# Investigating the relationship between the density of liquor outlets and perceived problems of public disorder and violence

## Researchers

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## Summary

A recurring issue for liquor licensing policy makers is the extent to which restrictions should be placed on the availability of alcohol in order to minimise alcohol-related harms in the community. This study aims to provide timely information about the relationship between liquor outlet concentrations and reported problems with drunkenness and property damage in the neighbourhood, and assault victimisation in the home.

## Outcomes

This study showed that concentration of liquor outlets is predictive of alcohol-related problems. Any statement that implies that limiting the number alcohol retailers is irrelevant to harm minimisation must therefore be open to serious question. Previous NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) research had shown that the responsible provision of alcohol by suppliers appeared to be the exception rather than the rule in NSW. Evidence clearly supported the need for the continued regulation of the alcohol retail market in order to minimise the harms associated with alcohol misuse. The social impact assessment process, which replaced the needs test for liquor licensing applications in NSW, certainly has the potential to ensure that the harms caused by alcohol misuse are minimised. This process would be assisted by taking into account data relating to current levels of alcohol-related harm in specific local areas, including harms associated with such things as the degree of extended trading, or even the overall number of alcohol outlets.

## References

Donnelly, N, Poynton, S, Weatherburn, D, Bamford, E, & Nottage, J 2006. Liquor outlet concentrations and alcohol-related neighbourhood problems. Alcohol Studies Bulletin no.8, Sydney: Lawlink.