



Michael Gallacher MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for the Hunter

MEDIA RELEASE

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SOBERING UP CENTRE TRIAL BEGINS

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Michael Gallacher has today launched the start of a trial of sobering up cells to combat drunken violence on our city streets.

From this weekend intoxicated people in the trial areas who refuse police requests to move on may be required to sleep off their intoxication in a sobering up cell.

“Everyone should be able to go out and enjoy a night out without being harassed by drunken fools and threatened by anti-social behaviour,” Minister Gallacher said.

“The NSW Government is committed to addressing alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour in the community and this trial will assist in determining the long-term benefits of this approach, to not only address alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour, but also improving amenity to patrons and residents within entertainment precincts like Kings Cross.

“This Government continues to send a clear message that drunken and anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated and police will have every right to enforce safety on our streets,” Minister Gallacher said.

“Sobering up cells will be in addition to existing police powers and procedures and anyone who has committed an offence involving violence will continue to be detained under existing police procedures,” Minister Gallacher said.

A mandatory sobering up centre in Sydney’s CBD will be operated by Police, while two non-mandatory centres based in Sydney’s Eastern Beaches and Wollongong will be operated by a non-government provider on behalf of the Department of Family and Community Services.

The Eastern Beaches centre will also commence operations on 5 July, with Wollongong coming online later this year in time for the summer season.

Family and Community Services have led the design and implementation of the two non-mandatory centres in the Eastern Beaches and Wollongong. These centres complement the mandatory centre run by the NSW Police.

The service provider for the Wollongong centre is Watershed, and the Eastern Beaches centre is being operated by the Haymarket Foundation. Both these organisations have more than 30 years’ experience in providing community based drug and alcohol services.

Anyone detained at the mandatory centre will be required to pay a cost-recovery fee, regardless of the length of time spent at the centre and repeat visitors to the mandatory centre will also be subject to an escalating user-pays charge.

The NSW Government will be presented with an evaluation report at the conclusion of the 12 month trial.

ENDS

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