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## **Specialist order would help tackle problem of repeat drink drivers: report**

A specialist drink driving order should be introduced to help tackle Tasmania's persistent problem of repeat drink driving offenders, according to new research.

The Tasmania Law Reform Institute (TLRI) today released its recommendations in the report, *Responding to the Problem of Recidivist Drink Drivers*.

The report found evidence which suggests that a well-designed specialist response to repeat drink driving would provide a promising alternative to traditional sentencing approaches.

The specialist drink driving order would be situated with the drug treatment order that currently operates with the Magistrates Court.

The report also constructed the first Tasmanian profile of repeat drink drivers – where the majority are male with nearly 85% of offenders having a history of alcohol abuse.

"Repeat drink drivers post a considerable risk to public safety and the TLRI's view is that a solution-oriented approach will reduce the likelihood of reoffending and so improve community safety," Report author Dr Rebecca Bradfield said.

The TLRI sought community consultation as part of its research into the issue, where the Institute also analysed models which exist in other jurisdictions.

The final report also looked at the adequacy of current criminal justice responses to repeat drink drivers, and found these were inadequate for a number of repeat offenders.

Dr Bradfield said the limitations of conventional court practices for these offenders have also been stressed by magistrates.

"The emphasis of such an approach is on accountability, and the aim is to facilitate rehabilitation by targeting the underlying causes of the behaviour and so protect the community by reducing the risk of reoffending.

“A Drug Treatment (Driving While Intoxicated) Order should aim to facilitate the rehabilitation of offenders by providing a judicially-supervised, therapeutically oriented, integrated alcohol treatment and supervision regime,” she said.

Further key findings of the Tasmanian profile include:

- Nearly 75% had a history of problematic drug use
- Nearly 70% of repeat drink drivers were unlicensed or drove while suspended or disqualified at the time of their last offence.

“These findings reflect research from other jurisdictions that has highlighted the complex nature of the problem posed by repeat drivers and the need for specialist response,” Dr Bradfield said.

The report was prepared following a request from the former State Government’s Attorney General, the late Vanessa Goodwin, that the TLRI investigate the problem of repeat drink driving in Tasmania.

The report was guided by a reference group including Tasmania’s former Chief Magistrate Michael Hill and Dr Isabelle Bartkowiak-Théron of the Tasmania Institute for Law Enforcement Studies (TILES).

The research was funded by grants from the Solicitors Guarantee Fund and the Motor Accident Insurance Board (MAIB) Injury Prevention and Management Foundation.

**To read the report visit:**

[http://www.utas.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1093388/TLRI-Responding-to-Drink-Drivers-Final-Report.pdf](http://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1093388/TLRI-Responding-to-Drink-Drivers-Final-Report.pdf)

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