









accessed by third-party administrators and was developed through the use of privacy consultants to ensure compliance with the national privacy principles. However, this system has yet to be incorporated in Geelong.

One ID system supplier questioned the lack of clear regulatory standards regarding the collection and dissemination of personal data. As demand increases for interoperable technology and greater information sharing about banned patrons among venue managers, police and security agencies, there is a need for the development of clear regulatory and data management protocols. Nevertheless, the following quote also highlights that increased regulation may prioritise information privacy over patron safety.

The fact that there are no protocols... leaves the use of these things vulnerable. They have been highly effective and the misuse of one could bring down a lot of good work and that worries me quite a bit. So in terms of is regulation needed for it? Yes. But the problem is when you get regulators involved...they are largely coming from an angle that is myopic and not a balance of what the real objective is; and that is making it safe. And making it safe means there has to be some surrendering of privacy (System Manufacturer).

Licensees favoured the open circulation of information between all Geelong venues and with police to prevent 'bar hopping' by flagged or banned individuals. As one venue licensee described:

If you can get it [ID scanning] implemented on a grand scale in the CBD at least it has some sort of impact because if they were to be banned from [one venue]...[unruly patrons] used to be able to walk into any other venue they can. But now it impacts on all the CBD venues so if they're banned they're banned everywhere...(Licensee).

However, this study revealed an important paradox associated with information privacy and crime prevention. Victoria Police

consistently used information privacy as the standard justification for only providing generalised LGA data rather than the specific locations of reported assaults or basic demographic characteristics of victims and suspects. Local government representatives participating in the development of the November 2007 Accord considered this was the major impediment to the development of meaningful evidence-based policies to combat alcohol-related violence.

## Patron surveys and site observations

Patrons were asked about their previous experiences with ID scanners, whether they had been scanned before entering any Geelong venue in the previous 12 hours and to rate their satisfaction with this requirement. Just over 50 percent of respondents (n=169 of 324) had been in one or more licensed venues within 12 hours of being surveyed, with 68.6 percent indicating their ID had been checked and nearly half (47.3%) confirming their details were electronically scanned. Around the same proportion of males (68.5%) and females (68.8%) indicated their ID was

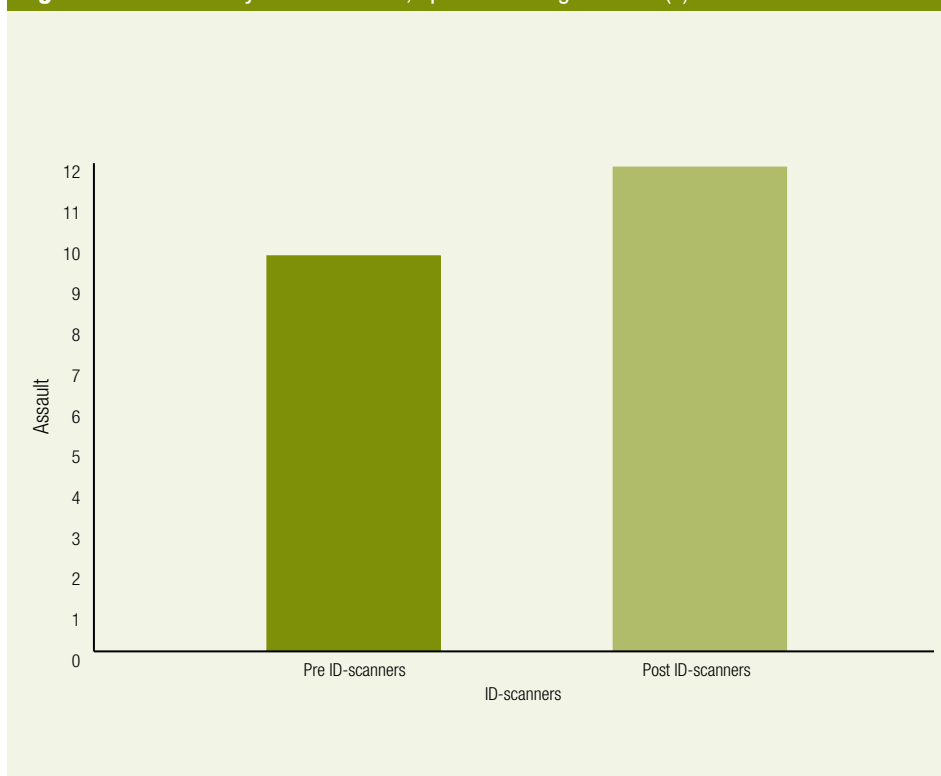
checked on the night of the interview. The mean satisfaction score for ID scanners across the entire sample was eight out of 10.

At least five site visits were conducted at 10 venues in the Geelong CBD. In 58 percent of these sessions (29 visits), all patron ID documents were scanned electronically before entry. In one-quarter of cases, no ID was checked at any point. Observers reported their own ID was not checked in 14 percent of site visits. Perceived patron intoxication levels were considerably higher in venues with ID scanners. However, this is to be expected as all venues with ID scanners are automatically classified as 'high-risk' and trade after 1.00 am.

## Police and emergency department data

Police data indicate that 5,064 assaults were recorded between 2004–05 and 2008–09 in the Geelong LGA. Overall, this represents an upward trend over time, though with significant fluctuation (see Figure 1). However, the number of reported offenders and victims increased after ID scanners were mandated under the revised Liquor Accord. Figure 1 outlines average monthly assault data for the 'high-risk'

**Figure 1** Mean monthly street assaults, April 2005–August 2009 (n)



**Table 1** Offenders and victims by year, Geelong LGA, 2004–2009

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Offenders	587	782	808	924	953
Victims	758	929	947	1080	1103

alcohol consumption period between 8.00 pm on Friday night and 6.00 am on Sunday morning before and after ID scanners were introduced. While the overall rates are relatively low, a slight increase is discernible after the revised Accord was launched.

Table 1 documents the aggregate rates of offenders and victims identified in the Geelong LGA. These figures also indicate ID scanners had no immediate impact in reducing assaults reported by or to local police from mid-2007 to mid-2009.

Figure 2 documents trends in reported assaults during ‘high-risk’ alcohol consumption times between July 2004 and May 2009 based on location. Monthly trend data identify fluctuating assault rates in the street, private homes and on licensed premises. When this data is depicted at quarterly intervals, there is a reduction in the number of assaults in licensed premises from July 2008. By this time, ID scanners

were an accepted facet of Geelong’s night-time economy.

Emergency department data reinforce these trends, even though changes in the reporting of alcohol-related triage incidents were introduced between 2005 and 2009 [2]. Time series analysis indicates around 25 percent of alcohol-related emergency department admissions during ‘high-risk’ periods occurred between 11.00 pm and 1.00 am, with a sharp increase exceeding 100 percent between May and December 2007 (Miller et al. 2011; Palmer, Warren & Miller 2011). These rates subsequently plateaued, then fluctuated, to produce an aggregate increase in alcohol-related assault and emergency department admissions since 2005.

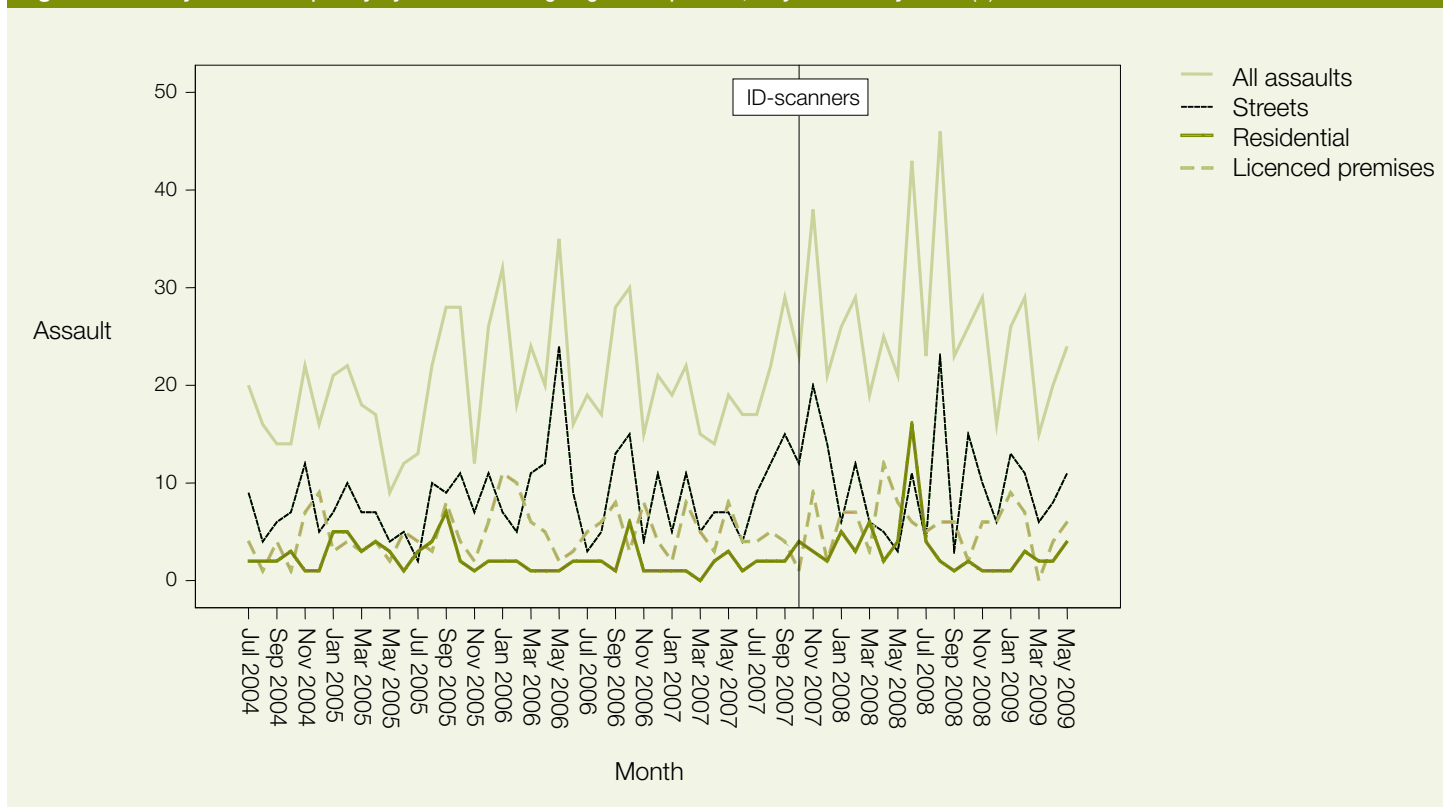
## Discussion

Despite claims by venue licensees and system suppliers, this study provides limited

empirical support for claims alcohol-related assaults in and around Geelong’s late-night venues have declined since the initial pilot of May 2007 and the subsequent mandated use of ID scanners under the revised Liquor Accord. Between May 2007 and May 2008, there was no discernible reduction in either reported assaults (see Figure 2) or emergency department admissions that identify alcohol-consumption as a key variable. Increases in street assaults from July 2008 suggest ID scanners may have produced a displacement effect, but firm conclusions on this point are not possible. This is an example of one of Brown’s (2013) key principles of regulation of crime prevention interventions—they must be effective at preventing crime.

A different picture emerges when these figures are considered in light of key stakeholder interview data. Venue licensees and system managers equate improved business with the erosion of anonymity and deterrence. However, selective non-scanning has significant potential to undermine these key benefits. Door staff indicated this form of profiling had not reduced violence at some Geelong venues.

**Figure 2** Monthly assault frequency by location during ‘high-risk’ periods, July 2004–May 2009 (n)









Dr Darren Palmer is an Associate Professor in Criminology at Deakin University and member of Deakin's Centre for Citizenship and Globalisation.

Dr Ian Warren is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at Deakin University and member of Deakin's Centre for Citizenship and Globalisation.

Peter Miller is an Associate Professor and Principal Research Fellow in Psychology at Deakin University.

General editor, *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* series:  
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© Australian Institute of Criminology 2013  
GPO Box 2944  
Canberra ACT 2601, Australia  
Tel: 02 6260 9200  
Fax: 02 6260 9299

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