

Grogg lockdown ends

John Ferguson
state politics editor

A CEASEFIRE will soon be called over the controversial 2am nightclub lockdown trial.

Consumer Affairs Minister Tony Robinson has indicated the controversial trial will end early next month.

Licensed premises will again be able to admit revellers at all hours, so long as they adhere to their licence conditions.

The Brumby Government will analyse details provided by the Director of Liquor Licensing and police before deciding whether to institute a permanent lockdown.

Under the 2am policy, drinkers cannot enter nightclubs or bars in entertainment zones such as King St and Chapel St after the cut-off time.

Under the lockdown, drinkers are banned from entering or re-entering venues in the councils of Melbourne, Yarra, Port Phillip and Stonnington after 2am. Venues can be fined up to \$6800 for breaching the lockdown.

A spokeswoman for Mr Robinson said the lockdown trial, which started eight weeks ago, was one of several measures the Government was testing in a bid to reduce alcohol-fuelled violence.

"The Brumby Government has implemented a broad range of measures designed to combat alcohol-related harm, ranging from giving police and the Director of Liquor Licensing more powers, putting a freeze on any new late-night liquor licences and providing more support to Victorians experiencing problems with alcohol."

"The current lockdown trial will cease at the start of September. An evaluation of its effectiveness will be completed. The temporary lockdown will cease before any future, on-going arrangements are put in place."

Scores of licence-holders managed to get exemptions from the lockdown, embarrassing the Director of Liquor Licensing, Sue Maclellan.

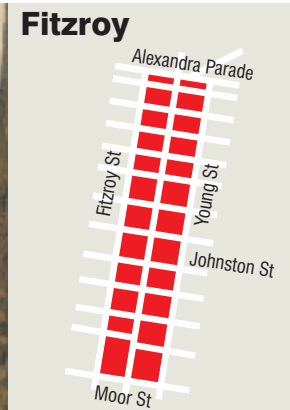
The controversy threatened to undermine the Government's tough stand on alcohol-related violence.

Concern over booze-driven violence peaked after a series of *Herald Sun* reports exposing the rising trend of young people invading the CBD and causing trouble.

The Government commissioned a taskforce to examine the impact on society.

The Government has also backed higher penalties for

New anti-booze zones



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breaching liquor laws, an overhaul of the way liquor licences are handed out, and increased police resources in the CBD.

Having faced a huge backlash over the 2am lockdown, it is likely the Government will attempt to find some middle ground on the issue.

However, the lockdowns have worked effectively in regional centres.

Under separate laws introduced last year, 121 people have been issued with orders banning them from the CBD and Chapel St for 24 hours.

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Tough bans for party streets

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will run from near the housing commission flats near Fitzroy Town Hall to Alexandra Pde.

In St Kilda, the exclusion zone will cover much of Fitzroy St and surrounds, and the Acland St precinct.

In the designated areas, police will be able to issue a notice banning a person from pubs or clubs for up to 24 hours if they suspect the person has committed an offence.

Those banned for 24 hours

don't incur a criminal conviction, nor will the infringement be included on a criminal history check. Breaching a 24-hour ban carries a penalty of up to a \$2202 fine.

Police also can apply for a court order that a ban last a year if serious offences, such as making threats to kill, property damage or weapons offences, are committed in the area. Breaching a court order incurs a penalty of up to \$6607.

Police have banned 140 people from areas around Melbourne.

Street drunks attract harm

Terry Brown

STAGGERING research is under way to try to stop drunks falling victim to violence.

Crowds along nightclub strips have had their staggering, glassy eyes and slurring rated out of 10, and their blood-alcohol readings taken.

From the results, Welsh researchers have produced a mathematical model they hope will cut alcohol-related harm drunks tend to bring on themselves.

A team led by University of Cardiff scientist Dr Simon Moore spent two nights a month for a year in the company of boozers.

Torrential rain and -6C at 3am were only part of the difficulty.

"The biggest problem with surveying drunks is that alcohol seems to make some people think they are the funniest people on earth," Dr Moore said.

"And that we, the surveyors, would be very interested in hearing all their really interesting stories."

Researchers found the drunker people were, the happier they were to take part in the survey.

Sober types were more intent on getting where they were going without delay.

Researchers found a blood-alcohol reading of .22 was enough to induce the staggers, and 25 per cent of those surveyed were at least that drunk.

Sober pedestrians move along footpaths in a follow-the-leader fashion.

But because drunks' movements are unpredictable, the blind leading the blind is haphazard.

Dr Moore found that when a fifth of the crowd had the wobbles up, foot traffic slowed by 9 per cent.

When everyone was staggering drunk, it dropped by an irritating 38 per cent.

Drunks slowing pedestrians elevated crowd stress levels, which increased aggression and street violence.

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