

WA leads in fight against glassing

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Legal Affairs Reporter

PERTH pubs and bars will be among the first in Australia to introduce tempered glassware to reduce the potential for them to be used as weapons.

Racing and Gaming Minister Terry Waldron and the Australian Hotels Association have been working to introduce the safety glass, which is identical to standard glass in look, feel and weight, but shatters on impact instead of exposing dangerous shards.

The replacement scheme is not compulsory, but the AHA is recommending its members take part in the "progressive" rollout, expected to take up to a year.

The AHA said the system would be self-regulatory and some publicans had already agreed to the changeover.

It comes as WA has gained a reputation for glassing attacks, including a high-profile case involving former model Eva Scolaro.

The 24-year-old was jailed for plunging a glass into the face of Roxanne Stacey Hemsley at Perth's Library nightclub in March 2009.

Another attacker, Neil Walker Kennedy, received an 18-month suspended prison term in



November last year after he drove a glass into the neck of a patron at the Elephant and Wheelbarrow in Northbridge.

The victim almost bled to death on the footpath outside the pub in August 2009.

Mr Waldron told *The Sunday Times* he would continue to resist calls to legislate for the blanket introduction of plastic or paper drinking vessels on licensed drinking premises.

"People have a right to order drinks in glassware at our pubs

and restaurants and I don't want to allow the actions of a few to dictate the hospitality experience of the overwhelming majority, who should be free to experience the increasingly sophisticated and diverse hospitality sector we have in this state," he said.

"By using tempered glassware, the licensees are ensuring they can do everything they can to prevent those who engage in anti-social behaviour on licensed premises from using them as a weapon."



CHEERS: AHA chief executive Bradley Woods, left, and Racing and Gaming Minister Terry Waldron toast the new tempered glasses.

AHA chief executive Bradley Woods said he expected most hotels and bars to change over to tempered beer glasses in six to 12 months.

"The industry has worked closely with the minister and department to achieve a good result for the public and a fair result for business owners," he said.

"The key is maintaining quality products in quality glassware while improving public safety."

Mr Woods said tempered

glass was now more affordable and available.

Royal Perth Hospital's head of plastic surgery, Mark Duncan-Smith, described it as a huge step in protecting the public.

"The problem with the old glass is it is like a window - you end up with shards and sharp edges when it is broken," he said.

"If this stuff (tempered glass) crumples rather than creating jagged edges, it is a great idea, a wonderful initiative."

WA Nightclubs Association president Simon Barwood agreed the use of tempered glass was "a good idea".

"Our members are aware of glass on licensed premises as being an issue," he said.

"We are not in a position to advise them on taking a course of action or not, but this information will be passed on to them and it is up to them as responsible licensees to make their own decision."

Mr Barwood said his nightclub, The Rise in Northbridge, had used tempered glass for standard spirits for several years.

Mr Waldron said the Director of Liquor Licensing had the power to set conditions that could force venues to serve drinks from specified containers.