

Unintended consequences of Alcohol Management Plans in Queensland: **changes in drug and alcohol use**



Signage at airport

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Queensland Alcohol Management Plans (AMPs)

- Crisis intervention
- Intended harm minimisation approach
- Complex and varied alcohol restrictions



Initial implementation plan for alcohol restrictions 2002

Affected areas and restrictions from 2002



Major focus on supply reduction:

- carriage limits
- canteen closures
- supply limitations in catchment areas
- re-opening of some local licensed premises

Currently under review

Independent evaluation of Alcohol Management Plans in Queensland – multiple methods study

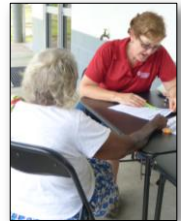
Perceptions and experiences of impacts

Community Surveys 2014-15 (n=1211)

- 10 communities
- Prohibition & non-prohibition
- 70% - current drinkers
- Results given back to communities

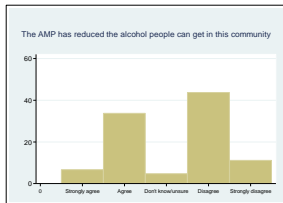
Key questions/propositions:

- Access to alcohol
- Changes in drinking
- Binge drinking
- Cannabis use
- Other drug use



Community survey

Impact of AMP on access to alcohol (n=1098)



57% disagreed

"The AMP is not working because the grog is still coming in -wine and spirits which isn't allowed. The police haven't got time to pull every single car up."
"It's up to \$300 for 750ml bottle. If you're paying that for alcohol there's not a lot of money for other things."
"But I don't think it's had much effect. . .but also like any form of prohibition does it creates an opportunity for entrepreneurs? "

Sly grogging

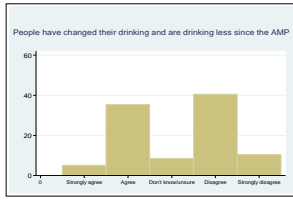


Sly grog seizures (photos courtesy of Queensland Police)



Wine and spirits popular

Impact of AMPs on alcohol consumption (n=1098)



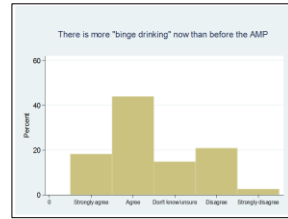
56% disagreed

"Some people are drinking less due to the amount allowed in the community."

The people drinking at the club are not the problem. It's the drinking outside that is the problem."

"It (AMP) was taking the grog away from the canteen into the houses. So suddenly you are finding your 13s and 14s and 15 year olds heavily intoxicated in the streets."

Impact of AMPs on alcohol consumption (n=1098)



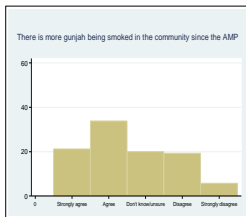
73% agreed

"Grog is the prized possession, you have to get rid of it very quickly so the police don't tip it out and you end up at the courthouse."

"It's made them sneakier, forcing people to binge drink rather than drink socially."

"Binge drinking is terrible in the community. They are also introducing that into children as young as 11, 12, 13."

Impacts of AMPs on drug use (n=1098)



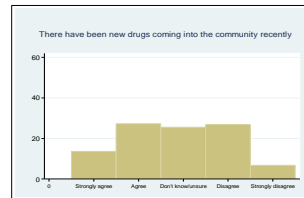
69% agreed

"There is more dope in the community since the canteen shut."

"You knock out the alcohol and then you get the sly grog and ganja."

"You will know that the AMP has led to people substituting (drugs) People who have never had ganja before in their life, even old people, turned to using ganja. This is the stories that I get from men's groups. Older men and women, 50's 60's."

Other drug use (n=1098)



"There's ice first time. Most people aren't. We need the police worried in here, really cracking down on it."

"Soon ice will come and that will mean we are in big trouble."

There are other drugs. I don't know what they are taking but they don't get that stupid on marijuana.

"That other stuff wouldn't come here. We're strong here...Already decided we don't want that here."

Conclusions regarding perceived impacts



- Sly grogging entrenched and highly problematic
- Limited impact on access and consumption of alcohol
- Increased binge drinking
- Increased cannabis use



Poster promoting Sly Grog Hotline

Way forward



- Implementation of full complement of supply, harm and demand reduction measures
- Any loosening of restrictions needs to address sly grog
- Community efforts to change restrictions and drinking behaviours need to be adequately informed and resourced
- Improved government and community partnerships



View from Coolgaree Bay Sports Bar & Bistro Palm Island

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Related publications

Robertson J and Dowie R. cannabis: a cloud over our community. *Of Substance*, 2008, 6:3

Clough A. Listening to what Indigenous people in remote communities say about alcohol restrictions and cannabis use; "Good thing that the alcohol has gone, but the gunja has kept going". *Medical Journal of Australia*, 2012, 197:5

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