Licensees Must Be Prepared for the Footy Finals

September is a fantastic time of the year when the sun starts shining and the footy finals are on. It is also a great time for bars, hotels, restaurants and clubs to be busy with patrons watching the footy and celebrating. However, licensees must ensure that they have their business well prepared and above all liquor licensing compliant to ensure their patrons are safe. Otherwise they will risk being charged with significant fines and disciplinary action from the Licensing Authority and Licensing Enforcement Unit.

Recently we saw an ugly incident with a fight between spectators at Mandurah's Bendigo Stadium during the grand final of Waroona and South Mandurah. The Police were quick to make comment that the bar was open from 10am serving liquor and it was a significant contributing factor in this ugly incident.

You can guarantee that over the next few weeks there will be additional attention given to licensed premises the inspectors of Racing, Gaming & Liquor as well as the Licensing Enforcement Unit. Therefore, all licensees of hotels, restaurants, clubs and small bars must be diligent and ensure that their "house" is in order, to protect their patrons and avoid receiving any enforcement notices and disciplinary complaints.

We recommend that all licensees should conduct a liquor licensing self-check and look at the following:

1. The liquor licence is displayed in a prominent position near the entrance of the premises. This also includes any limited licence, extending trading authorisation or specific one off event for the occasion.

2. The licensing plan is kept on the premises in a prominent position and all staff are aware where it is located.

3. Ensure that the incident reports are kept up to date and if any minor incidents occur then this is recorded in the incident report as soon as possible.

4. Hire security where you think the staff may need assistance in controlling the crowd and ensure that the security staff are fully aware of the licensed conditions and the licensed area.

5. Ensure that all staff are aware of the licensing conditions and licensed area including any alfresco areas.

6. Closely monitor patron behaviour and do not allow drunk and disorderly patrons to remain on the premises.

7. Contact taxis and have access to a bus or public transport so patrons can easily disperse from the premises.

8. Ensure all staff are appropriately trained and updated with the relevant courses.

9. Utilise plastic glasses and cups if necessary. It is best to avoid bottles and potential broken glass where possible.

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Following the end of a long football season most clubs have a celebration often known as "Mad Monday", where there is significant celebration for the season just passed. This often involves excessive drinking and shenanigans. Therefore, it is also very important that the licensees are diligent during these occasions.

Over the past couple of years we have had a several matters involving incidents where licensees have been charged by the Licensing Enforcement Unit for patron poor behaviour on Mad Monday. A Licensee may not want to the party pooper and give more latitude to footballers celebrating on a Mad Monday. But they need to be careful as a breach of the Liquor Licensing laws can mean significant fines and even put their liquor licence in jeopardy.

If you require any further information or assistance with preparing for the liquor licensing requirements for the upcoming finals and post celebrations, please do not hesitate to contact Murfett Legal by telephone on +61 8 9388 3100, via our website at www.murfett.com.au or email one of the following directors:

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