



The Hon Tony Kelly MLC
Minister for Police
Minister for Lands
Minister for Rural Affairs
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Leader of the House in the Legislative Council

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POLICE GIVEN GREATER POWERS TO MOVE ON DRUNKS

Minister for Police Tony Kelly announced that police will be given more power to break up large gatherings and move on groups of drunken people under new legislation being introduced to Parliament.

Mr Kelly said the new legislation will allow police to disperse groups of people who are “noticeably affected” by alcohol or drugs and are likely to damage property or threaten public safety.

“By breaking up drunken and unruly gatherings, police can potentially prevent violence and other criminal activity,” Mr Kelly said.

“The changes are not intended to stop people from having a good time, but they will help ensure drunken groups don’t spoil the fun for others.”

Mr Kelly said until now, police have needed to be satisfied that a group of people who they consider a risk was “seriously affected” by alcohol, before being able to direct them to move on.

Mr Kelly said lowering the threshold of what constitutes an intoxicated person in these circumstances would reduce uncertainty for police, particularly those managing crowds on occasions such as New Year’s Eve.

“These new powers give the Police certainty to act by changing the definition from ‘seriously affected’,” Mr Kelly said.

“Police have faced the dilemma over whether to disperse revellers in places such as train stations and shopping centres, and when groups gathered for “beach coldie” parties.

“These are late night gatherings on beaches where young people have parties involving music, drinking alcohol and sometimes enter the water to wade or swim.”

“The risk of drowning and injury is obvious and it is important police have the power to disperse groups when they believe there is a threat to public safety.”

Mr Kelly said until now police have had to apply two different tests when they were applying the *Law Enforcement Powers and Responsibilities Act 2002* and the *Liquor Act 2007*, that latter of which contains the “noticeably affected” definition.

“Harmonising the definitions in the two acts will make it easier for police to enforce the law and dispersal groups of intoxicated people in public places.”

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