

A simple system enabling police to target **licensed premises** associated with **alcohol-related crime** has been implemented across New South Wales after a trial showed it was feasible, acceptable to licensees, and resulted in a drop in alcohol-related incidents. The Alcohol Linking Programme systematised enforcement of a new law requiring responsible alcohol service. It was developed in partnership with police after an assessment of gaps in their procedures. A similar approach has been successfully tried in Wales ▶ [Nugget 10.9](#). These procedures could provide a mechanism for implementing new British licensing laws and strategies aiming to curb crime and disorder.

LINKS

Nuggets [11.10](#) [10.9](#) [1.10](#)
Just say, 'No sir', issue 9

In the Australian programme, police attending an incident involving drinking record just four extra bits of information, including where the suspect last had a drink. ❶ If this was a licensed premises, the incident is considered 'linked' to those premises. Licensees are sent written feedback comparing the number and type of incidents linked to their premises with the local average, together with notification of a police visit the following week for a 30-item responsible service audit. At a further meeting the result is presented to the licensee with advice on reducing alcohol-related harm. Licensees with a 'clean' record are instead sent a congratulatory letter. In the initial trial nearly 400 premises were randomly allocated to these interventions or to normal policing. ❷ Incidents linked to intervention premises fell by 36% compared to 21% after normal policing, narrowly missing statistical significance. Most involved assault or drink driving but the intervention was also followed by large drops in domestic violence, malicious damage and drunkenness. After state-wide adoption, audited premises accounted for up to 22% fewer alcohol-related incidents than before.

❶ Wiggers J. *et al.* "Strategies and outcomes in translating alcohol harm reduction research into practice: the Alcohol Linking Program." *Drug and Alcohol Review*. 2004, 23(3), p. 355–364 **AC**

❷ The Linking Project. *Hunter & Northern Metropolitan Regions of NSW 1996–1999. Final report*. April 2002.