The Impact of Liquor Restrictions in Halls Creek

Quantitative Data - 24 month review

November 2011

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There has been no significance testing conducted on the data provided in this report. Therefore, caution should be applied when interpreting the results.

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Executive Summary

On 11 May 2009, the Director of Liquor Licensing released his decision that, as of 18 May 2009, the following restrictions be imposed for an indefinite period of time, with a review of the effectiveness of the restrictions at regular intervals.

Halls Creek Store

- The sale of packaged liquor, exceeding a concentration of ethanol and liquor of 2.7 per cent at 20^0C, is prohibited to any person, other than a liquor merchant.

Kimberley Store

- The sale of packaged liquor, exceeding a concentration of ethanol and liquor of 2.7 per cent at 20^0C, is prohibited to any person, other than a lodger (as defined in section 3 of the *Liquor Control Act 1988*) or a liquor merchant.
- The sale and supply of liquor for consumption on the premises is prohibited before 12:00 noon on any day, except when it is sold ancillary to a meal or to a lodger.
- A dress code is to be displayed at each entrance to the premises.
- Liquor products are not permitted to be displayed for sale within the area outlined blue on the plan dated 17 November 2008.

This report provides a range of statistical information covering three time periods.

- Pre-restriction – June 2008 to May 2009.
- Post-restriction period 1 – June 2009 to May 2010.
- Post-restriction period 2 – June 2010 to May 2011.

The following is a summary of key findings from this report.

Police

- Police tasking in Halls Creek has halved over the 24 months post-restriction, decreasing from 2,058 tasks pre-restriction to 1,027 tasks in post-restriction period 2.
- The number of drink driving charges pre-restriction was more than three times higher than post-restriction periods 1 and 2 (265 pre-restriction compared with 80 for each corresponding post-restriction period).
- Since the introduction of the restriction, the total number of assault offences has decreased by 58 percent, from 278 pre-restriction to 188 and 116 in post-restriction periods 1 and 2 respectively.
- Alcohol-related assault offences fell from 243 incidents pre-restriction to 156 and 86 incidents in post-restriction periods 1 and 2 respectively.

Health Services

- Compared with the pre-restriction period, alcohol-related presentations to the Halls Creek Emergency Department fell by 34 percent in post-restriction period 1 and a further 45 percent in post-restriction period 2.
- Since the introduction of the restriction, triage category 4 presentations have decreased by a total of 61 percent and category 5 presentations by a total of 68 percent over the 24

month post-restriction period. More severe alcohol-related presentations (categories 1 and 2) have remained relatively stable pre and post-restriction.

- There was a slight downward trend in the number of ambulance tasks recorded over the 24 month post-restriction period, decreasing from 230 tasks pre-restriction to 221 and 207 tasks in post-restriction periods 1 and 2 respectively.

Sobering Up Centre (SUC)

- In the first 12 months of the restrictions, there was a 70 percent drop in the number of presentations to the Halls Creek SUC, decreasing from 1,084 presentations in the 12 months pre-restriction to 328 in the 12 months following the introduction of the restrictions.
- Due to the dramatic drop in demand, presentation data for post-restriction period 2 was only available for the 10 month period from June 2010 to March 2011. During this time, a total of 189 presentations were recorded.
- Of the 189 presentations recorded in post-restriction period 2, 17 percent were by Halls Creek residents and over half (56 percent) came from the surrounding communities of Koongie Park and Nicolson Block and from the desert communities of Balgo and Billuna.

Overview

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide statistical information regarding the changes to some indicators in the 24 months following the introduction of mandated liquor restrictions in Halls Creek on 18 May 2009.

Scope

This report presents a statistical snapshot of changes to a limited number of government and non-government community services indicators following 24 months of mandated liquor restrictions in Halls Creek.

This report does not make any comments or recommendations regarding the current restrictions nor include any anecdotal information or feedback from the community or local businesses.

The University of Notre Dame has been commissioned to provide an evaluation of the current liquor restrictions, including qualitative and quantitative information, 24 months after implementation. The Notre Dame report will include anecdotal information and feedback collected from the community and a broader range of businesses and service providers than is presented in this report.

This report refers to three time periods.

- Pre-restriction – June 2008 to May 2009.
- Post-restriction period 1 – June 2009 to May 2010.
- Post-restriction period 2 – June 2010 to May 2011.

Background

There are a total of six liquor licenses in Halls Creek – one hotel, one restaurant, one liquor store and three special facilities.

On 11 May 2009, the Director of Liquor Licensing released his decision that, as of 18 May 2009, the following restrictions would be imposed for an indefinite period of time on the sale of alcohol in Halls Creek.

Halls Creek Store

- The sale of packaged liquor, exceeding a concentration of ethanol and liquor of 2.7 per cent at 20^0C, is prohibited to any person, other than a liquor merchant.

Kimberley Hotel

- The sale of packaged liquor, exceeding a concentration of ethanol and liquor of 2.7 per cent at 20^0C, is prohibited to any person, other than a lodger (as defined in section 3 of the *Liquor Control Act 1988*) or a liquor merchant.

- The sale and supply of liquor for consumption on the premises is prohibited before 12:00 noon on any day, except when it is sold ancillary to a meal or to a lodger.
- A dress code is to be displayed at each entrance to the premises.
- Liquor products are not permitted to be displayed for sale within the area outlined blue on the plan dated 17 November 2008.

The restriction effectively limits the Halls Creek Store and the Kimberley Hotel to selling only low strength beer for consumption off the premises. It does not restrict the sale of alcohol to be consumed on the premises, nor does it impact on the sale of alcohol to guests staying at the Kimberley Hotel or prevent liquor being sold with a meal at Russian Jacks Restaurant.

Methodology

In June 2011, the Drug and Alcohol Office (DAO) sent requests to a range of government and non-government agencies requesting data for the 24 month report. The provision of this information was entirely voluntary.

Each group was asked to provide data (by month) for the period of June 2010 to May 2011, to be able to compare with similar data from the previous two years.

Where possible, this report compares the annual periods of June 2008 to May 2009 (pre-restriction) with the period of June 2009 to May 2010 (post-restriction period 1) and June 2010 to May 2011 (post-restriction period 2).

An annual comparison removes the impact of seasonal variations that might otherwise occur if comparing data for shorter time periods in any one year.

In this respect the Kimberley region experiences a great deal of seasonal population movement and tourism.

Typically during the 'Wet Season' (October/November through to March/April), there is a great deal of movement by Aboriginal community members across the region. The six major Kimberley towns of Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Kununurra and Wyndham see an influx of people from smaller surrounding communities during this time for a variety of reasons, including escaping the possibility of being cut off from essential services due to road closures. Tourism is at its lowest during this time.

The 'Dry Season' (March/April through to October/November) is the peak time for tourism. It is also the time when many of the Aboriginal community members who come to town during the 'Wet', return to their home communities.

Key Findings

Police

The WA Police provided statistical information regarding random breath testing (RBT) and resulting drink driving charges, police tasking, assaults and domestic violence incidents for the periods June 2008 to May 2009 (pre-restriction), June 2009 to May 2010 (post-restriction period 1) and June 2010 to May 2011 (post-restriction period 2).

Since the introduction of the liquor restriction, a range of changes have been made to police reporting requirements, including:

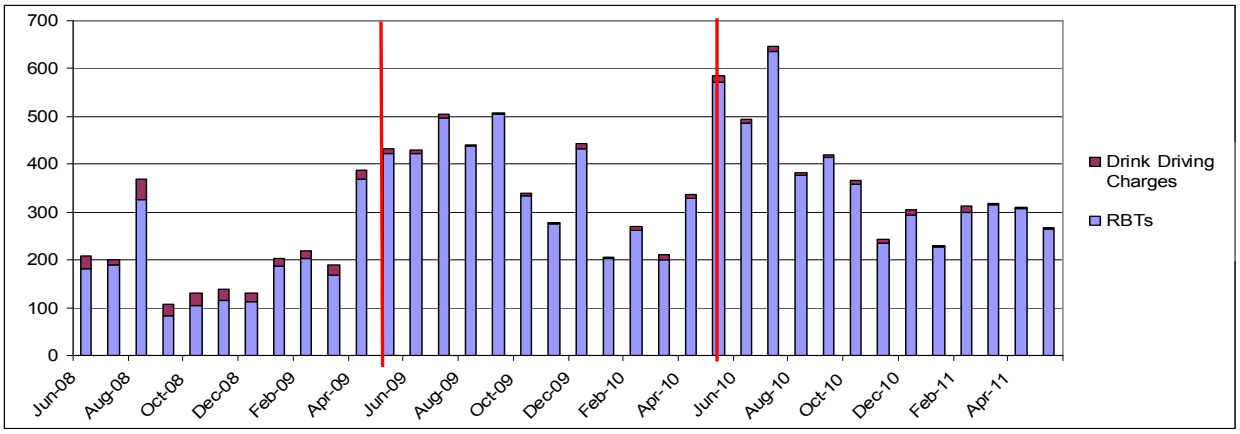
- Changes to the police data recording system resulting in the inability to separate alcohol-related tasking from general tasking. However, Halls Creek police estimate that up to 90 percent of their activity before the restriction was alcohol-related.
- Data collection around assault and domestic violence changed from recording the total number of *reported* cases to only those *verified* through investigation. All the assault and domestic violence data included in this report has been amended to be *verified data* and is comparable across the period of this report.

Road Traffic and Random Breath Testing

A total of 4,208 RBTs were conducted by Halls Creek police from June 2010 to May 2011 (post-restriction period 2), 262 less than the 4,470 conducted in post-restriction period 1 (May 2009 to June 2010). The number of RBTs conducted post-restriction remained substantially higher than the pre-restriction period (2,459 RBTs conducted from May 2008 to June 2009).

Drink driving charges were stable across both post-restriction periods at 80 charges. The number of drink driving charges pre-restriction was more than three times higher than post-restriction periods 1 and 2 (265 drink driving charges pre-restriction).

Graph 1: Random breath tests and resulting drink driving charges made by Halls Creek police from June 2008 to May 2011



From June 2008 to May 2009 (pre-restriction), the ratio of RBTs to drink driving charges was 9.3 to 1 (2,459 RBTs resulting in 265 drink driving charges). In post-restriction period 1, the ratio improved to 55.9 RBTs for every drink driving charge (4,470 RBTs resulting in 80 drink driving charges). A similar ratio was maintained in post-restriction period 2 at 52.6 RBTs for every drink driving charge.

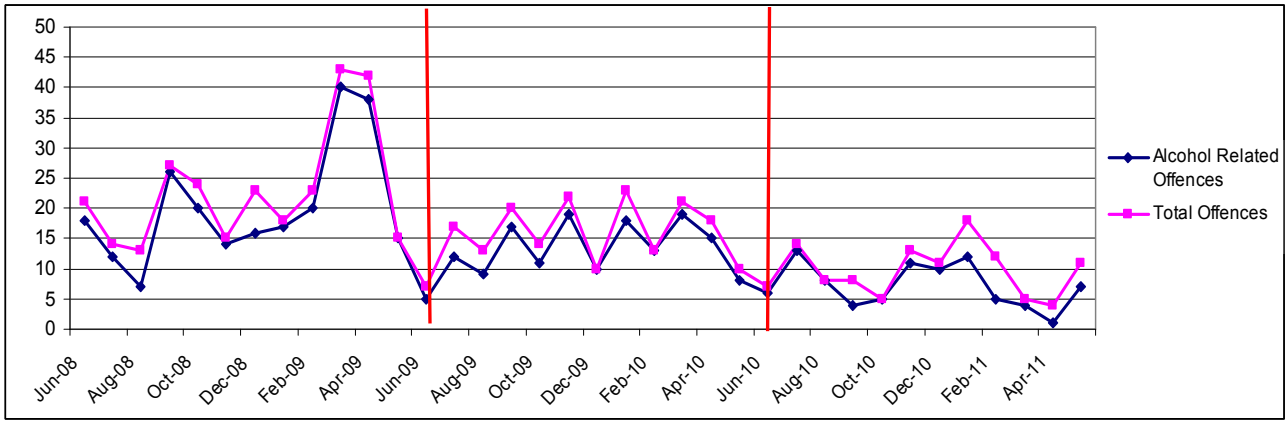
Table 1: Random breath tests and resulting drink driving charges made by Halls Creek police from June 2008 to May 2011

	June 2008 - May 2009 Pre-restriction	June 2009 - May 2010 Post-restriction 1	June 2010 - May 2011 Post-restriction 2
RBTs	2,459	4,470	4,208
Drink Driving Charges	265	80	80
Ratio	9.3:1	55.9:1	52.6:1

Reported Assault Offences

Before the introduction of the restriction, the majority of assault offences reported to the Halls Creek police were alcohol-related. This has remained the case post-restriction; however there has been a substantial decrease in the total number of assault offences reported.

Graph 2: Total number of verified alcohol-related assaults reported to the Halls Creek police from June 2008 May 2011

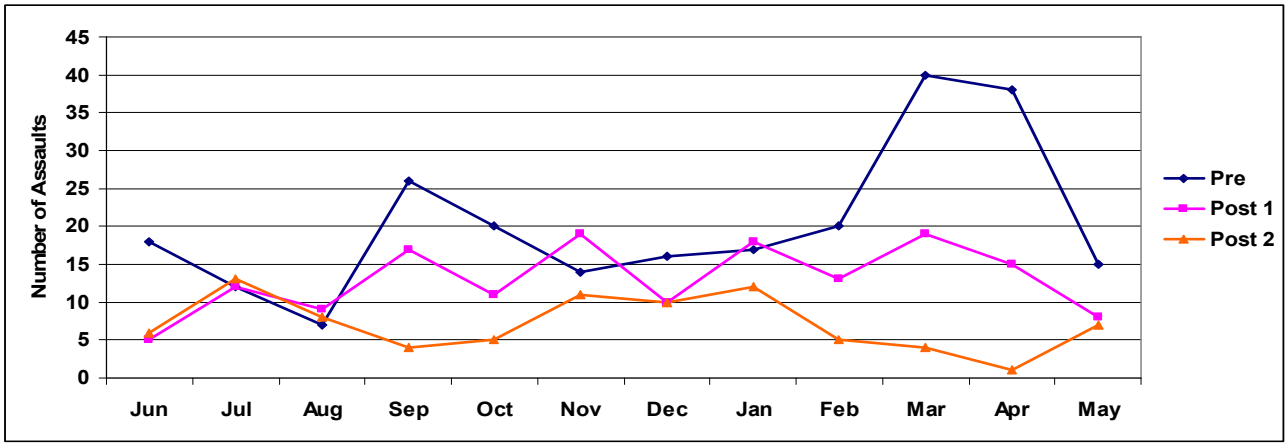


Since the introduction of the restriction in May 2009, the total number of reported assaults has decreased by 58 percent. From June 2008 to May 2009 (pre-restriction) there were a total of 278 assault offences compared with 188 in post-restriction period 1 (June 2009 to May 2010) and 116 in post-restriction period 2 (June 2010 to May 2011).

Data on alcohol-related assault offences alone has shown a similar trend. In the 12 month period following the introduction of the restriction (post-restriction period 1), the number of

alcohol-related assault offences fell by 36 percent compared with the 12 months pre-restriction (from 243 to 156 alcohol-related assaults). There was a further reduction of 45 percent between post-restriction periods 1 and 2, from 156 to 86 alcohol-related assaults.

Graph 3: Verified alcohol-related assaults reported to the Halls Creek police pre-restriction, post-restriction period 1 and post-restriction period 2

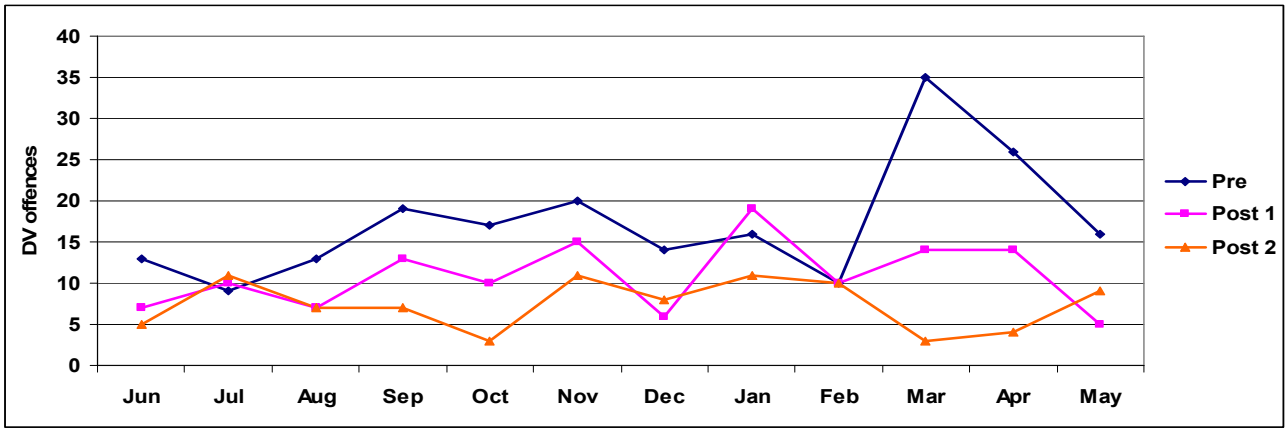


Levels of Alcohol-related Violence and Domestic Violence

Verified cases of domestic violence recorded by the Halls Creek police from June 2010 to May 2011 (post-restriction period 2) fell by 32 percent when compared with the initial 12 month period post-restriction (from 130 incidents to 89). This followed the previously reported decrease of 38 percent from pre-restriction to post-restriction period 1.

Despite the decline in recorded cases of domestic violence in post-restriction periods 1 and 2, the proportion of alcohol-related incidents remained high. In the 12 month period from May 2010 to June 2011 (post-restriction period 2), 75 percent of verified cases of domestic violence were alcohol-related (67 out of 89 total cases).

Graph 4: Total number of verified domestic violence offences reported to the Halls Creek police pre-restriction, post-restriction period 1 and post-restriction period 2



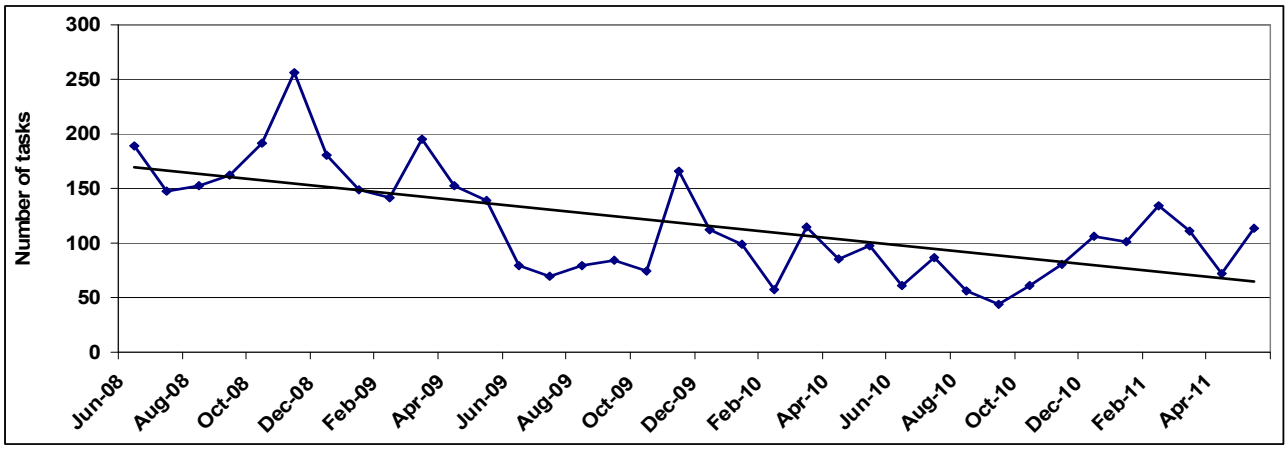
General Police Tasking

Any instance where police are called to attend to a situation by a member of the public or identify a situation whilst on patrol is recorded as a task.

There has been an overall decline in the number of Halls Creek police tasks since the introduction of the restriction. Pre-restriction (June 2008 to May 2009), a total of 2,058 tasks were recorded. In the following 12 month period (post-restriction period 1), there was a 46 percent reduction in police tasking (from 2,058 to 1,117). The number of tasks decreased by a further 90 from 1,117 to 1,027 in post-restriction period 2 (June 2010 to May 2011).

From June 2008 to May 2011 (pre and post-restriction), seasonal trends in police tasking were evident, with a higher number of tasks recorded during the Wet each year (October/November to March/April) than during the Dry.

Graph 5: Police tasking numbers for Halls Creek from June 2008 to May 2011



Health Services

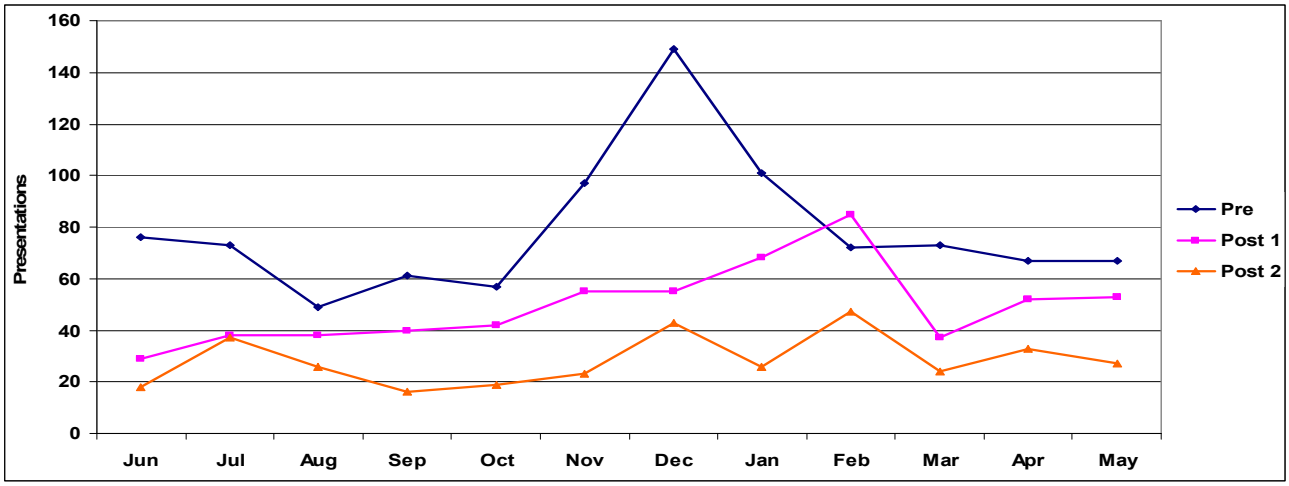
Acute and long-term health services in Halls Creek are provided by the Halls Creek District Hospital and Yura Yungi Aboriginal Medical Service.

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) provided data on emergency department (ED) presentations, triage codes for ED presentations and ambulance call outs in Halls Creek from June 2008 to May 2011.[1]

Halls Creek Hospital Emergency Department

Since the liquor restriction was introduced in May 2009, alcohol-related presentations by Halls Creek residents[2] to the Halls Creek Hospital ED have fallen substantially. The number of presentations decreased from 942 in the 12 months pre-restriction (June 2008 to May 2009) to 619 in the first 12 months post-restriction (June 2009 to May 2010), representing a 34 percent reduction. The number of alcohol-related presentations decreased by a further 45 percent in post-restriction period 2 (June 2010 to May 2011), from 619 to 339.

Graph 6: Alcohol-related ED (MCD 20 and 21 codes) presentations for Halls Creek residents pre-restriction, post-restriction period 1 and post-restriction period 2



Despite the consistent decline in presentations over the three year period, seasonal trends in the data remained, with presentations peaking during the Wet (October/November – March/April) both before and after the restriction was introduced.

Triage Categories

[1] The data on emergency department presentations were taken from the HCARe data system, which is used in many Western Australian hospitals. The HCARe data system categorises presentations to the Emergency Department by Major Diagnostic Category (MDC). There is no independent category within which all alcohol-related presentations are recorded. While alcohol may be a contributing factor to a presentation, presentations to the Emergency Department are recorded according to the primary condition requiring treatment. This results in under-reporting of alcohol-related presentations. For example, a patient presenting with a broken jaw as a result of an alcohol-related fight will be recorded as an 'injury' and not an 'alcohol-related injury'. For use in this report, the Emergency Department data grouped under 'alcohol-related presentations' is drawn from two MDCs that commonly feature alcohol-related presentations i.e. 'Alcohol/Drug Use' and 'Injury/Poison/Toxic Drug Effect'. The category 'Alcohol/Drug Use' primarily records those presenting for acute alcohol or drug intoxication, which is the reason why the figures are very low. These figures are indicative only and should be considered in the context of other data presented in this report.

[2] Community members who cite a Halls Creek postcode when identifying their place of residence.

All Western Australian ED presentations are classified into one of five triage categories according to their severity and the urgency of treatment - from category 1 as the most urgent through to category 5 as the least urgent.

The following table provides a pre and post-restriction comparison of alcohol-related presentations to the Halls Creek ED according to triage code. The majority of alcohol-related presentations fall under triage categories 4 and 5.

Comparing the 12 months pre-restriction with the first 12 months post-restriction, the number of alcohol-related presentations classified as category 4 reduced by 43 percent (from 410 to 233) and those classified as category 5 reduced by 46 percent (from 429 to 231).

The reduction in alcohol-related ED presentations continued in post-restriction period 2 (June 2010 to May 2011). Category 4 presentations fell by a further 40 percent (from 233 in post-restriction period 1 to 160 in post-restriction period 2) and category 5 presentations fell by 31 percent (from 231 in post-restriction period 1 to 139 in post-restriction period 2).

The number of presentations classified as category 3 fluctuated over the three year period. After a 37 percent increase in category 3 presentations in post-restriction period 1 (June 2009 to May 2010), there was a substantial decline in post-restriction period 2, from 122 to 66 presentations. The number of alcohol-related presentations classified as category 1 and 2 remained relatively stable pre and post-restriction.

Table 2: Triage category presentations for alcohol-related issues to the Halls Creek ED from June 2008 to May 2011

Triage Category	June 2008 to May 2009 Pre-restriction	June 2009 to May 2010 Post-restriction 1	June 2010 to May 2011 Post-restriction 2
	Number of presentations		
1	4	3	4
2	21	23	24
3	77	122	66
4	410	233	160
5	429	231	139
Total	**941**	**612**	**393**

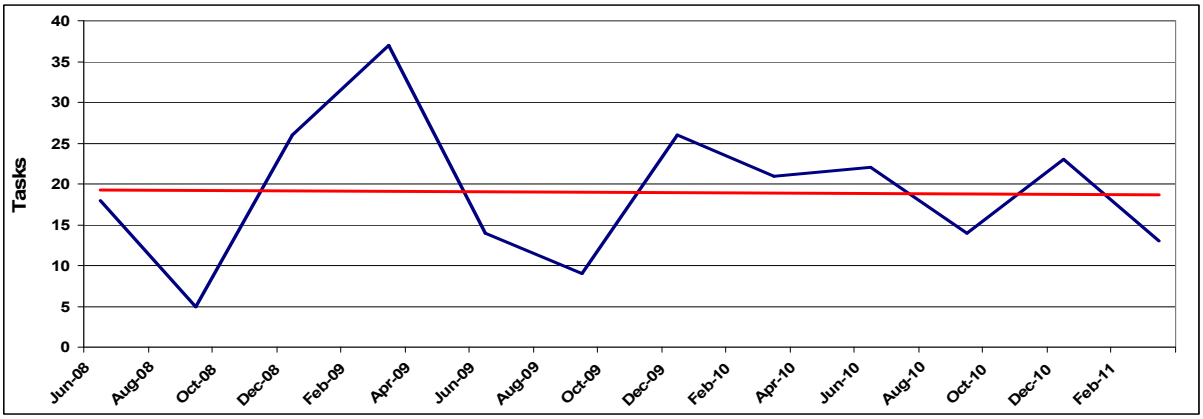
Ambulance Callouts

Halls Creek ambulance data records all callouts and does not differentiate between alcohol-related and other.

The total number of ambulance callouts recorded pre-restriction (June 2008 to May 2009) and post-restriction period 1 (June 2009 to May 2010) remained relatively stable at 230 and 221 callouts respectively. There was a reduction of 14 callouts in post-restriction period 2 (June 2010 to May 2011) when compared to post-restriction period 1.

There is a seasonal trend in ambulance use in Halls Creek, which is to be expected when considering the similar trend in presentations to the ED. Ambulance callouts were generally higher during the Wet (October/November – March/April) both before and after the restriction was introduced.

Graph 7: Halls Creek ambulance tasks pre-restrictions, post-restriction 1 and post-restriction period 2



Health - Regional

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) provided data on the admissions of Halls Creek residents to the ED of the hospitals in Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Wyndham and Kununurra for June 2008 to May 2011.

For the pre-restriction period June 2008 to May 2009, there were 145 presentations by Halls Creek residents to other Kimberley hospitals for alcohol-related issues. This increased to 188 presentations during post-restriction period 1 (June 2009 to May 2010). In the second year post-restriction (June 2010 to May 2011), there was a further increase of 69 alcohol-related presentations recorded across Kimberley hospital EDs (totaling 257 presentations).

In June 2008 to May 2009 (pre-restriction), Halls Creek residents presented to the ED of other Kimberley hospitals on average 12.05 times per month. This figure increased by an average of 2.7 presentations per month in post-restriction period 1 and a further 6.67 presentations per month in post-restriction period 2.

Table 3: Average number of alcohol-related presentations by Halls Creek residents to Kimberley Hospital Emergency Departments by month, June 2008 to May 2011

	June 2008 - May 2009	June 2009 - May 2010	June 2009 - May 2011

Hospital	Pre-restriction	Post-restriction 1	Post-restriction 2
	Average presentations per month		
Broome	5.75	9.08	12
Derby	2.3	1.5	3.67
Fitzroy	1.08	0.92	0.58
Kununurra	2.75	2.67	5
Wyndham	0.17	0.58	0.17
Total	**12.05**	**14.75**	**21.42**

Broome, Derby and Kununurra hospitals recorded an increase in the average number of presentations per month by Halls Creek residents from post-restriction period 1 to post-restriction period 2. Fitzroy and Wyndham hospitals recorded a slight decrease in average monthly presentations by Halls Creek residents during this same period.

Sobering Up Centre

The Halls Creek Sobering Up Centre (SUC) provided data on the number of presentations for the 12 month period June 2008 to May 2009 (pre-restriction), the 12 month period June 2009 to May 2010 (post-restriction period 1) and for a 10 month period post-restriction period 2 (June 2010 to March 2011).

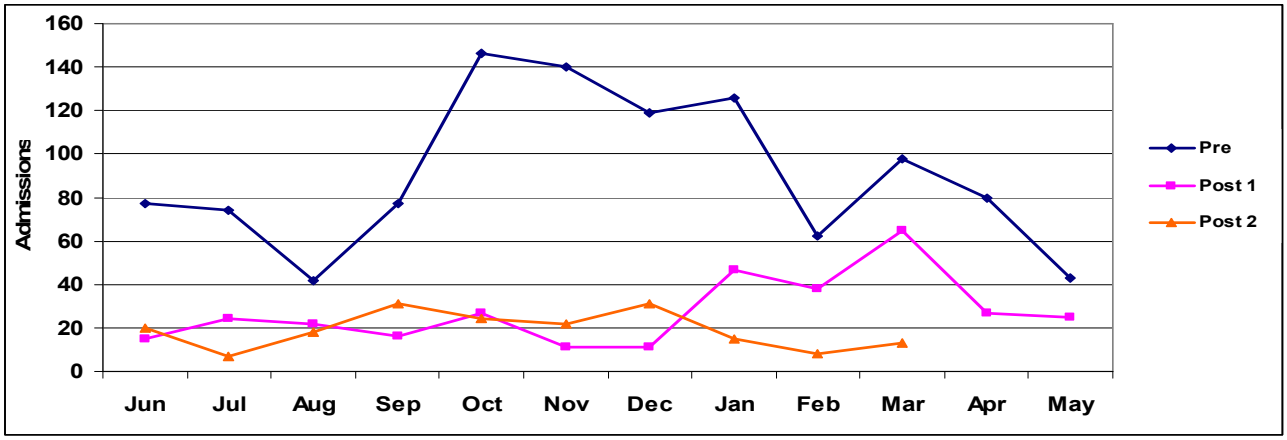
Pre-restriction, the Halls Creek SUC was very busy on a regular basis, with people having to line up to use the service. Over the course of the post-restriction period (June 2009 to March

2011), the SUC experienced a dramatic drop in demand. Presentation data to the Halls Creek SUC for the period of June 2009 to May 2010 (post-restriction period 1) indicated a 70 percent reduction in presentations, from 1,084 recorded pre-restriction to 328 presentations in post-restriction period 1.

In the ten months from June 2010 to March 2011 (post-restriction period 2), a total of 189 presentations were recorded, with monthly figures ranging from seven in July 2010 to 31 in both September and December 2010.

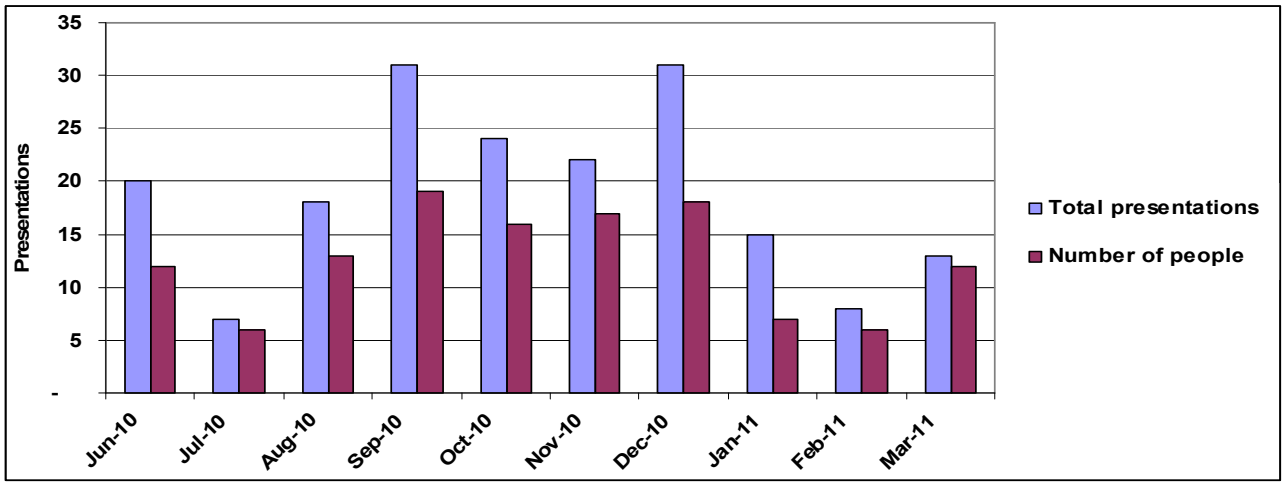
Presentations from January to March 2011 were substantially lower than during the same time period in post-restriction period 1 (from 150 presentations to 36) and pre-restriction.

Graph 8: Halls Creek Sobering Up Centre presentations pre-restriction, post-restriction period 1 and post-restriction period 2



Of the 189 presentations to the Halls Creek SUC from June 2010 to March 2011 (post-restriction period 2), one-third (63) were by individuals who had been admitted on multiple occasions each month.

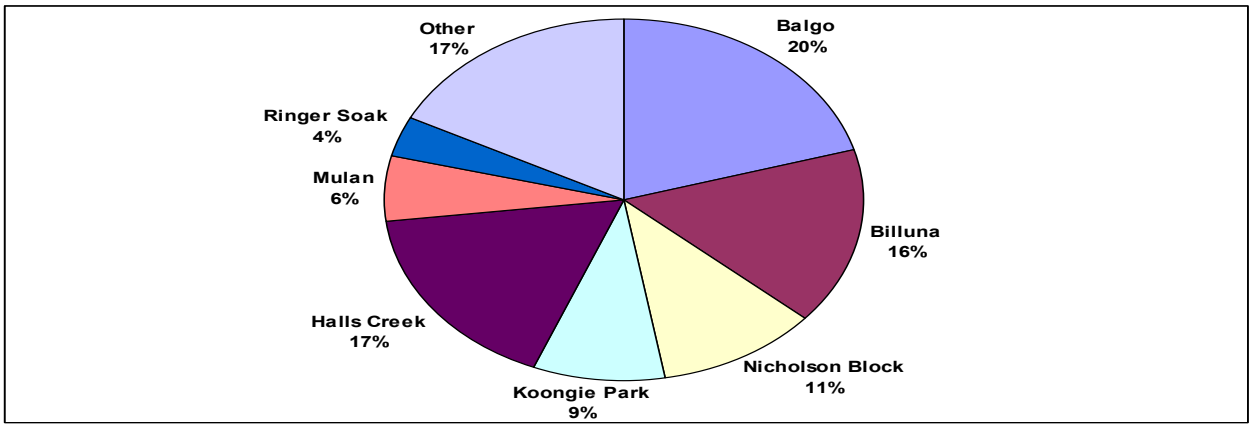
Graph 9: Halls Creek SUC total presentations compared with the number of individuals presenting by month, June 2010 to March 2011 (post-restriction period 2)



Information collected on the home town of people presenting to the Halls Creek SUC showed that, of the 189 presentations recorded in post-restriction period 2 (June 2010 to March 2011), 17 percent were Halls Creek residents and over half (56 percent) came from the surrounding communities of Koongie Park and Nicolson Block, and from the desert communities of Balgo and Billuna.

In post-restriction period 2 (June 2010 to May 2011) community members from Balgo, Billuna and Koongie Park were the highest users of the Halls Creek SUC, similar to post-restriction period 1. The percentage of presentations to the SUC by Ringer Soak residents was fewer in post-restriction period 2 (4 percent) than in post-restriction period 1 (10 percent). The proportion of presentations by Halls Creek residents increased from 8 percent of total presentations in post-restriction period 1 to 17 percent in post-restriction period 2.

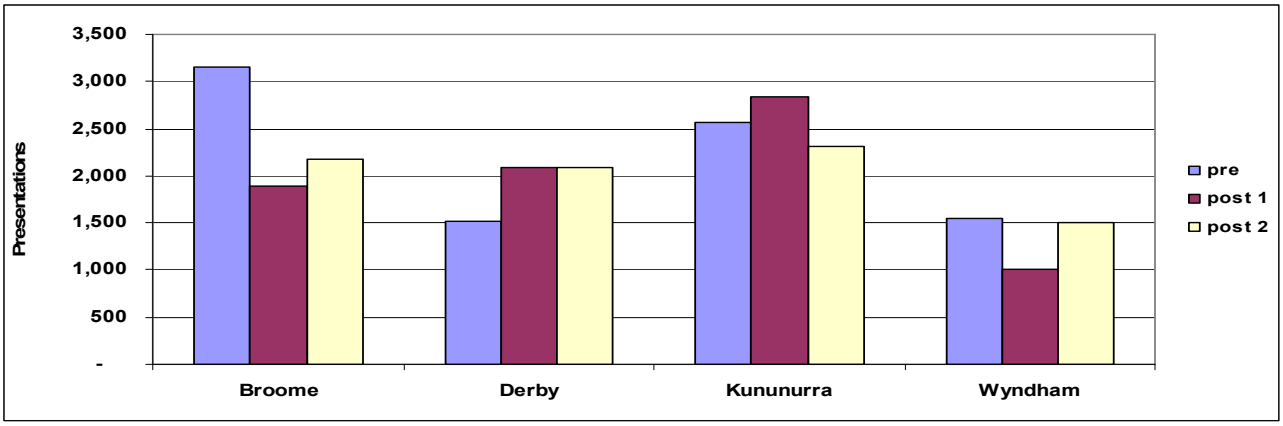
Graph 10: Halls Creek SUC total presentations by location from June 2010 to March 2011 (post-restriction period 2)



Regional Sobering Up Centres

Sobering Up Centres (SUC) in the Kimberley towns of Broome, Derby, Kununurra and Wyndham provided admission data from June 2008 to May 2011. The Fitzroy Crossing SUC ceased functioning as a SUC in early March 2007.

Graph 12: Presentations to Kimberley Sobering Up Centres pre-restriction, post-restriction period 1 and post-restriction period 2



After experiencing fewer overall presentations from June 2009 to May 2010 than for the same period pre-restriction, the SUCs in Broome and Wyndham recorded an increase in presentations in post-restriction period 2 (June 2010 to May 2011), though still not to the levels seen prior to the introduction of the restriction. In contrast, the number of presentations to Kununurra SUC dropped by 530 in post-restriction period 2 compared with the previous 12 month period. Derby SUC recorded an increase of 574 presentations from pre-restriction to post-restriction period 1 and then remained stable in post-restriction period 2.

Table 4: Kimberley SUC presentations pre-restriction, post-restriction period 1 and post-restriction period 2

Location	June 2008 - May 2009 Pre-restriction	June 2009 - May 2010 Post-restriction 1	June 2010 - May 2011 Post-restriction 2
Broome	3,151	1,895	2,177
Derby	1,512	2,086	2,087
Kununurra	2,566	2,841	2,311
Wyndham	1,552	1,001	1,501

An analysis of presentation data across the five SUCs in the Kimberley region for June 2010 to May 2011 (post-restriction period 2) showed that 12 percent of the total presentations to the Broome SUC and 11 percent to the Kununurra SUC were by Halls Creek residents.

No analysis of home location of presentations to the SUC's was available for the period pre-restriction.

Table 5: Number of Halls Creek residents reporting to Kimberley Sobering Up Centres for post-restriction period 2

Location	June 2010 to May 2011 Total number of presentations	June 2010 to May 2011 Number of Halls Creek residents
Broome	2,177	259
Derby	2,087	79
Kununurra	2,311	264
Wyndham	1,501	6