

**EVALUATION OF
ALCOHOL HEALTHWATCH
LAST DRINK SURVEY PROGRAMME**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Last Drink Survey (LDS) originated ten years ago from a community action project as a liquor licensing surveillance data system and alcohol harm reduction strategy.
- The LDS is currently regarded as a key public health tool in the management of liquor licensing. It is used primarily to identify, monitor and target licensed premises that are not complying with Sale of Liquor (SOL) Act (1999) requirements such as the serving of intoxicated persons and minors.
- The LDS as implemented by Alcohol Healthwatch (AHW) in the Auckland region, is a well developed model that provides a comprehensive approach for information gathering and interventions through the collection, analysis and dissemination of police data concerning all alcohol-related offences in seven liquor licensing districts.
- The AHW coordinators of the LDS operate in a collaborative partnership approach working closely with police and other statutory agencies involved in liquor licensing. They play a major role in facilitating the work of Liquor Liaison Groups (LLG) who operate as a regular forum for the statutory agencies involved in liquor licensing to discuss liquor-licensing and alcohol-related issues. One particularly important task is following up LDS data through organising combined night visits to licensed premises.
- The LDS data is used primarily to work proactively with identified 'problem' premises to improve their management practices. It is also used to help identify locations for Compulsory Breath Testing (CBT) operations and for indicative trend data for licensing hearings. Other uses include the provision of relevant demographic data for other stakeholder organisations that have an interest in reducing alcohol-related harm.
- The LDS was designed as a tool for intelligence gathering to indicate trends for intervention purposes, rather than as a scientific evidential tool. Its purpose and utility is not always well understood and this sometimes gives rise to concerns of validity and credibility. The name *Last Drink Survey* may also be confusing as it is not a statistical survey but a surveillance system indicating trends. It is always used alongside other sources of information gathered regarding problem premises, such as information shared at LLG meetings.
- Ensuring satisfactory data collection by police is an ongoing problem. Suggested strategies to improve this include:
 - gaining commitment at the highest police level with national directives to ensure district accountability at senior levels
 - ensuring a programme of LDS training is instituted at all levels for the police (taking account of new recruits, police turn-over)
 - inclusion of the LDS information in a compulsory police form
 - simplifying data requirements as far as possible, in line with recommended changes on forms currently used for LDS data collection
 - keeping the police informed of its utility to demonstrate how the LDS adds value to their policing work
 - automatic provision of access to all police forms used for monitoring compliance with the SOL Act 1999
- A large amount of LDS data not related to licensed premises offences is collected. Further uses for this data could be explored such as promoting host responsibility practices in non-licensed settings, for raising media awareness of alcohol issues and training purposes.

- Improved communication strategies have been suggested respectively for police and licensees such as emailing reports and producing regular newsletters.
- Strengthening relationships with existing and other potential stakeholders is seen as an important ongoing role for LDS coordinators.
- A current information gap in respect to LDS data relating to off-licensed premises such as bottle shops and supermarkets was noted for further investigation.
- There is general support for the development of a nationally consistent LDS system incorporating national LDS guidelines, standardisation of LDS forms and data collected, and a national database. Benefits mooted are to increase national awareness of LDS trends, provide transferability of data and regional comparisons and to increase collaboration at the national level for sharing of strategic information and training resources.
- Ensuring regional consultation and input into a national system to share common approaches, accommodate local concerns and practices is considered an essential part of any national process. Similarly, ensuring top level commitment from key stakeholder agencies is also a prerequisite for the effective development of a national system.
- AHW have a proven track record in successfully coordinating a highly regarded LDS system at a regional level that includes both rural and urban licensing districts. Their current proposal to spearhead a national initiative is of considerable merit and would go far to increase the potential of the LDS and enhance its value and credibility.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Last Drink Survey (LDS) programme has been operating in various parts of New Zealand for nearly a decade. It is well recognised nationally and internationally (Hill and Casswell 1999; Wood et al. 1995) as a key public health tool in the management of liquor licensing to reduce alcohol-related harm.

The LDS was developed initially as part of a concerted community action response to address major changes to the Sale of Liquor (SOL) Act, 1989, in the early 1990s. It was seen as a potentially useful health promotion tool in aiding the promotion of healthy public policy, community action and supportive environments. The establishment of the LDS programme represented a major shift in practice from thinking about drink driving as solely a traffic/road safety issue, to identifying linkages between sources of drinking and alcohol-related harm and to improve licensed premise performance. It has subsequently become a pivotal tool for the main statutory and community agencies involved with liquor licensing issues (primarily police, District Licensing Agencies and the health protection/promotion sector). Regular LDS reports provide a focus for collaboration on strategies such as host responsibility and monitoring the practices of licensed premises.

Last Drink Surveys are mainly used to identify, monitor and work proactively with licensed premises that have come to the attention of police. These premises are where people apprehended by the police for offences involving alcohol (such as driving with excess blood alcohol [EBA] content, assault, under-age drinking) report having consumed or bought their last drink. LDS data is also used for other purposes such as providing trend information on alcohol-related offences, offender profiles, and for providing indicative (not evidential) data to assist in the targeting of specific police operations in certain locations or for seeking license suspensions or opposing license renewals where there have been major or persistent infringements of the SOL Act.

Aspects of the LDS programme have been evaluated as part of the national 1990-92 Liquor Licensing Project (Stewart et al. 1997), an independent police peer review of the Waikato and Auckland traffic enforcement/Compulsory Breath Testing (CBT) programmes in 1998 (Hayes and Moloney 1997) and the 1996-98 Waikato Rural Drink-Drive project; (Stewart and Conway 1998; Stewart and Conway 2000). However there has only been limited documentation of its history to date and a comprehensive evaluation of the LDS operations in Auckland had never been undertaken.

There are seven individual LDS projects in the Auckland region coordinated by Alcohol Healthwatch (AHW), an Auckland health promotion organisation. In the latter part of 2000, AHW approached the Alcohol and Public Health Research Unit (APHRU) to discuss the undertaking of a process-impact evaluation of their current LDS programme. The purpose of the evaluation was to review its current operations and help inform its future development.

1.1 Evaluation objectives

- To document the history, structure, organisation and activities of the programme
- To document the programme reach
- To document stakeholders' perceptions of the programme and its impacts

1.2 Methodology

After initial discussions and consultation with AHW staff, the following methods were selected to meet the purposes of this evaluation;

- Consultation and liaison with AHW staff
- Literature review of history and operations of the LDS programme
- Key informant interviews
- Participant observation of Liquor Liaison Group monthly meeting.
- Participant observation of Liquor Liaison Group premise night visit
- Collation of forms and tools used for LDS database construction

1.2.1 Consultation and Liaison with AHW staff

During the period of the evaluation, meetings, both formal and informal, were held between the researcher, Stephen McTaggart, and staff at AHW. All AHW LDS coordinators were also formally interviewed to gain a full perspective of how the seven LDS projects worked throughout the Auckland region. This resulted in a rich description of the background, operations and developments that have occurred and are occurring within the current Auckland LDS programme.

1.2.2 Review of the History of the Development and Operations of the Last Drink Survey Programme in New Zealand

A literature search was undertaken to document the history of the LDS programme. A document review was also conducted of relevant information pertaining to its current operation in Auckland. Documents, reports, articles, papers and relevant texts were obtained from the APHRU library, the University of Auckland Library, AHW and APHRU staff, police and health personnel and other persons previously or currently involved in LDS projects. Information was also downloaded off the World Wide Web.

1.2.3 Key informant interviews

Thirty key informant interviews were conducted between January and June 2001. Three pilot interviews were initially carried out to evaluate the interview schedule. Key informants were drawn from a purposive sample suggested by AHW, covering the seven Auckland areas where the LDS operates: Manukau City; Papakura District; Franklin District; Waitakere City; North Shore City; Rodney District and Auckland City. This provided a broad representation from the following agencies: police, AHW, council, and health.

The interview schedule was constructed using open-ended questions (**Appendix 1**). This design was used to elicit in-depth conversation between the interviewer and interviewee. All interviews were conducted by Stephen McTaggart for continuity purposes.

Each interviewee was sent a letter explaining the nature of the evaluation prior to the interview (when possible) or given a copy of the information sheet prior to the interview (**Appendix 2**). They were also asked to sign consent forms.

Interviews varied between thirty to ninety minutes depending on the input from the interviewee. Interviews were recorded on cassette tape with the written permission of the interviewees. The tapes were later transcribed to highlight main themes and suitable quotations from interviewees. Analysis of this information formed a core section of the evaluation report.

1.2.4 Participant observation of Liquor Liaison Group monthly meeting

As Liquor Liaison Group (LLG) sector representatives are the main end-users of the LDS, a focus on their operations was an important component of this evaluation. Minutes from the Liquor Liaison Group meetings from each of the seven areas for the last twelve months were also examined for key issues addressed.

The researcher attended one ninety minute LLG meeting. Members from all of the statutory agencies involved in that LDS area attended to discuss the data generated by the LDS monthly report and other liquor licensing and alcohol-related matters associated with their work. The researcher observed, took notes on the discussion and interactions that took place, and wrote a self debrief report later that day.

1.2.5 Participant observation of Liquor Liaison Group night visit of licensed premises

Night visits of licensed premises are an integral part of the LDS monitoring and LLG follow-up process. The researcher accompanied the LDS coordinator on a night visit to two premises in the Counties Manukau area. These visits were carried out after 9.00pm on a Saturday night for optimum impact, and were for the purpose of observing the procedures used to examine the premises' compliance with the SOL Act and host responsibility recommendations. The researcher took notes during each visit of approximately one hour, and further notes were also made from subsequent discussion with the LDS coordinator and later written up for analysis. These visits were not the usual multi-agency night visits carried out in the Manukau area as time constraints meant that none could be arranged.

1.2.6 Collation of forms and tools used for LDS database construction

The researcher collated the extensive forms related to the LDS operations. These comprised data collection forms used by police and those generated internally at AHW including the LDS monthly excel spreadsheet that contains all data pertaining to alcohol-related offences collected from the three Auckland police districts (**Appendix 3**).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

History, development and operations of the Last Drink Survey programme

There have been three significant periods in the development of the LDS: its initiation through the Liquor Licensing Project (early 1990's), models of development and regional refinements as documented by the two largest and best known LDS models (the Auckland LDS operations and the Waikato Rural Drink-Drive Project [mid-late 1990s]) and, most recently, a national resurgence of interest in the LDS.

2.1 Initiatives developed from the Liquor Licensing Project period (1990-94)

The concept of the Last Drink Survey first emerged along with that of the Liquor Liaison Group (LLG), following the establishment of the Liquor Licensing Project (LLP) in 1990 to address significant new changes to the Sale of Liquor (SOL) Act in 1989 (Hill and Casswell 1999; Stewart et al. 1997). These changes devolved greater licensing responsibilities to local authorities through District Licensing Agencies (DLAs) and substantially liberalised the existing licensing laws resulting in a proliferation of new liquor licenses and licensed premises. The LLP was a national community action approach involving a network of alcohol health promotion advisers to strategise on public health input into the new licensing system and licensee practices. Two major strategies developed from the LLP were Liquor Liaison Groups (the intersectoral groups comprised of agencies with statutory SOL Act powers [police, licensing and health sector] set up to share and act on liquor licensing information) and the Last Drink Survey.

The LDS was a liquor licensing surveillance data system and alcohol harm reduction strategy initially proposed and established in Hamilton in 1990, by Ross Henderson, a Waikato Area Health Board (WAHB) health promotion adviser, who was also part of the LLP. He initiated the LDS as a partnership project between the WAHB and the local Ministry of Transport (MOT). Key details such as last place of drinking, demographic data and offence data (including breath test readings) were collected by the police as part of their drink-drive operations. Results were collated and analysed by health agencies and these were used by the police, licensing agencies and health sector to identify, monitor and approach premises that were featuring in the LDS and by implication contributing to the drink drive problem. The criteria in identifying licensed premises which required further action from the database were usually premises that had been named three times in three months or linked to a very high breath alcohol reading eg 600 microgrammes/litre compared to the legal limit of 400 microgrammes/litre). Host responsibility training and assistance were then offered to these premises.

At this time, there were no other alcohol harm reduction strategies quite like the LDS known to be operating anywhere else in the world. However there was a sound rationale behind setting up such systems to target premises for intervention, according to references in the international literature of that period. Australian research had found that there were links between licensed premises and the reported last place of drinking for both drivers detained for excess blood alcohol and numbers of assaults occurring in certain areas (Stockwell et al. 1991).

Additionally, as a forerunner to the widespread development of server intervention (host responsibility) programmes (Homel 1989; Peters 1986; Russ and Geller 1987; Saltz 1987), there had been an experimental short-term "Driving under the Influence" project in California

(Mosher and Wallack 1979). This project was aimed at reducing the number of licensees repeatedly serving intoxicated patrons, particularly drunk drivers. It was initially conceived primarily as a method of targeting enforcement efforts to licensed premises, identified through apprehension of drunk drivers who had cited the premises where they had previously been drinking. However the emphasis shifted to include the provision of training as an intervention strategy for the licensees of 540 identified premises. Evaluation of the enforcement and training phases of this project indicated some decrease in intoxicated patrons on problem premises and positive feedback from licensees on the training provided.

Benefits of the proposed LDS strategy were first outlined in a paper presented to a 1990 Auckland Road Safety Conference (Henderson 2001). These included:

- Supplying information on alcohol impaired driving to the Medical Officer of Health (MOH), Licensing Inspectors and the Police in the context of the Sale of Liquor Act
- Providing an opportunity to promote “recognition of host responsibility” and strengthen “server intervention” practices amongst licensees
- Supplying useful intelligence for the targeting of specific premises through police operations

A further paper by Dr Gillian Durham (Wellington regional Medical Officer of Health), who was also connected to the LLP, emphasised its potential value as an initiative to encourage inter-agency collaboration and prevent alcohol-related problems. She described the LDS as a surveillance system to assist in gathering information on problem premises so that priorities could be set for educational interventions for licensees, to assist them to provide safe drinking environments (Durham 1990).

An Alcohol Advisory Council (ALAC) discussion paper on the concept was also produced by their research officer in 1991 (Orchard 1991). She recommended further exploration of issues regarding pertinent aspects of LDS design and data validity such as police data collection systems and bias in enforcement activity.

The Waikato region’s early LDS design formed the basis of other LDS projects developed by LLP health promotion workers in main centres such as Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin in 1991. The actual name, ‘Last Drink Survey’ is credited with having been coined by the Auckland pilot LDS project that began in Auckland City as a collaborative venture between AHW and the MOT. These initiatives were discussed in LLP meetings and adapted and promoted by other health promotion advisers in other regions throughout the country. Further development of the concept and promotion of its adoption nationally was undertaken by Ross Henderson who enlisted support from Phil Wright (Associate Commissioner, Traffic) at the MOT National Office and later Laurie Gabites from the Police Development group (PDG) at national Police Headquarters after the MOT/Police merger in 1992.

The PDG and Traffic Safety Division (TSD) of Police Headquarters in Wellington commissioned a research report in 1992 to identify the role alcohol plays in crime and traffic offending and investigate the possibility of establishing national data collection procedures for Last Drink Surveys. The resulting “Liquor Trail” report (Hunt 1993) examined the formation and early development of the projects regionally, concerns relating to the police role in data collection, validity of data, and difficulties in implementing an accurate and consistent complete national data system with uniformity of data collection tools, collation and analysis etc. It suggested that because of the difficulties outlined in obtaining consistent data collection, LDS data would always be incomplete and therefore it was more appropriate to use it as a local guide for information and intelligence purposes rather than for the purpose of having a statistical database. The report confirmed the benefits of using the information obtained, primarily as a tool for agencies involved in education, licensing and policing of

licensed premises. It particularly noted that Liquor Liaison Groups were most appreciative of LDS data and viewed it as providing a basis for immediate action and future planning.

Following this report, a National Last Drink Survey Steering Group was subsequently formed in March 1994. Its purpose was to address LDS design, implementation, interagency interface issues and take a leadership role in developing, establishing, monitoring and providing administrative support for the Last Drink Survey projects. Representatives from ALAC, APHRU, PDG, TSD, the Public Health Commission (PHC), Dunedin police and the author of the "Liquor Trail" research report attended these meetings. This group agreed that the aim of the LDS was not to build a stringent statistically correct database but to form partnerships with key players (Police, Health, DLAs) to identify problem premises to help local communities implement intervention strategies. There was a consensus that the LDS should be nationally driven but implemented locally. Each area would keep their own records and monitor their own problem premises. The police and TSD began working jointly toward establishing an LDS in each police district and investigating the national processing of LDS data. However it was found that at that stage, available police computer systems could only organise for data access to be entered and accessed at the local level (NZ Police 1994).

A survey of current LDS projects operating throughout the country was undertaken by APHRU in 1994 (Stewart 1994). These projects varied in who was responsible for data analysis and dissemination (police or health agencies) and whilst some areas only collected drink drive offence data, others collected additional alcohol offence related data as well.

Existing projects at that stage including the following: (Note that some of the smaller areas were possibly later amalgamated into police district areas).

North Island: Far North, Whangarei, Kaipara, Auckland City, Manukau, Hamilton, Cambridge, Raglan, Te Awamutu/Kihikihi/Pirongia, East Coast, Hastings, Central Hawkes Bay, Taranaki, Taranua, Dannevirke, Wanganui, and Wellington City

South Island: Nelson Bays, Marlborough/Blenheim, Christchurch/Canterbury, Rakaia River, West Coast, North Otago, Greater Dunedin, South Otago, Southland (Invercargill).

In 1995, the Steering group produced and circulated widely, a draft LDS guidelines document. This was intended to aid the setting up and implementation of the national/local LDS, as a partnership strategy between agencies. It was produced with the assistance (amongst others) of the Alcohol and Public Health Research Unit (APHRU), and the Dunedin LDS Partnership-Management Group who had already produced their own comprehensive plan. It included suggestions for LLGs to also be developed at the same time, as a vehicle for disseminating and acting on the LDS data. The work undertaken by the LDS Steering committee undoubtedly contributed to the formalisation of the LDS projects throughout the Waikato and other regions (NZ Police 1999).

An evaluation documenting the detailed process of the Liquor Licensing Project and its impacts through three sets of key informants was undertaken in four localities and conducted at the national policy level by the Alcohol and Public Health Research Unit (Stewart et al. 1997). Findings indicated that the two strategies most frequently and favourably mentioned were the Last Drink Survey and Liquor Liaison Groups. The researchers found that these were enthusiastically supported in the regions where they were introduced because they offered practical collaborative approaches to addressing licensing issues. At the start of the project only one LDS was under development, at the end, 10 LDS projects were operating. Another key finding was the critical role that health promotion workers such as AHW played in initiating, coordinating and formalising the place of the LDS within police operations.

“Research interviews with the licensing police in 1995 suggest that without this assistance last drink surveys would not have been continued to the point at which their usefulness was recognised” (Hill and Stewart 1996a cited in Hill & Casswell, 1999: 17).

The implementation of the LDS was perceived to have helped all the agencies involved to collaborate in improving standards in the management and practices of licensed premises, using the complementary approaches of host responsibility advice and training, reinforced by sanctions of license suspension or cancellation. The widespread adoption of the LDS also represented significant long-term structural change in formalising public health measures and interventions as part of the liquor licensing equation.

2.2 Models of development, regional refinements - Auckland/Waikato and current national developments (mid 1990's – 2001)

2.2.1 The Last Drink Survey in the Auckland region

The Auckland LDS (coordinated by AHW) was piloted in 1991 with the overall aim of reducing the incidence of alcohol-related problems in Auckland City. Its initial focus was on the prevention of drink-driving offences through assessing the extent of alcohol-impaired driving in the region. This was done by identifying the source of problems (i.e. identifying the place where a person charged with driving under the influence of alcohol purchased their last drink) and through identifying possible solutions to promote better management of licensed premises (Anstey 1993).

The LDS projects were developed with police throughout Auckland police districts in three stages. This reflected their intent to expand beyond the use of drink-drive data, to all data on alcohol-related offences including domestic and street violence, as well as address regional coverage (Anstey 1993; Gower and Falconer 1994). The first stage covered the initial pilot in Auckland city with consolidation of the LDS in the second stage in 1992. Stage 1 and 2 focused on the prevention of drink-driving offences, but in accordance with its original broad aim, the scope of the project was widened in Stage 3 in 1994 to collect police data on other alcohol-related crime such as assault, drunkenness and violence (Gower and Falconer 1994). This occurred in conjunction with the police “Drink is the Link” initiatives that emerged from a paper produced for the first New Zealand Police Strategic Plan called “*Alcohol as the Aggravator*” (cited in Hunt 1993) that identified alcohol as a key component in crime, family violence, street disorder and road violence.

Other LDS projects were developed throughout the Auckland police districts, in consultation with Liquor Licensing, Police and Health Promotion/Protection services, in the respective areas. These were based on the Auckland city model of LDS data collection. These were; Manukau City, Franklin District / Papakura District in 1994; Waitakere City in 1995; Rodney District in 1996 and North Shore City in 1997. Papakura and Franklin were split into two separate LDS areas in early 1997 reflecting their respective urban and rural contexts. By operating out of the same office at AHW, there is reported to be more efficient use of resources and a pooling of initiatives, ideas and methods. There is a shared regional perspective on LDS data collection, police training, host responsibility training and the involvement of and interaction with other statutory and community agencies (Alcohol Healthwatch 2000:1).

In 1996, the mission of the police/LDS was formally expanded to collect data on all alcohol-related offences throughout the different LDS projects in the Auckland police districts (Thomas 2000: 5). It had earlier been noted that

“it takes comparatively little extra work to capture the non-drive alleged offence data as well as the drink drive data from police sources This collection of non-driving offence data is considered vital to the success of the LDS, as well as pertaining to its original concept, that is identifying licensed premises which breach the Sale of Liquor Act” (Thomas 1998: 6).

2.2.2 The Last Drink Survey in the Waikato region

The LDS was an integral component of the 1996-98 Waikato Rural Drink Drive Project, (WRDDP) a collaborative community action project that aimed to reduce alcohol-related road death and injuries in a region that had the highest regional fatal road toll in New Zealand at that time (Stewart and Conway 2000). The project involved intersectoral meetings of police, district licensing inspectors, health promotion workers, health protection advisors, representatives of Maori alcohol services, public health nurses and staff from ALAC (who funded the project) and APHRU (as evaluators). They worked together collectively from their different perspectives, on a local and regional basis to find local solutions to local issues facing their communities. Their primary objectives were to raise the level of awareness of their communities' increased drink- drive death and injury risk, to challenge attitudes and behaviours that encouraged drink-drive and to promote, implement and support initiatives to reduce drink-drive in rural communities.

One of the major strategies of the WRDDP was to improve the use of the LDS in the Waikato police districts. Historically there had been problems with the completion of LDS forms, incomplete data and untimely delays with analysis and dissemination of LDS information that then made remedial action difficult with identified premises, given the time lag. There was considerable refinement and adaptation of the LDS as part of this project led by Ross Henderson who had been the instigator of the original LDS. This included the amalgamation of district LDSs, a yellow logbook system implemented in the 21 police stations in the area to make it easier for police officers to find information/forms etc and the appointment of an information officer based at the police district headquarters who collected, collated and analysed all the LDS data previously done by local police. This was then fed back on a monthly basis to the local LLGs to take action. It also became closely linked into the Compulsory Breath Testing (CBT) operations, another key facet of the WRDDP. The information officer regularly sent out media releases that were picked up by local media (drafted in association with local police) detailing the results of CBT operations together with interesting anecdotal stories to raise awareness and maintain deterrent visibility for the general public and licensees.

Significant benefits were achieved through the concerted efforts to improve the standardisation of LDS data collection/data gathering instruments and dissemination of LDS data findings in the Waikato police districts. Data capture more than doubled from 40% to 98%. Early identification of problem premises meant interventions were better targeted. LDS information was used to plan CBT operations, as well as being used as admissible evidence in licensing hearings, as one indicator of problems with errant licensed premises. The success of the improved system resulted in its extension to include the Bay of Plenty and a total of seventeen territorial local authority areas (NZ Police 1999).

The evaluators also recorded that the credibility of the LDS was significantly increased by the changes made and some licensees even used the LDS information as a self-audit tool. The LDS information officer position was considered very valuable and funding was obtained to continue it beyond the end of the pilot project (Stewart and Conway 1998).

The WRDDP was featured at the 1998 ALAC *“Working Together”* national conference in Nelson 1998. A workshop was also held, outlining the details of the Waikato LDS model

(Appendix 4). One of the obvious differences between the Waikato and Auckland models was the decision in the Waikato police districts to focus solely on the collection and dissemination of LDS data related to alcohol and driving offences. It was thought there were problems in getting sufficient data on non-traffic related offences in rural areas to use the LDS for this purpose. Because of the existing way in which such offences were recorded and processed by rural officers it seemed to be more sustainable to use it for traffic offences only.

The fundamental principles and purpose of the LDS, along with the auditing of licensed premises were discussed from different regional perspectives, with a view to developing national protocols and procedures.

2.2.3 Police Peer Review of CBT/Drink Drive operations

In late 1997, Chief Inspector Moloney and Inspector Hayes from the Victoria police were contracted to undertake an appraisal of the Waikato and Auckland police district regional CBT/Drink Drive operations (Hayes and Moloney 1997). The report was very favourable with the review team highlighting the excellent cooperation between all groups involved in the overall drink-driving offensives. There was particular comment on how there was more focus on the role of drinking environments in New Zealand compared to Australia, along with more compliance from licensees. They were impressed by the emphasis on intervention with drinking environments, including the Last Drink Survey and the host responsibility work and associated training work being undertaken. They also acknowledged the usefulness of the LDS in relation to other crimes such as street offending and domestic violence. Amongst its recommendations, the police peer review strongly supported the continuance of the LDS.

2.2.4 LDS – National coordination

Despite solid development work at the district and regional levels, attempts to develop national coordination and standardisation of data collection and approaches to the use of the LDS have never come to fruition. Although draft national guidelines were circulated in 1994, a definitive document was never produced and distributed. Nor did national protocols and procedures, as suggested at the 1998 ALAC “*Working Together*” conference ever eventuate. An ALAC commissioned report on alcohol-related data collected in New Zealand gives brief comment on the history, design, strengths and limitations of the LDS data and thoughts for future direction (Brinsdon 1998). Identified strengths highlighted the use of the LDS data as a helpful tool in the reduction of drink driving and the profiling of highly intoxicated drivers involved in crashes. The main limitation of the LDS data cited by Brinsdon is the inconsistencies in data collection, which may limit their cross-police district comparison potential. The author’s summary recommendations suggested that,

While the surveys cannot provide trend data for the country as a whole, they provide useful information about the kind of drinking that leads to motor vehicle crashes. They also provide important information for preventing alcohol problems associated with high-risk premises...Continuation of the last drink survey should be supported, while nation wide standardisation of the survey, where practical, should be encouraged (Brinsdon, 1998: 30).

In 2000, approaches from Invercargill and Ashburton Police to AHW for assistance with their LDS projects rekindled the notion of a national LDS system. Eldene Bradley, an LDS coordinator at AHW, began working on an AHW initiated LDS national development project. The aims are to develop a nation-wide consistent standard of collecting LDS data, as well as simplifying the collection methods for police. The intent is also the promotion of a national LDS model to areas that do not have an LDS in place, and to existing LDS operations that

would like to update and better integrate their current model of practice. This could ultimately result in a managed national database that statutory agencies could have access to.

AHW is currently seeking funding to further the development of a national LDS system. This initiative has widespread support from the key agencies involved with licensing, police, licensing authorities and the health sector.

The proposed LDS national agenda/plan would include,

- Establishment and facilitation of a national working group to provide a forum for consultation, discussion and sharing of ideas and experiences
- Development and dissemination of national guidelines and a handbook
- Establishment of a national LDS database
- Promotion of and training in AHW LDS model
- Exploration of new data opportunities e.g. family violence
- Planning and implementation of an LDS community action pilot project in the Auckland region
- An evaluation of all associated activities
- Targeted research: at national and district levels

AHW organised a national LDS workshop at the ALAC 2001 Working Together Conference to inform and interest people in proposed national directions for collection and data analysis. AHW also addressed practical issues through presenting their model for areas that did not yet have an LDS or wanted to further develop their existing LDS practice (**Appendix 5**).

To date, the LDS is known to operate in various forms in at least 20 areas throughout the country. These include: Ashburton, Dargaville, Auckland (comprising seven projects: Rodney, North Shore, Waitakere, Auckland, Manukau, Papakura, and Franklin) Waikato (including Rotorua and Bay of Plenty) Taranaki, Hawera, Wellington, Nelson, Christchurch, Dunedin, Southland and Invercargill. Other areas may also have active LDS projects but further information, though requested from police at national police headquarters, was unavailable at the time of this report.

2.3 Description of the Alcohol Healthwatch LDS Projects in Auckland

2.3.1 Operations of AHW LDS projects in the Auckland police districts

The Auckland LDS operations have been well documented through LDS annual reports produced over the past nine years by AHW for related agencies in the seven LDS project areas: Manukau City; Franklin District; Papakura District; North Shore City; Rodney District; Waitakere City and Auckland City. These reports contain extensive information highlighting each project's aims and objectives, methodologies employed, an introduction to the agencies involved in the LDS, as well as a yearly compilation of alcohol-related offences in their area.

The Last Drink Survey Job Information manuals (Alcohol Healthwatch 2000) explain the role and responsibilities of the LDS Co-ordinator. They also detail how the LDS database works, what templates are employed, and the coding system that is employed for data input. Specific information is given regarding data collection processes, data input, monthly report format and regularity of LLG meetings. Examination of the manuals also indicated (in combination with the key informant interviews) the similarities and some differences in the methodologies employed in each of the seven areas.

The LDS team, employed by AHW, currently consists of three LDS Coordinators, a LDS National Development Coordinator, and an administrative support person. All AHW LDS Coordinators participate in a Hospitality Association Bar Managers certificate course (NZQA approved) as part of their training in order to gain knowledge of the SOL Act.

The three coordinators are responsible for seven separate LDS projects covering areas based on the Auckland Regional Territorial Local Authorities (TLAs).

Geographical/Police boundaries for the seven projects are as follows:

Auckland City: TLA boundaries, excluding the part of Mt Wellington that lies south of the southern motorway, and excluding the entire Otahuhu area.

Manukau City: TLA boundaries, including the part of Mt Wellington, that lies south of the southern motorway, and including the entire Otahuhu area.

Papakura District: TLA boundaries

Franklin District: TLA boundaries

Waitakere City: TLA boundaries

North Shore City: TLA boundaries

Rodney District: TLA boundaries

2.3.2 The Methodology of the LDS Projects

The main functions of the LDS projects in the Auckland region are:

Police data collection

AHW data collation

Monthly report distribution/dissemination

Liquor Liaison Groups

Police Data Collection

Police use an LDS form to collect data from drink drive offenders at the time of apprehension. Other LDS information is contained within the Loose Leaf Charge Sheet (Pol 173) and the Infringement Offence Notices (ION) and in Counties Manukau only, alcohol-related information is collected on a modified Police 101 form. The responsibility for collecting data for the LDS project usually sits with sergeants/senior sergeants in charge of staff at the police station/watchhouse.

AHW Data Collation

The LDS Coordinators collect data from specific points at police stations once or twice each month. Data collection time creates opportunities to liaise with police staff. The informal sharing and passing on of information as well as networking and educative opportunities at these times is deemed invaluable by both the AHW staff and the police staff.

Data entry entails either the direct copying of LDS forms or scanning through all of the Charge Sheet folders and entering the alcohol-related details. When available, details are also taken from the photocopied police noting sheets, and the infringement notices of underage drinkers (the latter do not have a corresponding charge sheet as they are of the instant fine type). LDS forms are mailed to AHW directly from some stations. After the data is collected, it is entered onto an excel spreadsheet and collated using the following categories:

Data related to licensed premises: on, off, club and special

Data related to non licensed places; private, public, work, motor vehicles and unknown places

Data related to individual premises

Data with no identifying information

Data specific to geographical areas

Each month the data is analysed to show emerging trends. The analysis shows:

Total number of offenders
Number of offenders by time of day and day of week
Numbers by ethnicity
Numbers by gender
Minimum, maximum, and average Breath Test Reading (BTR)
Minimum, maximum and average age

New analysis detailing three separate age categories of over 20, 18-20 and under 18 will also be provided for the next annual reports. This is intended to track any trends following changes to the SOL Act in December 1999 that included lowering the drinking age from 20 to 18. Total drink-drive offence figures are also produced annually.

Monthly Report distribution/dissemination

The LDS data is distributed on a monthly basis to each of the seven project areas. For each area, most if not all of the following organisations/agencies/groups receive regular LDS data reports; New Zealand Police (ie Traffic Alcohol Group [TAG], Strategic Traffic Unit [STU], Team Policing Unit

[TPU], liquor licensing section/staff, Intel), City/District Council (ie District Licensing Inspectors, Road Safety Coordinator(s), Auckland Healthcare (ie MOH and Health Protection Officer(s), and the individual licensees who receive data specific to their premises. The recipients of the data differ in each of the seven areas. For example, some police sections do not operate or exist in every listed area. As might be expected, all receivers/users of the LDS data have different requirements or even restrictions on what data they might receive and how often it might be received.

Organisations may be sent LDS information on a periodic basis, or may, in addition, request specific fields of the LDS data. Some examples of these include:

- Police – age/ethnicity/category of offence
- Youth Access to Alcohol group – age/offender's residential suburb/location apprehended/category of offence
- ALAC – age/licensed/non-licensed
- Doctors and public health nurses – offender's residential suburb/location apprehended/category of offence/age
- Safer Communities – area/age
- Pacific People's group – ethnicity

Liquor Liaison Group Coordination

AHW LDS Coordinators organize LLG meetings in each project area on a monthly or six weekly basis. The Coordinators:

set the meeting schedule
ensure key members are available to meet
check that a venue is organised
where necessary, provide the meeting agenda and facilitate the meeting
take the meeting notes and disseminate them to group members

AHW Co-ordinators take responsibility for ensuring the group sets achievable aims and objectives, and that these are met to the group members' satisfaction. It is their role to follow up agreed action with statutory agencies and to carry out the groups' requests where

appropriate. This may involve participating in night visits', reporting licensees' concerns back to the group, or setting up a licensees' seminar etc.

Annual Reports

Separate annual reports are also produced for each of the seven LDS project areas. These are disseminated at district, regional and national levels. It has been proposed by AHW that an annual report for the entire Auckland region (a combination of data from all project areas) will be produced for 2001.

3. LIQUOR LIAISON GROUP (LLG) MEETINGS

LLG meetings exist primarily as a forum between the statutory agencies concerned with liquor licensing matters as well as other related issues. LDS Coordinators play a prominent role in the seven Auckland LLGs, organising and facilitating the meetings in most areas, as well as ensuring follow-up action from any matters that arise. They are regarded as a very effective network for the sharing and discussion of formal and informal information between the relevant sectors. The meetings also provide a vehicle for planning subsequent action, both for individual agencies and in conjunction with other agencies involved.

LLG meetings are held on a monthly or six weekly basis in Auckland, Franklin, Manukau, North Shore, Papakura, Rodney, and Waitakere. Where possible, all agencies with statutory responsibilities in liquor licensing issues attend LLG meetings. Meetings are generally hosted by the police or health agencies, although in Franklin these are held in different licensed premises so the LLG members get to know local licensees. At the Franklin meetings the first half hour is spent talking to the licensee about their concerns and used for problem solving.

Each LLG has a policy on who can attend the meetings with some allowing non-statutory agencies (by discretionary invitation only) to attend some or part of their meetings. In all cases, attendance is restricted by the confidential nature of report material and discussions. Some agencies send more than one representative and where an agency such as A+ covers more than one area, they attend meetings in all seven areas. The statutory agencies that attend on a regular or semi regular basis, depending on commitments/time available/directives of senior controllers are:

- District Licensing Agency (DLA) represented by the District Licensing Inspector/s
- Police represented by one or more of the following; Liquor Licensing/Team Policing/Intel /Strategic Traffic/Traffic Alcohol
- AHW represented by one of three LDS Coordinators
- A+ represented by the Medical Officer of Health/Health Protection Officer/s

Members of the Traffic Alcohol Group (TAG) within the police have been invited to attend every LLG in the Auckland region and attend when they are able. Others who have been invited to attend LLG meetings on a restricted basis in some areas are Road Safety Coordinators, and representatives of ALAC and the Hospitality Association of New Zealand (HANZ).

3.1 The Liquor Liaison Group as a forum for alcohol-related issues and action

At the LLG meetings, agency members discuss relevant alcohol-related issues as well as current monthly LDS data. Each LLG sets their own discretionary criteria as to how licensed premises are identified for further attention eg appearing two or more times a month in the LDS data or where there have been high breath test recordings (over 800 mcg) twice in two months attributed to having their 'last drink' at their premise. Each LLG also decides what strategies they will put in place to address alcohol-related concerns.

Core business regularly includes:

- Discussion of LDS data to highlight alcohol-related problems in their area (problem premises, youth and alcohol, intoxication levels, recidivist drink drivers, any non compliance with the SOL Act in their area)
- Planning of action for problem premises (warning letters from A+, visits from the local police or the Team Policing Unit, night visits by LLG team members, informal contact by AHW)

- The application for, objections to, reviewing of, suspension of, cancellation of, monitoring of liquor licences; (on, off, special, and Temporary Authority licences)
- Monitoring of hearings related to alcohol (breaches of the SOL Act etc)
- Monitoring of licensed premises' compliance with Host Responsibility practices
- Forward planning for future (public) events where alcohol is involved eg Wine and Food festivals, Sports events, School Ball parties (pre, during and post parties etc.)
- Road Safety concerns/planning
- Requesting specific police enforcement eg placement of CBT operations/targeting of problem areas

Other alcohol-related issues that have arisen for discussion within the last twelve months at various LLG meetings are:

- LDS form filling rates by Police
- Police forms and notices as a source of good LDS alcohol information
- Supply of alcohol to minors by older people
- Fake proof-of-age documentation such as ID cards, licences and passports
- Movement of under age crowds from premise to premise when checking of IDs is strictly operated
- Noise complaints
- Security in licensed premises
- Courtesy vans for licensed premises
- The age of managers applying for certificates (18 years)
- Superettes and delicatessens applying for licences
- Very cheap alcohol and intoxication
- Illegal stills
- Alcohol laws/SOL Act card for police notebook
- The changing laws on smoking in bars
- Alcohol-related intimidation at sports events
- Public drinking in main streets and beaches with resultant disorderly behaviour.
- Factory parties
- Youth Access to Alcohol Project (YAAP)
- Students Against Drink Driving (SADD)
- Newspapers printing names of drunk drivers
- District Licensing Inspector's training courses
- The Franklin District Council website
- SOL Act/liquor licensing forums and conferences

Actions taken from LLG meetings

Whenever a premise appears regularly on the LDS monthly spreadsheet/s according to the LLG's criteria and subsequently comes up for discussion, the following range of actions are considered and implemented as appropriate.

- Provision of data relevant to identified premise, and where appropriate, an AHW letter of concern
- A+ letter of concern asking for a response from the licensee outlining the action they will take to address the situation
- Informal day visit and/or interagency night visit
- Increased monitoring
- Formal warning
- Opposition to license renewal

3.2 Participant observation of Liquor Liaison Group meeting

The researcher observed an LLG meeting in June 2001. Representatives from ADHB, AHW, Police and DLA were in attendance. An LDS Coordinator chaired and facilitated the group. The notes from the previous meeting were reviewed and discussed. The LDS monthly report was consulted throughout the meeting. Informal 'on the ground' information was also aired and added in to the group knowledge. Main issues discussed were: a mini mart selling after hours; the suitability of some applicants for upcoming licence renewals, and further action planned on visiting problem premises by police and licensing inspectors. Note was also made of the shrinking staff levels of the district team policing unit and how this would effect policing of alcohol-related issues in the area.

4. INTERAGENCY NIGHT VISITS TO LICENSED PREMISES

4.1 Outline of night visit

Night visits are generally (but not necessarily) triggered by a high number of appearances by a premise on the LDS spreadsheets. Some day visits are also carried out, but as more of a host responsibility and informative exercise rather than a monitoring one. AHW promote and often coordinate interagency night visits. The interagency night visit team may typically include any or all of the following representatives: local police, an AHW LDS Coordinator, a DHB Health Protection Officer, and a District Licensing Inspector. On some occasions Road Safety Coordinators will participate in the night visits.

The timing of night visits varies, depending on the popular nights of patronage, ie Thursday, Friday, and/or Saturday nights. Between six and ten premise visits are attempted per night dependent on resources and time available. Visits may start at 10pm and go through to as late as 3am, depending on the licence restrictions of the individual premise. The hours of visits are selected to monitor the optimum hours where premises might contravene the SOL Act. Some night visits are implemented with no prior knowledge by the licensees, or duty managers of any given premise. They are in effect, a surprise, overt visit to take a snapshot of a premise's alcohol-related practices, and an opportunity for information and suggestions to be shared with the licensees and/or duty managers by the agencies attending. Other visits may be implemented on a covert basis. An LDS Coordinator or a licensing inspector will walk through the premises, then sit for an hour or so to observe the behaviour of bar staff, security staff, and patrons.

4.2 Forms used

The LDS Coordinators use the following documents on their visits (*refer to Appendix 3iii*):

- LDS Premise Visit form
- LDS Appearance list
- Individual licensed premise's LDS data
- LDS abbreviation/code list and LDS Coordinator's contact details
- Serving Practices Questionnaire

4.2.1 The LDS Premise Visit form

This form provides an agenda for the night visit team to check a premise for;

- *Door staff*
- *Duty manager of premise present /name displayed*
- *Intoxicated person/s on premises*
- *Minor/s on premises*
- *Appropriate signage*
- *Availability of appropriate food*

The night visit team will check the premise for compliance with the following areas;

Door Staff

Premises must have a suitable number of door staff/security. Ideally, the duties of the door staff are to check the age/identification of patrons as they enter premises. Security staff

should also move through the bars of a premise, monitoring for over intoxication, minors, fighting or aggressive behaviour in patrons.

Duty Manager of premise present / name displayed

As well as requiring a copy of the premise liquor licence to be displayed in public view, the name of the current manager on duty must also be clearly visible on the premise.

Intoxicated person/s on premises

As it is an offence to sell alcohol to intoxicated persons or have an intoxicated person(s) on or within a licensed premise under the SOL Act, none should be present. If found intoxicated they should be asked to leave by bar/security staff.

Minor/s on premises

As it is an offence to sell alcohol to minors under the SOL Act, none should be found consuming or having consumed alcohol on the premise. However, this is dependent on designation, i.e. in a supervised area, they may be there if accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Otherwise, minors should be asked to leave by bar/security staff.

Appropriate signage

A premise must have in plain view, signage that will fulfil part of the premise's SOL Act host responsibilities' requirements. These signs are to inform patrons of such things as; age restrictions, moderate drinking practices, drinking and driving, low alcohol beverages available, menu for food available, transport (taxi contact numbers etc). Inappropriate signage for cheap alcohol promotion such as shooters, two for the price of one, and extended happy hours (all of which can encourage rapid intoxication) is also monitored.

Availability of appropriate food

To comply with host responsibility requirements, suitable substantial food must be accessible on demand for bar patrons. This can include on site kitchens, or the ability to deliver fast food by an outside contractor. The minimum standard might include food such as pies, pizzas, hamburgers and hot chips and roast dinners. The definition of suitable food does not include snacks such as potato chips, peanuts etc.

4.2.2 LDS Appearance list

The licensed premises that rate the highest (usually the top five) appearances quarterly will receive a letter showing their standing on the LDS Appearance list, relating to their local area. Information about other licensed premises on the list is provided in a coded form.

4.2.3 The Individual Licensed Premise's LDS data

This is provided to all licensees who appear on the LDS Appearance list in the form of a spreadsheet for the quarterly period, accompanied by a page of graphs for analysis purposes. The LDS Coordinator is able to help the licensee to pinpoint the problem times/days and to provide an offender profile for the licensed premise using this data.

4.2.4 LDS Abbreviation/Code list and LDS Coordinator's contact details

The licensee receives a list of abbreviations and codes used in the data entry process for their use in reading the data. The licensee/duty manager will also be given the LLG group members' business cards and they will be advised to feel free to ring at any time if they have any further questions or concerns.

4.2.5 The Serving Practices Questionnaire

One of the night visit team (usually the AHW person) will interview the licensee/duty manager. If the premise is not up to host responsibility standards, the manager will be supplied with suitable educational material such as the host responsibility packs and pamphlets. They may also be advised to request staff members' to complete a serving practices questionnaire. This form is to help ascertain and evaluate the existing host responsibility practices of the premises.

4.3 Outcome of visits

During night visits, premises that are not complying with their SOL Act obligations are advised of issues that they need to address. Follow-up visits are planned to monitor practices. Copies of the premise visit report are provided to all members of the premise visit team, other police with a SOL Act monitoring role, and to the licensee of the premise concerned.

The desired outcome from night visits is that when licensees receive support to improve their management practices, enforcement can be limited to routine monitoring, thus reducing the demand on local resources and the incidence of alcohol-related harm in the community.

4.4 Participant observation of night visit of licensed premises

The researcher accompanied the LDS Coordinator to visit two premises in the Manukau area in August 2001. These visits were carried out after 9.00pm on a Saturday night for optimum impact, and their purpose was to observe the procedures used to examine the premises' compliance with the SOL Act and host responsibility requirements. Each visit lasted approximately one hour, with additional time provided after each visit for discussion between the LDS Coordinator and the researcher.

Observations:

Premise (a) provided a cheese board and could supply more substantial food from an adjoining restaurant. The duty manager's name was not displayed. The premise was not supplying adequate security/door staff for the number of bars they had. The security staff were in attendance at the door of a private function in one bar. Bar staff were left responsible for doing ID checks in the other bars. The premise was also offering an all night happy hour. All drinks were \$3.50 all night. This breached promotion protocols that have been drawn up by key stakeholder organisations including the police, the hospitality industry, and ALAC.

Premise (b) appeared to have better compliance with SOL Act and host responsibility requirements. They had adequate food supplied on the premise. The signage was adequate and door security was excellent. The researcher saw everybody being ID'd as they approached the entrance of the premise. Some were turned away to get suitable identification. These people later returned with the ID and were admitted. This premise had been presented with fake ID's in the recent past in the form of South African and Russian passports. They did, however, still have shooters for sale (high potency mixed drinks containing several measures of spirits). A couple of patrons in the bar displayed questionable levels of intoxication.

5. FINDINGS FROM KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The interview schedule covered different aspects of the LDS operation such as perceptions of how well it was working, data collection, distribution and use, interaction between agencies, suggested improvements and future directions. Responses were often inter-related. The main themes that arose from the key informant interviews were

- General Impressions of the LDS
- Use of LDS data
- Perceptions of data validity and its limitations
- Stakeholder interactions with the LDS
- Possible directions for the LDS

5.1 General impressions of the LDS

Respondents were asked for their general impressions on all aspects of the LDS. Overall the respondents were largely very satisfied with the LDS, albeit with some qualifications. Any criticisms were usually couched constructively, often offering potential solutions.

It's invaluable. Its certainly good information but there is a lot of room for tidying up the small things such as how you capture the data and credibility issues.

Many respondents suggested that the LDS operations have improved over the last few years.

[some]senior officers can now see the trends and purpose of the LDS

I feel very positive about it. There is progress being made. It's not rapid but it is being made. I feel that improvement is just around the corner

5.2 Use of LDS data

5.2.1 Identification/targeting of problem premises

The majority of respondents stated that the principal use of the LDS data was for targeting purposes, to help identify, monitor and target licensed premises/licensees that are contravening the SOL Act or exhibiting poor host responsibility practices. Some examples given for a premise's appearance on the LDS were; sale of alcohol to intoxicated persons on premises, sale of alcohol to underage persons on premises and persons arrested for EBA while driving after having visited a licensed premise. Premises with high numbers of appearances on the LDS monthly reports were contacted initially by mail to indicate their status and encouraged to respond to this by asking for assistance to address host responsibility issues. Problem premises were regarded as self-selecting in that if their name appeared on the LDS on a regular basis, action would be taken by LLG agencies. Additional action might also result in visits by liquor licensing police to identified premises to look at management practices such as signage, the condition of patrons, food provided etc. The number of times a premise might appear on the LDS before action ensued varied from area to area. One police respondent stated,

It works. It does point out where our problem areas are...We can keep tabs on problem hotels and visit them as needed: some more than others

An LDS Coordinator reiterated,

Very specific tool in my opinion for focussing on licensed premises... finding out which specific premises are causing problems.[Its] an enforcement tool

5.2.2 Planning Compulsory Breath Testing (CBT) operations

LDS data is often used for the placement of CBT booze bus operations. The Traffic Alcohol Group uses data from the LDS to indicate routes where potential drink drivers might travel. The information can also be used to direct police patrolling. However, many respondents indicated that the LDS data was never used as a sole source of information for decision making for either targeting premises or setting up CBT operations, but was used alongside other tools such as informal conversations and observations with police and other related agencies. At least one area uses the LDS data for booze bus location, combined with targeted patrolling and other road safety checks. A Road Safety Coordinator commented

[It's] good for multiple use stops: good for police revenue. [We're] not wasting time we do drinking, licenses and seat belts

5.2.3 Licensing and legal action

A further use for the LDS data is in the monitoring of license renewals and in objections to the issuing of licenses by the District Licensing Authority (DLA) or Liquor Licensing Authority (LLA). Although the LDS data has no direct legal validity, it can be used in a supporting role at liquor licensing hearings for the suspension or cancellation of licenses. A health protection representative stated,

I use it to support legal action to oppose liquor licensing applications or renewals

One police respondent clearly regarded it as ammunition,

It cannot be used as the sole reason for objection to a licence...[However] it is useful for liquor licensing hearings as it adds bullets in the chambers, metaphorically speaking

5.2.4 Other uses of LDS data

The LDS also collects data other than just drunk driving or offences on licensed premises. All alcohol-related warnings or convictions carried out by police within the three Auckland region police districts should generate paper work/statistics, which are then collated by AHW staff. There has been some use of this data to map social trends. An investigation of drinking in public places by the Safer Manukau and Otara Mainstreet initiatives used LDS data to help identify the extent of the problem. LDS data profiling offenders was also used in the Franklin district to inform General Practitioner training in alcohol interventions. As one police respondent indicated,

It can give information on social problems with alcohol: more than just the drinking aspect. We get domestic disputes, road crashes and violence stats

An LDS Coordinator elaborated,

We can look at recidivism, at links between alcohol and violence at private residences. Offenders and Victims information could be compared. We can look at gendered violence

Further users of the LDS data identified by respondents were the ACC Pacific Island liaison person who was provided with data on offences involving Pacific people, the Safer Waitakere Alcohol Project who collaborated on an alcohol and violence report based on local LDS data, the regional Community Alcohol and Drugs services (CADS) who receive data on any drug related offences, and Waitakere Sport who are informed of any sports clubs that appear on the LDS.

There was a suggestion by one of the LDS Coordinators that in their project area some of the LDS data is still under-utilised in terms of addressing drinking environments other than licensed premises.

Half our data relates to non-licensed premises, home and public...we haven't found a use for that yet.

5.3 Perceptions of data validity and its limitations

The majority of the respondents who work closely with the LDS were not greatly concerned with issues of validity, targeting and representativeness of data. The prevailing view was that police effectiveness had increased in apprehending intoxicated drivers, minors and licensees of non-compliant premises, because of prudent placement of TAG teams and licensing visits, based on LDS data used in conjunction with other information. They believed that it was rare for premises to be targeted without good justification.

5.3.1 Accuracy of data

Most of the respondents interviewed did not have expectations of the LDS data as a scientific statistical survey and were realistic about its limitations, treating it as a general tool indicating trends in certain locations over time. However it was apparent that some respondents did have concerns regarding the accuracy and representativeness of LDS data, citing factors such as inadequate police data collection (missing, incomplete or incorrectly filled forms) due to time and priority constraints for staff. They also questioned the source of data i.e. data may be skewed because of targeting certain areas or premises or by getting information from drunk persons who may give erroneous or incomplete details about where they had their last drink. The testimony given about last drink was seen by some as difficult to prove and could only be validated by police visiting premises and catching people in situ. One police respondent added

Licensees suggest there is misinformation in the LDS...because you are asking someone who has been drinking...you can't check or verify it...[conversely] there is some talk that licensees instruct their regulars to lie about their last place of drinking...that they have been drinking elsewhere

A few police believed that LDS data is flawed because statements made by persons who are intoxicated cannot be relied upon. They suggested that there may be a tendency for some people to lie about where they have had their last drink eg wanting to protect their local watering hole from prosecution or because of innate belligerence with authority figures. To counter this possibility, local police knowledge was stated as being helpful in checking the intoxicated person's statements at the time the statement is taken. Knowledge of licensed premises in a particular district has been used to catch out lies. Anecdotal examples were given of people stating they have been drinking at premises that had been closed down for some time. There were also comments that police are very skilled at knowing when people are telling the truth or not.

We just know...[they are lying]...we are police...we can catch them out

5.3.2 Effects of targeting on LDS data

A small number of respondents suggested that the number of times a premise appears is also relative to how proactive police might be in a particular area. This in turn is also relative to the amount of funding available to finance police actions such as CBT operations.

The LDS is reliant on police budgets, for example, if the police are not out breath testing; they get no results. This skews data: if numbers are going down it may be that less people have been breath tested...not less people drinking

This, they say is reinforced by a feed back effect of TAG operations going back to areas where premises of high appearance are identified on the LDS.

This [action] happens through all cities in Auckland. We need a greater cross section of geographical areas covered; not just the main arterial routes

Attention was drawn to the possibility of skewing the LDS monthly report through police practice in targeting premises.

Initially info was biased because of placement of Team Policing. If the police wanted to close a place they would visit heaps and heaps

However respondents also indicated that it would be inefficient to put CBT or Team Policing operations where there is no traffic, no pubs, very few drinkers or known problems.

5.3.3 The LDS in context

The negative comments made appear to be linked to a misunderstanding of the LDS being a stand-alone tool without full consideration of the context in which it is used and interpreted. AHW Coordinators were clear that the LDS data was not meant to be hard, evidential data but regarded as a monitoring rather than a scientifically precise tool.

We (AHW) acknowledge that it is not a scientific survey of any sort... it reflects police planning and priorities. No one entry stands up by itself: it can show trends

They pointed out that the LDS provided the ability to look at reports historically to see bigger picture patterns relating to alcohol problems. They contended therefore that interpretation of the data is not actually as susceptible to being as skewed as some respondents perceived. A premise's appearance on the LDS is tracked over time and so trends begin to emerge that are based on data aggregated longitudinally, not just on random operations.

It was apparent that despite some misgivings by some police, LDS data was regarded overall as a useful source of information, in combination with other sources of intelligence gathering. Its limitations were acknowledged but also accounted for, because it was not used as their sole indicator for policing activity.

5.4 Stakeholder interactions with the LDS

5.4.1 Police interaction with the LDS projects

Police awareness

Respondents suggested the level of awareness of the LDS within the general police staff is mixed ranging from excellent to minimal. These levels of awareness were viewed as dependent on at least four interrelated variables, the section or department in which staff work, position/rank held in the police hierarchy, levels of staff turnover and regularity of training/education in LDS.

Other than more senior police such as Superintendents, Inspectors and Senior Sergeants, the police regarded as having the highest awareness were involved in the Traffic Alcohol Group (TAG) or with liquor licensing as a portfolio. The police who work with alcohol-related issues and the LDS projects on a regular basis are the TAG staff who conduct the CBT operations and liquor licensing officers who liaise with LDS Coordinators/Health Protection Officers and District Licensing Inspectors on a regular basis.

Two of the three Auckland region police districts have dedicated liquor licensing positions/sections set up. There was evident concern by respondents involved with the third area at the absence of a district liquor licensing squad. This was thought to hinder the operations of the LDS and LLG. One respondent pointed out,

All of the other [outside] agencies have to interact with each of the seven local areas individually, which means a lot of work. This makes it fragmented...the police have no liquor licensing squad there and there is no one overseeing liquor licensing in general. Without a liquor squad the only police going into the premise are Team Policing. With day-to-day work taking priority [it] meant we had long periods of time when premises were not visited at all ...we need to have a dedicated liquor licensing squad with the police, or Team Police work needs to be more focussed

Awareness is clearly related to having liquor licensing as a part of their job portfolio or working in an area where they have had education/training in the workings of the LDS, process, receive and or use the LDS data on a regular basis and are more likely to have interaction with LDS Coordinators. General staff may be aware of filling in alcohol-related charge sheet details or of the existence of the LDS form but know little of its purpose or its end use.

The average cop on the street would know what the form is but no knowledge of the use of the LDS data or what happens to the form

The high turnover of police staff (through rotation/promotion/exiting the job) is reported to have an effect on the basic level of understanding or working knowledge. There is also a loss of local history when a police officer such as a liquor licensing officer moves to another district or section. The local station may lose all of their inside knowledge of which areas, times, premises, events, people etc. are potentially problematic. Access to police training days is hard because of prioritisation of police time and then often compounded by police turnover. Both the police and LDS Coordinators have noted that the level of awareness and form filling/data gathering improves considerably after LDS training sessions. Due to the high turnover of staff, constant re-education is necessary as expressed by two of the LDS Coordinators.

I have to constantly re-educate and re-push the LDS...If this was not done the LDS would fade away

There is a very high turnover for police...we do training [when they have access]. It's basic and short but beneficial

Police Buy in

The role of the police is viewed as crucial to the effective operation of the LDS. However the requirement for greater commitment to the LDS by the police was a general concern. Although it varied from district to district and section to section, depending on how well the LDS had been taken-up in each of these, the underlying theme was that collectively more "buy in" from each level of the police was needed. This was seen to span; better education of staff, data collection (complete and accurate form filling, form processing and use of reports), and a strong sense of ownership from the District Commanders right down to community level police. Comments from police illustrate this theme

I don't think the police as a whole are on board with the collection of the [LDS] data...[It's] seen as non-essential...[the] last thing on their minds is a last drink survey [form] in drunk and violent areas

It would give me a great deal of confidence if it [the LDS] was taken seriously by each and every police officer. That would raise the level of over all confidence [in the LDS]

(Of accurate and complete data collection etc) There should be a legal mandate to get police to do it...It should be put into the legislation

An LDS Coordinator reiterated their comments

More police buy in ...compulsory police buy in ...In an ideal situation, I would want the police to totally support the last drink survey and everything from form filling to getting the forms to the right place, to the use of this information, to visiting the licensees with us to using it at hearings if needed

There was general consensus from respondents that a top down commitment to the LDS is required with a directive of cooperation from high level police personnel accompanied by assigned responsibilities.

[We] need direct pressure from the area controller right through...we need pressure from the top and from the second in charge

There should be a police commander/controller, an inspector responsible overall. Someone should supervise the supervisors and senior sergeants...they should coordinate action

Police data collection

It was evident that there were different levels of data collection within different parts of the police and from station to station and police were well aware of this. Traffic staff didn't seem to have trouble with the form filling...

Traffic have been traditionally good at putting in the forms...other areas not so much

For us it is not a problem...they find the information good for the senior sergeants to get

However many other respondents highlighted problems in LDS data collection by police. This usually takes the form of missing, incorrectly filled or incomplete LDS data on LDS

forms or loose-leaf charge sheets. A LDS Coordinator and senior police respondent respectively commented,

Police don't fill in the form well...Forty percent of the forms are filled in wrongly or are incomplete

Police quite often don't put where they [people apprehended] had their last drink...rubbish data [this means] "more pages of unknowns than of licensed premises last month. Cops need to fill in forms correctly

A number of factors, some of which have been alluded to earlier, are seen to impact on the consistent and accurate gathering of LDS data by the police. These are; police workload and attitudes to paperwork, staff rotation, perception of validity of LDS data, buy in by staff, level of awareness of the LDS and LDS training.

Police respondents reported that there is a particular 'police culture' resistance to form filling, due to the endless mountain of competing paperwork with many complaints of the repetition involved in police forms and a reluctance to fill in any additional forms.

[There is] too much paper work, people go "oh, it's only the LDS form" It's a very low priority to fill in the LDS form...It's not filled out well for all occasions

Several police respondents suggested that it was important to increase police motivation to complete them and that a modification of some forms might also help to make the forms easier to complete.

Simplification of the form will help form filling...a tick the boxes sort of thing

Make the LDS part of an existing form...Perhaps the 101or part of the traffic offence notice

Accountability for data collection

Another frequently expressed view was for the need for more monitoring and accountability by senior sergeants and supervisors to improve data collection. It was mooted that accountability for the LDS form completion could be modelled on the current police charge sheet procedure whereby the Senior sergeant or officer in charge will not sign off a charge sheet until all details are completed. A police respondent suggested,

[There is] no way to change form filling success until supervisor says "where is the LDS info" Someone needs to be accountable...The supervisor needs to sign off the file...the LDS needs to be signed off

Regular Training/Informal training

Regular training of Police by LDS coordinators was viewed as necessary to raise the level of awareness and therefore buy in to the LDS. Several police respondents suggested that the level of awareness of the LDS amongst junior staff was directly related to the quantity and quality of data collection.

Cops do not understand what the LDS is about. The 'where was the last drink bought' question is not understood fully, it could be the corner dairy...you could see it start to feature. Training is a major issue for police

It was pointed out that training did not always have to take place in formal settings. There were positive reports of the informal opportunities AHW Coordinators use to provide education and encouragement for police staff.

When informal contact with LDS Coordinators happens, form filling increases and police become very keen. They can see the purpose of the project

5.4.2 AHW interaction with the LDS project

Standardisation of data analysis and reporting was thought to be a major consideration for the LDS Coordinators. A staff member stated,

All reports should be the same: people from all areas need to be the same [working on standard formats]. For example, intoxication levels all need to be the same; slights, mediums and extremes...spreadsheets need to be standardised

It appears that significant improvements are currently being made across a number of reporting areas. A standard format has recently been developed for all police districts' monthly data reports. The AHW LDS National Development Coordinator is currently working on the standardisation of the LDS spreadsheet to enable better inter-district examination of LDS data. Further development is under way that includes modification of existing templates in readiness for the national LDS initiative, currently being pursued by AHW.

There was a strong emphasis on the value of the team approach, especially for LDS staff to have a high level of motivation in ensuring the success of the LDS work. One LDS coordinator declared,

All staff members need to be moving in the same direction...need the same passion to motivate people we are working with...[to use the LDS reports]

It was suggested that the LDS/AHW could also encourage more understanding of the LDS by community agencies

The general population of community workers don't have that good an idea of what LDS is about

Further comment proposed that police could benefit from a strengthening of existing relationships with the other main agencies involved in liquor licensing i.e. council liquor licensing, and health sector health protection/health promotion staff. A stronger relationship was particularly suggested with the local frontline and community police to increase awareness and education regarding the LDS.

5.4.3 The relationship of the LDS to other statutory agencies

The level of awareness/working knowledge and use of the LDS amongst statutory agencies (other than the police) appears to be generally very high. LDS data is used routinely as part of their jobs in relation to monitoring of liquor licences and interventions with premises. The organisations that have contact with the LDS projects on a regular basis are District Licensing Inspectors from the local DLAs, Health Protection/Promotion Workers and Road Safety Coordinators from local councils. This is largely through the auspices of the regular LLG meetings.

Many respondents stressed the importance of the LLGs in the smooth running of the LDS and its working operations. One District Licensing Inspector commented,

[There is] a good working relationship with the other agencies as a result of those meetings

The LDS monthly reports are often a cornerstone for discussion at the LLG meetings. A police respondent stated,

The best uses [of the LDS] probably arise from the monthly meetings at the liquor group. We discuss the report and the direction we are going with any problem premises...the monthly report is circulated before the meetings

The LLG meetings are also where much of the additional informal information from front line police, Team Policing etc is passed on by police representatives who attend the LLG meetings. This informal information can give early warning of premises that haven't yet shown up on official data but may still be breaking the law eg supplying alcohol to minors.

Examples of police feed back illustrated this,

In some areas there are weekly-directed patrolling reports. These contain information about people targeted and present potential hot spots

[We] also get informal information from police on the beat re behaviour outside pubs...[people] pissed and throwing bottles. It's reported back to the Liquor Licensing Officer

The LLG structure for information sharing and subsequent action appeared to work very well in most districts, with representatives from all of the sectors with statutory responsibilities participating. However, in circumstances where police policy in one district limited police participation for a period of time, this was regarded as putting the LLG at risk. In the past there had always been a staff representative from each of the different stations at the district LLG meetings but this was reduced to a sole police representative. Respondents involved in that particular LLG reported that this slowed the LLG process down and hampered the communication, both formal and informal, of information between both stations and other sectors. The following views were echoed by many of the LLG participants in that district.

It was good when we used to have all the stations there; mainly because you could talk to the person you were dealing with directly. Everybody went away knowing what they were dealing with, what they were doing. You could look at the data to see trends, problems and lapses. [Now] there is a sense of frustration. We have gone backwards since the replacement with just one person

The [previous] group was ideal. Now the superintendent wants only one representative there. The dissemination of data is too big for that representative or any one person

A further problem for that LLG occurred when roster problems for the police representative meant that there was no police presence at LLG meetings for two months. One respondent considered that the low police priority given to LLG participation was seen to have put the LLG at risk.

It's [the LLG and LDS] not taken seriously by some hierarchy in the police bosses in this area and district. The superintendent in this area is not serious about the LDS...[I] relate this to the break-up of the [named LLG] - need to have all senior sergeants at the meetings

In this instance the LDS Coordinator continued to send the LDS data to each station in this district on a monthly basis. The LDS Coordinator also visited each senior sergeant in their respective stations to ensure the continuance of the police relationship with the LDS at a local

level. The limitations of LDS resources meant that this practice could not continue, and the relationships have subsequently weakened.

A number of other agencies and organisations outside of the LLG have a basic understanding of the LDS and its workings and have contact through both the statutory agencies and/or the AHW coordinators of the LDS. These include the Alcohol Advisory Council (ALAC), Alcohol and Public Health Research Unit (APHRU), the Hospitality Association of New Zealand (HANZ), local business communities, licensees, sports clubs and, it has even been suggested, criminal offenders' networks.

5.4.5 Licensees/managers/bar staff interaction with the LDS

Although no personnel from licensed premises were interviewed, some feedback was available about their exposure and attitudes to the LDS from respondents who had close contact with them. Usually, the first (and, in some cases, only) exposure/education of licensees and bar managers to the LDS is when they undertake training to sit their licensees/managers' exams. Outside of this, the next exposure to the LDS is if they appear regularly on the LDS form and are contacted by one of the statutory agencies.

One licensing inspector suggested that a proactive, educative approach be adopted with the licensees to alert them to the LDS

[I] would like to see a newsletter to licensees to make them more aware. Some places don't know the LDS exists...Tell licensees that data is available, to be more consistent. The licensees need to be shown the LDS structure, the police's role etc... But I realise that time and money is a problem

The AHW Coordinators have previously attempted to raise awareness of the LDS by contacting non-offending licensees in their area with varying levels of success.

For a while I tried sending it (summary reporting information about the LDS) to a wider range of my premises, ones who weren't offending at all. That back-lashed a bit because... the initial reaction was "Well what are you doing here if I haven't got a problem" So I backed off because it caused antagonism

In other quarters the LDS is often viewed as a self-policing tool and 'wake up call' by responsible licensees

Quite a lot of licensees: receive it as a good self-policing tool. LDS does have a fear factor about it [some licensees think} "If you feature too many times you are gone", this does not hurt

[There is] nothing you can do about the ratbags. They will always be ratbags...conscientious people will respond well to LDS notices. When I was a publican (for fifteen years) I received LDS notices and was alarmed

It was noted that mandatory training for certification under the SOL Act for licensees and managers is due to come into effect in 2002 and is expected to increase compliance with SOL Act requirements and awareness of the LDS.

5.5. LDS data collection, collation, analysis, distribution and use

Respondents made numerous positive and constructive comments regarding particular aspects such as the monthly spreadsheets/reports, simplification of forms, and the dissemination of data.

5.5.1 Monthly reports and use of the LDS data

The monthly report/printouts were regarded as being very helpful for:

- Indicating trends in problem premises
- Targeting of problem areas and premises
- Intelligence used for the setting up CBT operations or patrols for drunk driving
- Considering renewals of liquor licences or information for liquor licensing hearings
- Continued monitoring of premises that have been brought to the attention of various agencies

The format of the reports was seen by a high majority of the interviewees as excellent. Two police respondents commented

The reports are of a high level in its various forms at monthly meetings. They are ready for use

The format of the excel spreadsheet is good...lots of info

Only one person thought the reports to be of limited value. They considered they were already aware of the information and just skimmed the report for confirmation. A few other respondents thought there was too much or too little information. One person suggested that they only needed information that was relevant to their patch, not the entire district. One police comment was,

Perhaps simplify the data that comes out on a monthly basis...the feedback needs to be more area specific

There were also suggestions regarding the format and style of the reports such as a more user-friendly police code key printed somewhere on the report and an increase in number and size of graphs.

5.5.2 Simplification of forms

To address the issues of difficulties with accuracy and completion of the LDS forms by police it was suggested by several respondents that the LDS form could be simplified. This might make the job easier for police filling in (one of many) forms in less than ideal conditions. One police respondent stated,

[There should be] Consistency and simplicity of forms they (AHW) are creating as a lot of police move between districts. There should be a simple form right across the country so staff will know how to fill the form in, no matter where they go

There was a further suggestion that the Last Drink Survey form should be incorporated into the charge sheet, as it is mandatory for police to complete it. A simplification of the loose-leaf charge sheet LDS section is reported to be currently under revision.

5.5.3 Dissemination of data

Most comments on the dissemination of data were favourable. It was in a format that was easy to use and understand, and was timely for use for LLG meetings as well as CBT placements (among others). There had been some concerns in the past with internal police communication difficulties regarding the dissemination of data.

Some times you just don't get the information [passed on], which detracts from it [the LDS]

At the same time, one LDS Coordinator was concerned about whether any action was taken by police after the monthly data report had been delivered.

Sometimes it feels like it's [the police network] a black hole that you send the data into...who looks at it?

Two police respondents suggested that the dissemination of data could be streamlined by the use of email documents,

[We] Should have electronic copies: stop using paper copies of the monthly reports. The whole set and all graphs could be sent from the excel spreadsheet

It would be good to have dissemination [of the LDS monthlies] via email with filters for specific tasks...have AHW as the central data base

Some respondents indicated that there is a strong possibility that in the near future LDS information from police charge sheets will be entered directly into the Wanganui Police computer. This would make relevant information directly available to the LDS Coordinators in the Auckland region, from modified templates interfaced with the Wanganui computer dataset.

5.5.4 Data base design

The need to update or modify the current data base design was mooted by some respondents who suggested that a move away from spreadsheet to a database design, such as Access, would be beneficial for data management and report outputs. One person suggested a modification of the current excel categories or fields,

If the current spreadsheet design was retained, data entry/data categories and spreadsheets should be standardised between regions

5.5.5 Off licences

Several references were made to the absence of LDS data relating to off licences. This was considered particularly relevant, as off licences are one of the primary sources of access to alcohol for underage young people. The proliferation of increased sources of off-licence alcohol sales (supermarkets, bottle stores, delicatessens, etc) was reported as having had an increased impact on alcohol accessibility and consumption by young people. While specific questions pertaining to off licensed premises are included on the LDS form, no similar information is currently captured within the charge sheet information. Police commented,

The majority of information is about on-licences. I need more info on off-licences...There is only anecdotal info about where kids are accessing alcohol in this area...we need more hard info

We should be looking at off-licences as well. There is no way of identifying if the corner dairy is a problem

Gathering this data appears to be more difficult for police unless they are mounting specific operations around minors or off-licensed premises. Consequently the LDS data may not provide a complete picture of the situation with many off-licenses.

5.6 Possible directions for the LDS

5.6.1 Expanding the scope and reach of the LDS

Several respondents discussed areas that they thought could be built on

I think it has huge potential but needs a huge push in all aspects...it may be a model that can be used and expanded upon. Maybe it can be broken down into smaller sections. Perhaps drink driving is one; violence could be another

[We] need to increase the awareness of the LDS to police staff and the general public

The community needs to be made aware and responsible when the issues arise. Data can be used for a range of purposes outside of the ones presently used...for research groups or lobby groups perhaps

5.6.2 Use of police data for media awareness

Many respondents made positive comments about how the demographic data collected by the police could be used in media releases to publicise trends and increase community awareness of alcohol-related issues. This refers to data collected by the police for the LDS, but not linked specifically to the LDS because of confidentiality issues.

Good for public awareness. It sends a message to drivers and other people

I think it hits home...some of the police stuff does raise awareness. The education stuff does work...if the issue is kept out there, people will talk about it around the country

Regular (monthly) media releases were suggested with a wide variety of foci. These included specific information and data on excessive intoxication, breath test levels, drink driving, underage drinking, age and gender of offenders and offence rates.

We should publish (alcohol-related) results with considerations made for privacy ...Make people aware of police actions in the community... [I] would like to see a monthly column in the local rag

Nearly all of the respondents however suggested some qualifications with the use of media releases, particularly referring to it as police data, not linking it to the LDS. Consultation with all parties concerned in the data collection was vital as well as consideration of confidentiality issues and whether or not to use statistics.

We need to be careful not to step on the toes of the police. If they shut us out the LDS will close down

There was also a suggestion regarding joint ownership of releases between police districts and other agencies. Several people stated they were already using police data in local media such as community newspapers to raise awareness of alcohol issues.

5.6.2 A national LDS system

Two sub-themes emerged from the interview data regarding consideration of a nationally consistent LDS. These were;

- Benefits of a national LDS system
- Progressing the LDS at different levels

Benefits of a national LDS system

Most respondents mentioned that they could see value in having a system that would increase national awareness and enable the exchange of information. From a police perspective they would be able to compare their local problem areas to the national picture. National trends could be mapped. It would also be possible to keep a better track of problem licensees who move from city to city. The following comments were typical of many similar remarks made,

A nationally consistent form of the LDS would benefit all organisations concerned with injury prevention, Sale of Liquor Act enforcement and alcohol-related [information] There is a lot of potential for it I see it as something national organisations such as LTSA, LLA, ACC, etc could use to further their knowledge about alcohol offending

If a national LDS police directive were in place, data would be gathered more consistently

Enormous potential was seen in a national form of the LDS to bring together agencies on a national level to enable the sharing of a database, important strategic information and educative training resources. Other organisations such as LTSA might also be able to have access to the data.

Most respondents mentioned the advantages of a nationally consistent form of the LDS using the same methods, tools and data sets, including standardised forms for data collection and analysis. Police could transfer anywhere and the rules would be the same. One police respondent indicated,

If it were a national standard (LDS related forms), I could transfer to Taupo and be up to speed straight away

Respondents suggested that if the data gathering was improved (100% form filling) and collected at a national level significant benefits would arise. Consistent data collection was also seen as allowing for trends to be generalised and comparisons of LDS data in different districts. A senior police respondent stated,

Agencies could obtain comparisons and see national, district, and area trends. This would be useful overall for policing needs

A health sector respondent suggested that costs could also be shared on a national level,

You need a national programme for national consistency. Resources could be shared at a national level if given that priority. You need national aims, goals and objectives that everyone has to fit into. (You need) a consistency of priority

Progressing the LDS at different levels

Several respondents suggested there is a need to temper the enthusiasm for a nationally consistent form of the LDS with realistic appraisal of important issues that need to be worked through at different levels. Some thought perceptions of the value and credibility of the LDS need to be improved by commitment and changes at the local and district levels before it can be demonstrated as a national model. A few thought it was crucial to improve data collection issues at local police district level before a full on national database was possible. Generally, respondents made direct comment on the need to increase credibility of the LDS data and processes overall. This was summed up by a police respondent,

All of the organisations must improve from police to AHW. Credibility has to be better

The importance of getting the police on board as a primary stakeholder was emphasised by an LDS Coordinator,

If you have a national database it will benefit many organisations including the police...but will it belong to the police...it also needs police buy in

This point was also illustrated by a small number of mainly police respondents who suggested that it would be better to keep the LDS and its information local and who were only interested in local data pertaining to local problems. A police respondent indicated,

Police don't care what happens in other areas. I only want to know what happens in ('my area'). We own the problems in our area: not Dunedin or Invercargill

It was apparent that on another level, some respondents thought there were other considerations that needed to be taken into account, such as different philosophical models, funding mechanisms, needs, and conditions in any given geographical area. Some respondents commented on different aspects and features of the LDS that they were aware of. In certain parts of the country, the LDS is strictly educative and used only for host responsibility purposes whereas in Auckland it is used as an enforcement as well as educative tool. Others only collect CBT data whilst Auckland collects all alcohol-related offence data.

A further level of development put forward was for nationwide, nationally consistent alcohol/SOL Act /LDS related training and education. Different respondents suggested sessions on the LDS from LDS Coordinators should be regularly slotted into the new police recruits five-week training as well as part of a pan NZ educative programme for police and other statutory agencies involved in liquor licensing.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Purpose of the LDS

Historically the Last Drink Survey (LDS) has had a range of uses, including that of a public health tool within the context of collaborative community action to address significant changes to the 1989 Sale of Liquor (SOL) Act. It was developed as a means to help agencies empowered by statute under the SOL Act to monitor and enforce the objectives of that act, primarily to establish systems to control the sale and supply of liquor so as to contribute to reducing liquor abuse.

The main uses and chief benefits of the LDS were and still are as a vehicle for intelligence gathering and interventions to meet the SOL Act objectives. The liquor licensing system developed from the SOL Act incorporates a two-fold approach. Firstly, it has host responsibility requirements that aim to prevent problems such as intoxication on licensed premises and sales to minors. Secondly, where there is non-compliance with host responsibility policies and practices, there are penalties both through enforcement of the SOL Act, criminal provisions, and Liquor Licensing Authority powers to suspend and remove liquor licenses.

The Auckland LDS combines both these 'carrot and stick' elements through a surveillance system and targeted interventions. The surveillance system helps the statutory agencies to identify and monitor 'problem' licensed premises as required. The targeted interventions initially focus on promoting and supporting compliance with host responsibility measures. If compliance doesn't improve, the statutory agencies will then take collective action to restrict or close premises that continue to contribute to alcohol-related harm through poor management practice.

Unlike LDS projects in some districts that collect EBA data only, the Auckland LDS project collects all alcohol-related data. This provides a broad data coverage and also enables a more detailed demographic picture of the role alcohol plays in offending. This data is used for other purposes as well as for monitoring and interventions with licensed premises.

6.2 Understanding the operation of the LDS

On the whole, the Auckland LDS is viewed very positively by the agencies involved with its use and has strong credence across all levels of its operation. However the intent and modus operandi of the LDS is still not fully understood and accepted currently by some police who express misgivings about its credibility. They see the effectiveness of the LDS as contingent on scientific data collection and appear unable to get past perceived issues of data validity and reliability. These issues are not actually particularly relevant to the way the LDS operates.

There have always been a few concerns about the statistical validity and credibility of the LDS, based on a limited view of its purpose and utilisation. It has been suggested that the actual term 'survey' may be somewhat confusing and misleading and the LDS might be more appropriately called the LDI (Last Drink Information) or the LDT (Last Drink Trends). The LDS was never intended by its developers, past and present, to be a statistically valid survey of the academic or market research type, to quantify the incidence of alcohol-related offences such as drink driving from licensed premises in a random manner. It was designed as a general monitoring tool to pick up emerging local trends for intelligence/information gathering purposes. The expectation was that this data would then be used as a useful indicator for future action, in conjunction with other information such as inspection reports by statutory agencies and complaints from members of the public and other licensees.

Those who coordinate different LDS projects are well aware of its limitations including difficulties with police compliance in data capture. They are careful to only use it as an indicative tool, highlighting trends that are complemented by other sources of information. They also emphasise that as the LDS data is analysed over time, this moderates any perceived effects on the quality of the overall information from factors such as incomplete data and major CBT operations in particular areas.

Suggestions of offenders lying about the last premise where they drank and data being skewed because of certain areas/premises being targeted have to be viewed in the wider context of the LDS. The LDS is far more than just a snapshot survey of one point in time. LDS trends reflect the bigger picture. Processes are also in place for licensed premises to provide their explanation of events and put their case in writing to the LLG if they feel they have been singled out unfairly or dispute specific LDS entries.

LDS data is often used as part of building a file on a particular premise for a licensing hearing or court case, where there are continued appearances on the LDS monthly report spreadsheets and general non-compliance with SOL Act requirements. In these situations the LDS is not used as direct evidential data but has been successfully accepted as indicative data, in combination with other complementary sources of information.

The LDS night visits to monitor identified problem premises provide additional intelligence for liquor licensing purposes. These visits also often corroborate the presence of intoxicated patrons and minors as well as highlight deficiencies in management practices that contribute to alcohol-related harm. Generally however the main function of night visits is an educational one to help the licensees improve their management practices, so as to both reduce police workload and the chance that licensees will end up in Court or lose their licenses.

Further explanation of the LDS concept, its utilisation and benefits may help with general buy in and dispel existing concerns regarding credibility for the police. This is necessary in both informal and formal training situations for those directly involved in alcohol-related areas of police work, as well as police who are not currently involved. A name change may also help to shift the mind-set that appears to be fixed around issues of validity and representativeness.

National as well as district directives from top-ranking police were considered crucial to make a significant break-through in ensuring the provision of training sessions and commitment to LDS data collection. There needs to be a break-through in the reported paradoxical effect whereby sections of the police don't fill the LDS in well because it's perceived as "only the LDS form", seen as low priority and low quality, so the resultant quality of form filling and therefore data may become even lower. It is clear that more frequent if not regular training sessions are necessary for the success of the LDS. Police need to be convinced of the value that the LDS will add to overall policing work to enable better police commitment to the LDS for improved data collection.

6.3 The LDS – a collaborative Partnership

Though health promotion agencies and police have had a major role in initiating and implementing the LDS, it originated as and still remains in essence, a partnership project not a solely police or health-promotion owned initiative. In Auckland the LDS run by Alcohol Healthwatch has now become an integrated part of the liquor licensing network. As well as receiving extensive cooperation and funding from the police, there has also been closer coordination and interagency collaboration forged in relation to the LDS between the statutory agencies such as health/police and the DLAs. This is particularly evident in the

Liquor Liaison Group structure and processes where the respective agencies work together to achieve common objectives through strategies such as combined night visits.

6.4 Reach of the Auckland LDS

Alcohol Healthwatch have played a critical role in successfully expanding and coordinating the LDS in the Auckland region. The AHW coordinated team approach has ensured that the LDS is well established in all Auckland police districts. There is high awareness of and support for the LDS amongst the key statutory agency stakeholders and it is viewed as an effective monitoring, educational and intervention tool by most of the other key players who have contact with the LDS. Stakeholders are generally very satisfied with the LDS reports they receive and rate them as excellent practical documents ready for use.

Further extension of the LDS reach is starting to occur through supply of data to other interested groups and involvement of the LDS Coordinators in alcohol-related community projects. This fits with the original link of the LDS to community action. There is also considerable support for more media focus development, with suggestions of media releases published on a monthly basis using the LDS demographic/alcohol-specific data collected to maximise public awareness of alcohol-related issues. The need for consultation with all relevant parties and potential joint media releases does need to be followed through with consideration of who owns the information, what information is appropriate as public knowledge and just what can be released into the public domain. The notion of a newsletter for licensees with a different emphasis other than just LDS summary reporting information may also be worth revisiting, perhaps as a joint venture.

The LDS data collection and interventions has mainly focused on licensed premises to date, but there are potentially other useful untapped possibilities to explore in terms of using the non-licensed premise data to best effect.

6.5 Moving forward with the Auckland LDS model

The successful features of the Waikato LDS project described in their evaluations have also been found in the Auckland LDS. Having people in designated LDS coordination roles is vital to its effectiveness. Their role in working closely with the police, often out of police stations means that they become very familiar with and are accepted by the police culture. They have enhanced the level of knowledge available to police on alcohol-related issues.

They bring a high level of attention to the detail of the LDS systems that is acknowledged as essential to maintaining a fully functioning LDS system. This includes efficient data capture through simplification of forms, education and training; prompt dissemination of data, and working closely with LLGs, both in terms of facilitating meetings and organising follow-up action for identified problem premises.

There was particularly positive feedback about the synergy between the LDS and the work of the seven LLGs, both from key informant interviews and the participant observation. It was evident that the LDS data is a core part of the collective intelligence gathering exercise, alongside the other formal and informal data exchanged on alcohol-related concerns. In this forum, the LDS is regarded as the pivotal tool for identifying and monitoring problem premises, through both the data collection and the development of the comprehensive night visit system that has developed as an invaluable part of the LDS interventions.

The Auckland LDS model of collecting all alcohol-related data has proven to be relatively easy to implement and has provided very useful additional data. However it is the area of data collection that still appears to require considerable attention and consolidation. This research study was not able to ascertain the exact levels of LDS data completion from each of the seven Auckland LDS projects, although there were often comments about low completion rates (under 50%) and inadequate data. This is an area that appears to be quite patchy and also subject to the vagaries of police priorities.

There are significant findings from the Waikato Rural Drink Drive Project LDS component that indicate that where specific strategies were implemented to improve the LDS, it was possible to more than double the data capture (of EBA data only). This in turn increased its credibility and motivated police to keep consistently collecting the data. This was achieved through seeking high level national and regional commitment and ongoing liaison between key stakeholders, the introduction of standard, user-friendly LDS data collection systems and the appointment of a designated coordinator who was able to identify and promptly disseminate detailed trends data to police and the LLGs for further action as well as use general LDS data for media stories to raise the awareness of drink-drive issues.

The LDS model operating throughout the Auckland region is striving for consistency in its structure and operations. However the recent limited police representation in an LLG in one district illustrated how this LLG was effectively hampered in its functions. It also meant that police were not in a position to respond collaboratively on LDS data. This situation has now changed. Nevertheless it emphasises the necessity of having senior district level police cooperation to support current and future LDS developments.

A strong message that came through many of the responses was that local/district LDS operations needed to demonstrate commitment from all stakeholders as well as credibility before a national LDS system could be developed. So, concurrently with any national developments AHW needs to continue to review their own operations, improve data collection issues locally, consider better/extended use of the datasets they are currently compiling or holding and what system features and refinements might interest and motivate other agencies and organisations.

Several suggestions were made regarding specific improvements,

- Simplification of forms
- Increase the regularity of LDS training for police
- Investigation of email dissemination of data
- Specific procedures implemented to capture minors' infringement notice data
- Investigation of how the LDS could be used to capture information on any offences involving premises with off-licenses such as bottle stores and supermarkets.

It is important to note that problems with LDS data capture are reported to be common throughout other parts of New Zealand as well and are one of the main reasons for trying to develop national standardisation of data collection to overcome current barriers to satisfactory information gathering and to enhance the credibility of the LDS overall.

6.6 Future directions for the LDS

There is general agreement from those who participated in this evaluation that a national LDS system would have considerable benefits. These include access to a national database, increasing national awareness of trends, standardisation of data collection, district level comparisons, transferability of data, and increasing collaboration at the national level for sharing of strategic information and training resources. There have been attempts in the past

to develop a national LDS system. Though this has not eventuated for various organisational reasons, it has not diminished the need for this to occur to enable significant development of the LDS in terms of its credibility and utility. It is considered that any future proposed developments will need to carefully work through structural and process issues at national and district levels with a realistic and achievable plan. This will require top level support and collaboration as well as ongoing work at the district level in improving data collection systems, informal sharing of database design and Liquor Liaison Group approaches.

Suggested key elements for a national LDS initiative are:

- Securing resources to fund a national coordinator (to drive the process) and a national working party support structure, possibly as a joint funding venture between key stakeholders
- Police commitment at national level to support the concept of a national LDS system with national directives (such as senior level district accountability for ensuring LDS data collection)
- Development of a national LDS working party to work on national collaboration and guidelines
- Regular consultation at the local and regional level to ensure buy in and multi-flow of communication
- Training and support sessions for police and other statutory agency representatives involved with the LDS at national and police district levels

The current proposal from Alcohol Healthwatch to take a leading role in developing such a national system is both timely and well placed. AHW have an established track record in developing and coordinating a major LDS programme involving seven projects (urban and rural) in the largest population region of New Zealand and also have excellent contacts and credibility with the main stakeholder organisations. However resourcing and commitment from major stakeholder organisations will be essential to both getting this initiative off the ground and ensuring its success.

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