

Media Release

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VCGLR's Sale hub making its mark

(Quotes attributable to Adam Ockwell, Director Compliance, VCGLR)

Since launching in April 2018, the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR) Sale hub has made its mark on the region.

Funded in the 2017 Victorian State Budget, Sale and another office in Ararat were selected to maximise the VCGLR's coverage across regional Victoria. Between them, the two hubs cover over 2300 licensed venues including 70 pubs and clubs with more than 2800 gaming machines.

As well as allowing the VCGLR to have more oversight throughout the state, the hubs have also improved responsiveness to local community issues and harm related risks.

In the 2018-19 financial year, the Sale team conducted over 750 gambling and liquor inspections, with numerous high-harm breaches identified.

Director of Compliance for the VCGLR Adam Ockwell said "Having hubs in the east and west of Victoria has enabled our inspectors to better detect high harm breaches in regional areas, including an instance where a venue was found to be selling liquor without a licence".

The Sale hub has also made a significant impact on local communities through their engagement with stakeholders and licensees. In a recent stakeholder research survey conducted by the VCGLR, Sale inspectors received a high level of satisfaction by licensees for their inspections of licensed premises.

As well as engagement with licensees through inspections, Sale inspectors have been working closely with local community and sporting clubs to help address local issues. A recent Sale community forum saw the collaboration of sporting clubs, local council, Victoria Police and the VCGLR on issues such as the responsible service of alcohol, generating a good club culture, club responsibilities in relation to minors, fundraising and raffles. All attendees engaged with the speakers eliciting numerous questions. Future forums are in the planning stages.

The Sale team identified disengagement of packaged liquor licensees with local liquor forums in the region. Inspectors worked with licensees to explain the benefits of the forums to share and address local issues with other licensees and regulatory bodies. Attendance at forums by packaged liquor licensees has now increased and created greater awareness of liquor laws and best practice tools.

Working closely with local council and Victoria Police has strengthened relationships and communications between the regulatory bodies and the VCGLR. The Sale inspectors have regularly taken part in joint operations with Victoria Police as well as assisted in the facilitation of inspector training with liquor licensing officers.

The area covered by the Sale team encompasses approximately 32,000 square kilometres including Baw Baw, East and South Gippsland, Latrobe City and Wellington Shire. It covers over 1000 licensed premises.

The first year of the VCGLR's regional hubs has been a positive step to increasing the VCGLR's presence throughout Victoria.

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