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Strategies and outcomes in translating alcohol harm reduction research into practice: the Alcohol Linking Program

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Harm associated with consumption of alcohol on licensed premises is an issue of community concern. Interventions to reinforce responsible sale of alcohol such as server training and accords between licensees, police and health advocates are well known. However, while generally supported by police and licensees as 'a good thing', evaluations demonstrating that they reduce alcohol-related harm are rare. Lack of enforcement is often an issue. This paper reports on system intervention to enhance police enforcement of liquor laws by providing data-based feedback to police and licensees about alcohol-related crime following drinking on specific licensed premises. The system has been shown to contribute to a reduction of alcohol-related crime and has been adopted into routine practice by NSW police state-wide. It is a good example of how research can be conducted in a way that bridges the gap between policy research and policy practice.

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Alcohol-related harm and licensed premises

Alcohol misuse is a significant cause of harm in most countries [1]. Alcohol-related harms are diverse, and are associated with a variety of individual and environmental determinants [1]. A considerable volume of literature describes the association between harm and the consumption of alcohol on licensed premises [1–6]. Such harms are of particular relevance as licensed premises are intended, through legislation, to provide an opportunity for alcohol consumption in a controlled and safe environment.

Various community and government strategies are undertaken to ensure that licensed drinking venues provide the intended opportunity for safe alcohol

consumption [7–11]. Enforcement of licensing laws is proposed as one such strategy [11–14]. Through enforcement, the risk of harm has the potential to be reduced through enhanced licensee compliance with pricing and promotion controls; responsible hospitality practices; regulation of patron behaviour and changes to environmental and management practices. Despite its potential, little is known of the effectiveness of enforcement in achieving harm reduction outcomes.

Translating research into practice

Over the past decade there has been a growing trend for the performance of health and other services to

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be assessed in terms of outcomes rather than service activity levels. This greater focus on service delivery effectiveness has required providers to consider more carefully the likelihood that their services will result in enhanced well-being and/or a reduction in harm. A key means of achieving such outcomes is to select services that are supported by research evidence demonstrating their effectiveness. Hence, coincident with the development of an 'outcomes' approach to service delivery has been the development of 'evidence-based practice', a form of practice that involves the systematic consideration of research evidence when selecting service delivery strategies [15].

Different types of research evidence are required to be assessed by service providers when making service delivery decisions. Such evidence ranges from basic science and descriptive data, through efficacy and effectiveness trial results, to outcomes arising from dissemination and adoption studies [16–19]. Despite the importance of each evidence type, various analyses of research activity, including that in the alcohol field, have identified a preponderance of basic science and descriptive research activity and least activity in the areas of dissemination and adoption research [20,21]. As the likelihood of a service innovation having a population wide harm reduction impact is determined by its uptake by service providers [22], the relative absence of dissemination and adoption research presents an impediment to the achievement of such an impact.

Concerns regarding the failure of efficacious innovations to be adopted into practice have resulted in various strategies being proposed to enhance the likelihood of this occurring [19,23–31]. It is suggested that such strategies need to be applied at the inception of, and throughout the life of a research programme, not simply at its conclusion [31].

The remainder of this paper describes the conduct of a research initiative that, from its inception, incorporated a range of strategies to facilitate the adoption of an alcohol-related harm reduction innovation into service delivery practice. The focus of the research initiative

was the development and evaluation of a program to enhance police enforcement of liquor licensing laws as they relate to licensed premises (The Alcohol Linking Program). The research initiative was conducted in the state of New South Wales, Australia over a 9-year period commencing in 1996.

This paper describes the basis for each adoption strategy, strategy implementation and subsequent outcomes. The strategies undertaken in what was ultimately a successful research initiative are shown in Table 1.

The paper concludes with a brief description of the decision by the NSW Police to adopt the program into routine policing practice and a discussion of the implications of the research initiative and its outcomes for harm reduction research and practice generally.

Construction of a 'research into practice' team

Limited research exists regarding the characteristics of researchers and their organizations that facilitate the successful transfer of research knowledge into practice. Despite the lack of such evidence, those seeking to close the research-practice gap have suggested a need for greater communication and engagement by researchers with practitioners and policy makers [32,33], for researchers to give greater consideration to implementation and feasibility issues [34], and for the integration of research activity into practice organizations [35]. In addition, Oldenburg *et al.* [33] propose that research organizations require management structures, infrastructure, policies and funding processes that are supportive of dissemination research if research is to be translated successfully into practice.

The Alcohol Linking Program was undertaken by a unit responsible for the delivery of health promotion services to the half million people of the Hunter Valley Region, New South Wales, Australia. The unit and its services were structured and resourced to ensure the values and strategies of health promotion practice were integrated with those of population health research. Members of the integrated Alcohol Linking Program team included health promotion practitioners, re-

Table 1. *Alcohol Linking Program adoption strategies*

Construction of a 'research into practice' team
Development and delivery of a rationale for enhancement of police enforcement
Development of an acceptable enforcement program
Development of an evidence base regarding the efficacy of the program in reducing alcohol-related crime
Development of an evidence base regarding the acceptability of the program
Development of an evidence base regarding the feasibility of the program being adopted into routine policing practice
Development of an evidence base regarding the effectiveness of the program in reducing alcohol-related crime
The provision of resources for the research and adoption process

searchers, statisticians and computer programmers, and were able to draw on the considerable practice and research skills of the broader unit and its collaboration with academic researchers.

Given the service delivery goal of the unit the research initiative was, from its inception, developed with an explicit focus on aligning the design of the enforcement program and the research processes with the needs and interests of the end users, NSW Police. In so doing, the initiative was constructed with an objective of maximizing the likelihood of both the program and the research evidence being accepted as a basis for NSW Police decision-making.

The Alcohol Linking Program team took overall leadership responsibility for the conduct of the initiative, with its primary roles being project and research management, and the procurement of funding. Police took both an advisory and an approval role, providing technical policing advice, facilitating liaison with police systems and the obtaining of formal police approvals.

Development of a rationale for enhancement of police enforcement

The uptake of a proposed change in either individual behaviour or professional practice is suggested to be positively associated with the provision of a clear rationale for the change [36,37]. In the context of the Alcohol Linking Program, a rationale was needed to demonstrate to police the need, opportunity and potential gains from enhancing enforcement practices. This rationale was expressed in terms of the core business interests of police—law enforcement and crime reduction. The initial rationale, as described below, was developed based on a review of the literature and the collection of qualitative data from police. The rationale was expanded progressively throughout the life of the initiative based on evidence obtained from each strategy. All levels of police were presented with the rationale on a repeated basis to reinforce the need, opportunity and potential of the program.

The rationale addressed the associations between crime and alcohol consumption, and such consumption on licensed premises [2,3,12,38]. The opportunity for, and authority of police to reduce alcohol-related crime through enforcement was described [7,8,39], as was evidence regarding the effectiveness of hospitality service and management practices in reducing alcohol-related harm [40–42].

The existing lack of compliance by licensed premises with required harm reduction practices was demonstrated [43–45], as was the role and effectiveness of enforcement in enhancing such compliance and in reducing harm [13,14,46]. Data were presented that

described the limited extent of current police enforcement of licensed premises [12,47].

Development of an acceptable enforcement programme

Diffusion of innovations theory suggests that the likelihood of an innovation being adopted is most influenced by the characteristics of the innovation itself [48]. Characteristics of an innovation considered to be important determinants of its adoption include, from the perspective of the provider, its benefits, simplicity, compatibility, flexibility and cost. Similarly, it is proposed that research evidence is more likely to be adopted into practice if it addresses issues that arise from the actual delivery of services [49].

Barriers to police enforcement

The initial impetus for the Alcohol Linking Program involved concern in the local community regarding high levels of violence and crime occurring in and around licensed premises. Discussions between the team and local police, and analysis of local police crime statistics supported such concerns. To identify possible opportunities for reducing crime, an assessment of existing police enforcement activity, and barriers to it, was undertaken. The assessment identified the following structural impediments to police enforcement:

- inadequate intelligence data regarding alcohol involvement in crime [47];
- inadequate intelligence data regarding the last place of alcohol consumption by people involved in crime;
- system difficulties in retrieving alcohol-related intelligence data and in identifying high-risk premises;
- insufficient police resources for enforcement of liquor licensing laws;
- a low priority being given to enforcement of licensed premises [50]; and
- high cost of proven enforcement strategies [13,14].

Problem-orientated policing

Problem-orientated policing represents a possible means by which the identified barriers to enforcement may be resolved. Such a policing approach involves the systematic collection and application of intelligence data to the identification of crime patterns and causes, and the subsequent targeting of enforcement responses to those causes [51].

One application of this approach to the enforcement of licensed premises involves the collection by police of

intelligence data regarding the last place of alcohol consumption from people involved in police-attended incidents. In this way, associations between incidents and alcohol consumption on specific premises can be identified, enhancing police capacity to target enforcement activity to high-risk premises.

One low cost application of such intelligence data involves the provision to licensees of information regarding incidents of crime that follow consumption of alcohol on their premises. The potential for such a feedback strategy to improve licensee compliance is supported by evidence that the provision of performance feedback can be effective in changing behaviour [52,53]. In addition, providing such feedback offers licensees an opportunity to rectify service and management deficits in a collaborative, non-punitive manner [54]. The provision of such feedback also serves to demonstrate to licensees the capacity of police to detect possible non-compliance, and includes an implied threat of punishment, a threat shown to be effective in reducing alcohol-related crime [5].

Based on the theoretical harm reduction potential of a problem-orientated feedback strategy, the Alcohol Linking Program was developed to improve police collection and recording of alcohol-related crime intelligence data, and the application of such data to the enforcement of licensed premises. The program involved all operational police routinely collecting up to four additional pieces of information from persons involved in police attended incidents:

- whether the person had consumed alcohol prior to the incident;
- the person's level of intoxication based on an assessment of behavioural indicators of intoxication [55,56];
- where the person had last consumed alcohol; and
- if the last place of consumption was a licensed premises, the name and address of the premises.

And:

- delivery to licensees of a tailored 'feedback' report from police describing those incidents reported to have occurred following consumption of alcohol on their premises;
- a visit by police to high risk premises during which an audit of the premises' responsible service and management practices was undertaken. The audits have a harm reduction rather than strictly compliance focus [57,58]; and
- a follow-up visit by police during which the results of the audit were presented to licensees, together with recommendations for service and management improvements.

To enhance the likely adoption of the program by police, the data collection and enforcement requirements were designed with a specific goal of minimizing the response and compliance costs for police. This was achieved by limiting the extent of additional tasks to be undertaken and value-adding to existing policing practices. For example, the additional data required were restricted to a maximum of four items, and represented information collected frequently by police in text form, but not recorded systematically for intelligence analysis purposes. Similarly, the premises audit built upon existing, but non-systematically applied police auditing practices.

The data collection and enforcement approaches were designed and developed in collaboration with local licensing police to enhance their practical relevance and feasibility. A project advisory group consisting of members of the police service, industry organizations and individual hotel licensees and club managers was also established to provide advice.

Development of an evidence base regarding the efficacy of the Alcohol Linking Program in reducing alcohol-related crime

Although a problem-orientated feedback approach has been applied to the enforcement of licensed premises in a number of jurisdictions [59–62], no studies have reported on its efficacy in reducing alcohol-related crime.

As the primary requirements of the Alcohol Linking Program involved the collection and use of intelligence data, the feasibility of police collecting the required data needed to be established in the first instance. Feasibility of the data collection procedures was assessed by police in one suburban command in Newcastle, Australia using a project-specific form over a 6-month period. The results indicated that the data were able to be collected by police and analysed via computer, such that an association could be made between incidents of crime and reported prior consumption of alcohol on licensed premises. Interviews with participating police indicated that the data collection process was acceptable in terms of its content and ease of completion.

The efficacy of the feedback approach in reducing alcohol-related crime was assessed subsequently by a randomized controlled trial involving all 400 hotels, registered clubs and nightclubs in the Hunter Valley and Central Coast regions of New South Wales, Australia. All operational police officers in the regions collected the alcohol intelligence data using the project-specific recording card to determine the association between incidents of crime and reported alcohol consumption on licensed premises. Each experimental group premises received, on one occasion, a feedback report detailing those incidents reported to have

occurred following alcohol consumption on their premises. Those premises indicated by the intelligence data to be associated with one or more police attended incidents over a defined period received a police audit and subsequent feedback. Control group premises received normal police enforcement practices.

Over a 3-month follow-up period there was a 15% ($p < 0.08$) greater reduction in alcohol-related incidents associated with premises that received the feedback/audit approach compared to those that received normal policing.

Development of an evidence base regarding the acceptability of the Alcohol Linking Program enforcement strategy

In addition to evidence of efficacy, a key determinant of an innovation being adopted into routine practice is the demonstration of its acceptability to key stakeholders [63]. In the context of the Alcohol Linking Program, assessment of its acceptability was of particular importance as it imposed an additional burden on front line police, it involved what could have been interpreted as a 'soft' response by police to breaches of the law because of its educational, non-punitive focus, and because of its potential to impact on a significant industry group.

To assess the acceptability of the enforcement approach, surveys were conducted with all police ($n = 298$; 77% response) and licensees ($n = 239$; 76%) in the Hunter Valley Region and a survey of randomly selected households ($n = 864$; 70%) in that region. Two-thirds or more of police respondents considered the approach to be acceptable, appropriate and more effective than conventional enforcement approaches in increasing licensee compliance [63]. Almost all licensees (92%) found the audit visit acceptable, and approximately half found the feedback report and police audit useful in aiding the modification of their service practices. More than three-quarters of the community sample indicated that police adoption of a problem-orientated feedback approach to enforcement of licensed premises was acceptable.

Development of an evidence base regarding the adoption of the program into routine policing practice

Based on the efficacy and acceptability findings described above, police requested that a further trial be undertaken to determine the feasibility of the program being adopted into routine policing practice, and the likelihood of police intelligence and enforcement processes being enhanced as a result.

As unpublished police data indicated that rates of alcohol-related crime were markedly higher in rural and remote areas of NSW, the trial was conducted in western NSW as well as the Hunter Region, involving a total of 1413 hotels, registered clubs and nightclubs and approximately 2400 police. As opposed to the previous efficacy trial, the required alcohol intelligence data were collected in this study using routine police procedures, namely, recording in a notebook at the scene, and subsequent entry into the NSW Police mainframe computer (COPS).

Similarly, as opposed to the efficacy trial, the selection of premises to receive the audit was based on the common policing practice of focusing enforcement activity on high-risk crime locations. The top 8% of premises, based on the number of incidents involving an intoxicated person who had consumed alcohol on a licensed premises, were selected to receive the covert audits.

Organizational and individual behaviour change strategies to facilitate adoption into routine practice

Behaviour and organizational change evidence suggests that the effective adoption of an innovation requires a multi-strategic intervention approach [52,64–66]. Based on such evidence, the following strategies were implemented to facilitate adoption of the program.

(1) *Obtaining organizational leadership and policy support.* Development and implementation of the adoption trial was supported by the police spokesperson (Assistant Commissioner) for alcohol-related crime, and an advisory group consisting of police drug and alcohol, licensing and information technology staff. Throughout the trial, presentations of the rationale for the initiative and of supporting evidence obtained throughout its development were delivered to ensure support from all levels of police. Senior police at each command level assumed leadership roles in promoting the importance of alcohol-related crime prevention and of the program itself.

Formal police approvals were obtained regarding the research, data access, training and legal implications of the programme. Prior to the implementation of the feedback reports and audits, the support of industry peak organizations (Australian Hotels Association; ClubsNSW) was obtained.

(2) *Providing supportive organizational infrastructure.* Given the data collection/retrieval focus of the program, a computer system capable of recording and retrieving the specified data represented the key enabling infrastructure requirement. Modifications to COPS were

undertaken that involved the inclusion of mandatory alcohol data entry fields, and the provision of an automated facility for retrieving the collected intelligence data.

(3) *Developing police knowledge and skills.* All operational police were provided training that addressed the rationale for the program and the procedures for data collection and subsequent entry into COPS. A comprehensive learning package (manual and electronic forms), and materials to prompt police collection and recording of data were developed. Intelligence and licensing officers were trained in the retrieval of data, the production of the feedback 'reports' to licensees/managers and the conduct of audits and subsequent feedback delivery.

(4) *Implementing data quality assurance and performance feedback strategies.* Having trained police in the collection of alcohol intelligence data, monitoring and feedback of data collection quality was implemented on a monthly basis to compare and enhance performance against agreed benchmarks.

The following outcomes suggest that the adoption trial was successful in establishing the feasibility of the programme procedures being adopted into routine policing practice, and in enhancing the enforcement capacity of police:

- Over a 12-month period following implementation of the adoption strategies, between 87% and 100% of incidents had the required alcohol intelligence data fields appropriately completed.
- In a 6-month pre–post comparison, increases of between 56% and 1100% were observed across offence types in the proportion of offences reported to have involved a person who had consumed alcohol prior to the incident.
- The data suggest 10% of licensed premises accounted for 50% of people involved in police-attended incidents following their reported consumption of alcohol on licensed premises.
- Specific premises were reported to have been the last place of alcohol consumption by up to 190 people over a 12-month period, with 80% of these patrons being assessed as either moderately or seriously intoxicated.
- In a 12-month period, the letters/feedback reports were distributed on four occasions to all 1413 premises as a general deterrence strategy. In addition, the audit and feedback strategy was implemented with the top 8% of premises on three occasions.

Development of an evidence base regarding the effectiveness of the program in reducing alcohol-related crime

In addition to assessing the feasibility of the program being adopted into and benefiting policing practice, police requested an assessment of the program's effectiveness in reducing alcohol-related crime when adopted into routine practice. A trial to assess the program's effectiveness was conducted in conjunction with the adoption trial described in the previous strategy.

Alcohol-related crime rates measured over a 6-month baseline period in 2002 were compared with crime rates for the same period in 2003 following the implementation of the adoption strategies. Preliminary results suggest a reduction of up to 22% in the number of intoxicated patrons involved in incidents that followed their reported consumption of alcohol on audited premises.

Provision of resources for the research and adoption process

The capacity of service delivery-orientated organizations to fund extended research and development initiatives such as that described in this paper is limited. Similarly, the capacity of service providers to initiate, implement and monitor an innovation at the same time as maintaining service delivery in the absence of additional resources is negligible [25]. Collaboration with other agencies represents the only feasible approach for the large majority of organizations to obtain adequate funding and resources for undertaking such initiatives.

As indicated previously, a key role of the team involved the procurement of resources for the initiative. Such funds were obtained from a diverse range of sources including funding from the team's unit, research funding organizations and other government agencies with an interest in its outcomes (NSW Health). The NSW Police were a consistent contributor in cash and in-kind terms throughout the initiative.

The procurement of resources was of particular importance in the adoption trial to ensure that the cost of implementing the new policing procedures did not detract significantly from the capacity of police to maintain service delivery levels. A key strategy to achieve this involved the employment of full time staff located in police stations to ensure that the program adoption procedures were implemented in a manner that was relevant to and respectful of existing police circumstances, values and practices.

Adoption of the Alcohol Linking Program into state-wide routine policing practice

The positive outcomes of the various stages of the research initiative resulted in a decision by the NSW Government and the NSW Police to adopt the program as a required element of routine policing practice across the NSW Police force [67]. The implementation of the system-wide rollout, involving a further 9000 police began in late 2003 and is scheduled to be completed in 2005. The adoption strategies being used in the system-wide rollout are similar to those implemented during the adoption trial. The state-wide adoption of the programme is supported by funding from the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation and a substantial in-kind contribution by NSW Police.

Discussion

The Alcohol Linking Program research initiative has been described to illustrate one approach to translating harm reduction research evidence into routine, service delivery practice. The extent to which the adoption of the program by police can be causally attributed to the processes and strategies used in the initiative, either in combination or singularly, is unknown, and represents an area requiring future research. The extent to which the strategies are applicable to other harm reduction topics or other services or settings is similarly unknown and worthy of further investigation.

No other reported research addressing the translation into practice of evidence regarding alcohol or other enforcement strategies have been located by the authors. However, coinciding with the development of the Alcohol Linking Program initiative has been the development and adoption of a similar program in New Zealand [62]. The sequence of events leading to the decision by New Zealand Police to adopt such a program was based in part upon its gaining its own first hand experience and evidence regarding the feasibility, acceptability and utility of such a program. This evidence base was complemented by the findings of the Alcohol Linking Program.

Both the NSW Police and New Zealand Police adoption experiences involved the participation of police in the development of local evidence and experience base. The benefits of such participation included on alignment of the program's objectives with those of the organization, the compatibility of the program's design and processes with those of the organization and, finally, a sense of organizational ownership of the program, the evidence-building process and the evidence itself. Although such an approach may not be feasible in all settings or for all issues, the development of an in-house evidence base

has been proposed as one means of enhancing the translation of research evidence into practice [35].

The results of the acceptability studies and the expression of support by industry organizations suggest general acceptance of the initiative. This is not to suggest that the program received universal approval from police and industry members. Throughout the life of the initiative, some opposition was expressed at various times by both individual industry members and industry organizations. Similarly, despite the very strong support provided by the large majority of police, individual police have at times expressed opposition to the initiative and its processes.

The progressive provision to police of newly available alcohol-related crime data is considered to have played a key role in the success of the initiative. The data demonstrated a previously unknown level and pattern of alcohol-related crime, and demonstrated in a very direct manner the feasibility of the data being obtained. The provision of such data was also of benefit to police by identifying more clearly the relationship between such crime and the occupational health and safety of police, the impact of such crime on the demand for police resources, and the importance of enhancing the quality of intelligence data collection generally.

These unintended benefits demonstrate the important role of practice-based evidence in facilitating innovation and the successful transfer of evidence into practice. They also confirm the importance of aligning the design of service delivery innovations with the practical needs of service providers [35], and of providing direct service delivery benefits to providers incrementally throughout a research initiative, and at its completion [31].

The research initiative was conducted with an explicit goal of police adoption of the program, if it was proven to be efficacious and effective. The initiative therefore pursued both a research and a change objective, with research evidence being used as a means of achieving change. Although the ultimate objective of research is to contribute to the adoption of an effective intervention [16,17,19], the approach taken in this research initiative challenges the concept of researcher neutrality as an important element in the practice of scientific enquiry. This challenge is accentuated by each step in the Alcohol Linking Program initiative being conducted in sequence by a single team, potentially further limiting the independence of the researchers from its outcomes. The extent to which this approach has compromised the research (knowledge) objective of the initiative is a matter for debate, as is the relevance of this in the light of the subsequent adoption of the program by police. Such a debate exemplifies a broader discussion regarding the capacity of research to contribute to improved service delivery practices generally [49].

The sequence of research undertaken in the Alcohol Linking Program initiative and the decision to adopt the program into routine policing practice did not adhere strictly to recommended research phases [16,17,19]. For example, no studies by either the team or others have reported on the reliability or validity of the measures used. Similarly, the results of the efficacy trial did not, based upon accepted conventions, prove the intervention was efficacious, and the research initiative did not include a controlled trial of the program's effectiveness.

From a policing perspective, research regarding validity and reliability of the data was not required as the data were seen to fulfil a need for 'intelligence' data rather than 'evidence'. 'Intelligence' data collection is a routine element of policing practice, conducted with an aim of establishing possible associations between events, and with an understanding of the reliability limitations of such data. With this understanding, intelligence data are collected by police as a preliminary step prior to the collection of more reliable and valid data for evidentiary purposes, if such further data are considered to be necessary.

Similarly, from a policing perspective, the standard of evidence regarding the efficacy and effectiveness of the program was considered sufficient in the context of evidence from other sources supporting the efficacy of enforcement in reducing alcohol-related crime [13,14]. Such a view is supported by Babor [1] and Kreibel & Tichner [68] who propose that in the context of uncertainty regarding the adequacy of evidence, a precautionary approach that involves the taking of preventive action and shifting the burden of proof to opponents of that action is appropriate. These and other variances of the Alcohol Linking Program initiative from ideal models of research exemplifies what Holder *et al.* [19] describe as the dynamic nature of research and the not infrequent need to vary the movement between phases of research.

Models of both individual and organisational change suggest further stages exist following the adoption of an innovation before it can be considered to have become usual practice. In models of individual behaviour change this is referred to as the maintenance stage [69], and in models of dissemination, as maintenance, institutionalization and sustainability [20,26]. In the case of The Alcohol Linking Program, the decision by the NSW Police to adopt the program has served to highlight the need for additional strategies directed at achieving a 'hard wiring' of the innovation into the organization's systems. As is the case for evidence regarding effective adoption strategies, limited evidence exists regarding what are effective strategies for achieving such an outcome.

The contribution of licensed premises to the occurrence of alcohol-related harm is being increasingly

acknowledged [11,68,70]. What has also been acknowledged is a reduction in the allocation of resources to the enforcement of such premises [68], even though the number of such premises has increased markedly in many jurisdictions. In this context, a primary determinant of the likelihood of the Alcohol Linking Program becoming an institutionalised process and contributing to harm reduction is the capacity of governments to adequately resource this form of policing activity [67].

Despite its positive outcomes, an important implication of the Alcohol Linking Program concerns the need for further research addressing the effectiveness of other enforcement strategies. What has been tested in this program represents only one such strategy. Police require evidence regarding the effectiveness of a range of such strategies if they are to address successfully the varying situations and circumstances they confront on a day-to-day basis. Importantly, the Alcohol Linking Program initiative has provided, at least in NSW, a platform upon which such research and evaluation can be based.

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