



Kimberley Echo
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Calls for ID system ignored

■ Rourke Walsh

An independent review of WA's Liquor Control Act has been labelled a "lost opportunity" by Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley president John Moulden.

Cr Moulden said the review, released last week, was "not particularly courageous" and criticised it for not recommending an identification card system be implemented to purchase alcohol in the region.

An ID system for purchasing alcohol has previously been touted by the Shire and local liquor accord as a possible solution to the

region's drinking problems.

However, despite submissions calling for a trial, including from former Mining and Pastoral MLC Wendy Duncan, the system was not one of more than 100 recommendations made by the review.

"I think an opportunity has been lost to make some significant changes to the Liquor Act certainly in terms of how it impacts us in the Kimberley," Cr Moulden said.

"I know there were some submissions in favour of a cards system."

Currently in Kununurra the sale of alcohol is restricted under Sec-

tion 64 of the Act to between mid-day and 8pm Monday to Saturday with no takeaway sales on Sundays. There are also restrictions on container sizes and on the amount of alcohol any one person can buy per day.

Tighter restrictions apply in other Kimberley towns including Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing.

Cr Moulden said the current system was more of a hindrance on the region's important tourism indus-

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Restrictions don't target problem drinkers: president

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try than a deterrent for problem drinkers.

"What we are trying to do with the card system is restrict the amount of alcohol a person can buy in a day and that's for anyone," he said. "Everyone would have the same limit and everyone would have to show some form of photo ID to buy any alcohol at all, so it's not discriminatory at all.

"The situation as it applies at the moment is that effectively a person can go to all three

outlets in town and buy their daily limit and nothing has changed (in terms of limiting what people consume).

"We'd like the opportunity to trial (an ID system) here and we'll keep pushing for that."

Hoochery Distillery owner Spike Dessert said he had no issues with the current restrictions affecting his trade; however, not all of them applied to him when selling to tourists.

However, Mr Dessert said he was a supporter of any move to curb the negative effects of alcohol in the town.

Ms Duncan, who is now the Member for Kalgoorlie, said it was apparent to her the Section 64 restrictions were having an impact on the community, but did not necessarily achieve what they set out to do.

"(You have the restrictions but then) the post office had to

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put on extra people to deal with the extra mail-order liquor coming into town," she said.

"I decided to make a submission on the basis of representing the impacts of these liquor restrictions on small businesses in regional communities.

"The community doesn't get a say and it is quite adversely affected, particularly in the Kimberley and Kununurra where you have a lot of tourists passing through and they have no idea about the rules."

Australian Hotels Associa-

tion WA chief executive Bradley Woods said the review had failed to put forward any constructive or creative new ways of addressing regions or areas where there was a high level of alcohol misuse or abuse.

"What we were seeking were more targeted interventions that focused on individuals and empower police and the health authorities to deal with those matters on a case-by-case basis," he said.

"This is opposed to the current process which is to re-

strict access to everybody on the basis that if it's too hard to target individuals we'll just restrict the whole region.

"Over the years we've seen that's created a number of headaches, particularly in the development of the tourism sector."

Mr Woods said AHA WA had put forward an ID system for purchasing alcohol in particular areas in its submission to the review.