. Areas that appear 'owned' and 'cared for' are less likely to be damaged or littered and are more likely to be respected.

Alcohol Prohibited Areas help to improve the perception of safety within the nominated areas. In general, 'street drinkers' can increase the perceived fear of crime which can lead to avoidance of the area. Avoidance of specific areas leads to a reduction in natural surveillance which renders a location vulnerable for the commission of offences such as malicious damage, littering and more serious offences such as assaults and sexual assaults.

- (1) National Drug Strategy 2016-2025, p.16 draft form for public consultation
- (2) National Drug Strategy 2016-2025, p.12 – 24 draft form for public consultation
- (3) Drug & Alcohol Crime & Offences, National Institute of Justice
- (4) Prevention Resource Quarterly 2012, Australian Drug Foundation
- (5) Australian and New Zealand Crime Prevention Senior Officers' Group (ANZCP SPG)
- (6) NSW Bureau of Crime and Statistics
2016: Liquor offences: 1836 per 100 000 population as compared to the NSW State average of 795
2016: Drug offences: 3477 per 100 000 population as compared to the NSW State average of 146

Alcohol Prohibited Areas work best when the local community engages in other strategies simultaneously. There have already been suggestions made by council staff members which indicate programs such as community gardens and referring habitual offenders to participate in community teams and programs such as the Mens Shed, could benefit the person and the community as a whole. Police from the Monaro Police District are willing to assist council, as deemed necessary, to assist council with the implementation of such processes. Further, the Queanbeyan area already have an effective Community Drug and Alcohol Action Team (CDAT) and a proactive Liquor Accord who have been implementing harm minimization strategies within the local community to assist in reducing alcohol related crime for a number of years.

Police currently have legislative powers such as 'move on directions' to assist with some alcohol related incidents, whilst effective, they are solely reliant on people behaving in a criminal manner prior to police intervention and are not as proactive in reducing potential harms as enforcement activities within 'dry areas' can be.

There exists a financial and social cost with the commission of any alcohol related offence. Costs incurred include clearing up broken bottles and rubbish, the repair of damaged property, the physical and psychological harm inflicted upon those who are affected by the crime and by the impact on the town's reputation.

Police continue to strive to eliminate alcohol related crime and therefore support the proposal for the creation of this nominated Alcohol Prohibited Area as part of a holistic approach to reduce alcohol related harms.

Section 2 – Alcohol Prohibited Areas

NOTE: For this area to be legally enforceable signage must be adequate and must indicate times, dates and nominated area of enforcement.

Alcohol Prohibited Areas cover any other public place that is not a public road, part of a public road or a car park.

The following submission will detail statistical and anecdotal evidence which is an indication of past irresponsible behavior which may have risen from the consumption of alcohol within the nominated areas. For this report, data from the 1st of January 2018 to mid-June 2018 has been considered.

The evidence contained within this submission has been obtained from an interrogation of the NSW Police Force Computerised Operational Policing System (COPS). COPS is an operational computer system designed to capture and record crime. An 'event' is created by police within COPS when they attend an incident which they believe to be reportable. Police have also obtained information from the NSW Police Force Aided Dispatch (CAD) System. CAD is the NSW Police Force's resource deployment and incident management system. This system captures not only the police attendance at a location but also complaints made by members of the public. Other information within this submission arises from the observations of local Police as well as information provided by members of the public, local business owners, managers and employees.

Ernie Beaver Park, Gilmore Place, Queanbeyan

Within the period from 1st January 2018 to mid-June 2018 police have responded to the following likely alcohol related incidents within/near the proposed area.

- Concern for Welfare
- Check Bona Fides

There have been no alcohol related events recorded in the nominated period however Police have been provided with information that suggests irresponsible behavior arising from the consumption of alcohol has occurred within this zone.

Police have received information that indicates the area is frequently utilised by a number of middle aged people during the morning and lunch time who gather around the table at the location and consume large amounts of alcohol. These adults are alleged to be urinating in the bush land of the park. Their sheer presence combined with the alcohol consumption could be intimidating to families who wish to utilise the park facilities and thus could be causing avoidance of the area by families.

Further information indicates that the area is being used later in the afternoon and at night by youth who consume alcohol and partake in illegal drug use at the location.

Surveillance of this area by local Police supports the assertion that adults are utilising the park and bench area whilst consuming alcohol. Police have spoken to this group of adults on a few occasions over the past few months. These adults freely admit that they utilise the area on a regular basis as a gathering point and they frequently consume alcohol at that location. They further indicated that they often take care of the area and clear the bottles from the table (that were not left there by them) and sweep the rubbish from under the table into a pile. They also freely admitted to utilising the bushland within the park area to urinate as no other toilet facilities were close by for them to use.

Police have spoken to surrounding businesses and they state the same group of adults are there on a regular basis and that over the past several weeks have been becoming more of a nuisance to the business.

Police have liaised with members of staff from the Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council and met with them at the location for an assessment of the area. During this time the group of adults were there consuming alcohol. Council staff confirmed there were often alcohol containers in the rubbish bins and sometimes empty alcohol containers left around the park area. Recommendations from this assessment included the recommendation for an Alcohol Prohibited Area, landscaping, wayfinding and signage to be implemented within the area.

Council staff and the Crime Prevention Officer for Monaro believe other intervention programs such as working with the gathering of adults to conduct meaningful programs within the community, such as a community garden project, a Men's Shed project or something similar, would prove to be a fruitful exercise.


There is only anecdotal evidence that indicates youth are gathering at the park. During the mentioned period police have not recorded interactions with youth at this location, however, statistics from the Monaro Police District for the Queanbeyan area indicate that when police are dealing with intoxicated youth 42% of them had consumed their last alcoholic drink within a public place.

For these reasons, and the crime prevention advantages mentioned in section one, police are in full support of the establishment of an alcohol prohibited area within this area.



Naomi Nemeč
Senior Constable
Crime Prevention Officer
Monaro Police District

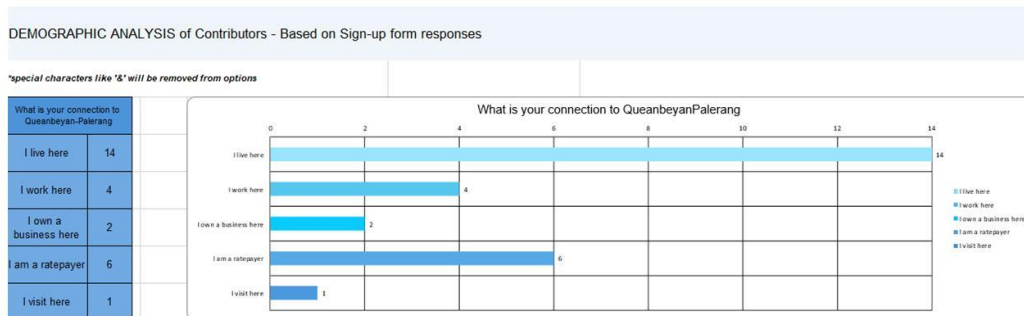
21/6/2018



Neil Grey
Detective Chief Inspector Grey
Crime Manager
Monaro Police District

Survey Responses
Do you have any comments on the proposal to declare Ernie Beaver Park, Gilmore Place Queanbeyan, an Alcohol Prohibited Area?
I support the proposal. I have repeatedly observed men drinking alcohol at the park during mornings when I have had my kids at the park, and on one instance the same men abusing their dog. Broken glass from beer bottles is also a turn-off.
I live in the area, and take my grandchildren to that park often. I have never found the people drinking to be offensive or intimidating. I think some people complaining are just too precious and elitist. I like to see the people enjoying some company and having a drink. I object to the park being made alcohol free. What if a couple want to have a bbq and a glass of wine on a summer's evening? Lots of people live in flats and can't have bbqs at home. I think we need to be a more inclusive community.
I fully support this proposal. We no longer take our children to this park due to the dangerous state of the park due to alcohol related activities, including broken glass on the play equipment and other dangerous litter around the park.
Bring it on! That park is just appalling. Those bums ruin it for everyone. They urinate in the bushes, ive seen them catcall highschool girls who are obvious truants. Ive seen them arguing and threatening each other. God knows what else goes on there - people slip between the fence and highway retaining wall at the back. All parks with playground equipment and BBQ areas where families congregate in Qbn should be alcohol free...and it should be policed. Im not sure of the name of the park around the back of tennis courts and Bindabella Medical centre adjacent to the river and low level crossing down past the caravan park, but those drunk blokes that congregate all day everyday are frightening. I took my dog for a walk down there once. Never, ever again - disgusting men making lewd comments and sexual gestures. Theyre there everytime i drive past. Not a safe area for a woman.
I think this a great idea. I stopped going to this park even though my children loved the park due to people drinking on the tables or bottles lying around.
This is a great idea. The park was always a nice close walk from how and the kids would love it. Now we dont go any where near it as my kids dont need to see people drinking at 11am nor listen to there disgustingly inappropriate conversations. They should move off and let our kids grow up been kids!
I believe all parks that have children's play equipment should be declared alcohol free zones.
Good that's what it needs I take my kids there all the time and I'm not the only one there are heaps of families around the area that use that park and I feel nervous when there are people drinking there

1 comment only; it is a park. All parks MUST be alcohol free. I am ashamed to be a rte payer in a community that has actually asked his question.
PLEASE MAKE ALL PARKS ALCOHOL PROHIBITED! I live very close to this particular park and there are so many drunks here it makes me feel unsafe even walking my dog let alone taking any children there! Smashed glass,"used equipment", drinks urinating on equipment. You name it, I've seen it. It really gives the area a terrible look! Do it for the kids.
I live in Gilmore Place & have a young daughter. These drunks are there every day & have been for years. I would never feel comfortable taking my little one to this park while they are there.
I totally agree, in fact all along the river should be alcohol free zones no matter who we are.
Good work all for it 🍷
I feel that it is a shame that the actions of a few can spoil it for others. I reside in the unit block adjacent to Ernie Beaver Park and often enjoy relaxing in the sun with a couple of drinks as the units tend to receive little to no sunlight during the day. For a park which is supposed to be family friendly it is difficult to understand why there used to be a water bubbler which had been leaking for as long as I can remember so the councils' answer was to remove it rather than repair it so that there is no longer drinking water for the kids who play in the park with the nearest public toilets situated opposite the police station in town. I feel that perhaps focusing on the one or two responsible for the above mentioned issues rather than punishing those who don't may be a better course of action. In closing I believe that as a resident and one who enjoys the option to be able to relax in the warmth at the park that turning it into a alcohol free zone may be a tad premature and hope that the option is reconsidered. As mentioned earlier I feel that the lack of facilities such as drinking water and toilets needs to be be looked into rather than worrying about a few people enjoying a couple of drinks in the park.



4.8 Alcohol Prohibited Area for Ernie Beaver Park - 6 Gilmore Place, Queanbeyan West
 Attachment 2 - Community Survey Responses - Alcohol Prohibited Area - Ernie Beaver Park (Continued)

