

CALL FOR INPUT ON LEGISLATIVE POLICY PROPOSALS: MINIMUM UNIT PRICING (MUP) AND ALCOHOL TRADING TIME PARAMETERS FOR WC PROVINCE.

1. PURPOSE

The Western Cape government (WCG) adopted the Alcohol Harms Reduction White Paper (AHR White Paper), 2017, as a policy imperative in regulating liquor. The AHR White Paper informs key interventions such as Minimum Unit Pricing and Trading Hours, which could contribute to the WCG's strategic priorities of well-being and safety. These interventions are targeted, with the aim to have a minimal impact on the economy. The AHR White Paper is aligned with the Provincial Strategic Plan (PSP), which responds to systemic challenges associated with alcohol-related harms. The policy initiatives now being considered aim to reduce harms associated with drinking patterns in a targeted way. The AHR policy draws heavily on best-buy policy interventions recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) to reduce alcohol-related harms. Several AHR initiatives will be undertaken to support a comprehensive approach to the challenge. However, regulatory interventions are proposed for two evidence-based policy initiatives: the introduction of Minimum Unit Pricing and the introduction of uniform trading times for licensed outlets in the province.

2. POLICY CONCEPTS

2.1. Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP)

MUP is an intervention where the base retail price is determined and linked to the alcohol content of the liquor product. The MUP targets the cheapest liquor products on the market, which, based on research, enables heavy and binge drinking patterns. Evidence and modelling found numerous categories of harms associated

with these drinking patterns would reduce. Simultaneously it would increase retailer profits due to the elasticity of change. MUP applies regardless of drink type reducing substitution for alternative cheap liquor. It would also reduce the volumes sold in illegal trade that utilises on-selling. MUP is a targeted intervention in support of alcohol harms reduction and has been shown to be effective in other jurisdictions.

2.2. **Trading times**

Weekends and evenings are notable high-risk periods in the Western Cape due to increased alcohol consumption associated with increased homicides, motor vehicle fatalities, pedestrian fatalities and deaths due to accidental fires. In terms of the prevailing legal framework, municipalities are allowed to exercise discretion to determine and set trading (business) hours for liquor outlets within their respective jurisdictions. The effect is that trading hours are uneven and excessive against acceptable norms. In addition, evidence shows that longer and later hours of liquor trade increase consumption and associated societal harm. The intention is to introduce evidence-based and uniform liquor trading hours to reduce harm while remaining mindful of the economic impact.

3. **REQUEST FOR INPUTS**

The WCG requests stakeholders to consider the two identified interventions and provide input and comments by no later than 31 July 2023.

Meaningful public participation ensures broader public interest is served and avoids introducing unintended consequences not anticipated at the time.

Please [click here](#) for further details on MUP and trading times as AHR policy imperatives.