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MEDIA RELEASE

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GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN ON BOOZE IN MINI BUCKETS

The NSW Government today took decisive action to ban licensed venues from serving alcohol in mini buckets.

Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality, Racing and the Arts, George Souris, said a Sydney hotel has been ordered to stop the disturbing practice immediately following compelling new evidence from NSW Police.

“The Director General of NSW Trade and Investment today issued an official direction under the Liquor Act ordering the Scary Canary Hotel in Kent Street from serving alcohol in mini buckets,” Mr Souris said.

“It follows covert operations by police at the hotel and a new submission to the Director General seeking the direction to ban the practice.

“The police submission, which includes video footage, details bar staff pouring alcohol haphazardly into buckets in amounts that exceed a standard nip measurement. Soft drinks and high energy drinks are also dispensed without the use of a standard measure.

“According to the decision published by the Casino, Liquor and Gaming Control Authority in which it overturned a previous banning direction issued by the Director General to the hotel, the licensee provided undertakings regarding its practice of measuring the alcoholic and non-alcoholic content into the mini buckets. The venue assured the Authority that the buckets contained no more than two standard nips and were equivalent to 1.5 standard drinks.

“This new evidence demonstrates that these undertakings are being disregarded by the licensee.

“Police also produced evidence linking the consumption of alcohol from buckets and intoxication and alcohol-related offences.

“This type of reckless behaviour is of concern and brings into question a licensed venue’s commitment to ensure the responsible service of alcohol. It is clearly not consistent with community expectations.

“Patrons must have some certainty as to the amount of alcohol they are consuming. Clearly if patrons are consuming unknown quantities of alcohol from a bucket it will lead to unacceptable levels of intoxication and the potential associated impacts such as violence and anti-social behaviour.

“The hotel faces fines of up to \$5,500 if it fails to comply with the official direction to cease the sale and supply of alcohol in buckets immediately.”

Mr Souris said he has also requested the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing (OLGR) to examine every option to prohibit the disturbing practice in venues across the State.

“OLGR is currently investigating a proposed code specifically prohibiting the serving of alcohol in mini buckets because of the potential for it to encourage rapid or excessive consumption and the increased risk of drink spiking,” he said.

“It is examining if the proposed code could be enforced as a condition on all liquor licences in the State. Any venue breaching licence conditions faces a penalty of up to \$11,000 and 12 months imprisonment.

“I have also asked OLGR to examine the use of non standard and novelty drinkware and the combination of high energy drinks and alcohol in its review of the department’s official liquor promotion guidelines which outline acceptable and non acceptable alcohol practices in licensed venues.

“I want to ensure that any irresponsible alcohol promotions which lead to intoxication and alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour are banned.”

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