



Red Bull sales curb

Aim to stop customers smuggling in alcohol

By JACQUI JONES
 Health Reporter

A HUNTER hotel has restricted sales of energy drink Red Bull after staff detected patrons buying the drink and mixing it with contraband alcohol.

Warners Bay Hotel licensee Matthew Tarrant said the measure was part of the hotel's responsible service of alcohol.

Red Bull cans are sold only as a mixer and not available as a single drink at the hotel.

Mr Tarrant said the policy was introduced in recent weeks as some patrons were smuggling vodka or other alcohol into the hotel to mix

with purchased Red Bull.

"So we have no control over what people drink. People just buy Red Bull cans," Mr Tarrant said.

"My staff noticed these people getting intoxicated and they were not serving them any alcohol."

Mr Tarrant said his preference would be to ban the energy drink, but the hotel had to cater to its patrons.

He said the restriction was about responsible service of alcohol.

"It's solely so my staff can keep control of intoxication,"

he said.

Health specialists have warned of potential dangers of mixing alcohol with highly caffeinated energy drinks.

Hunter New England drug and alcohol services clinical nurse consultant Andrew Taylor said that the main risk was the caffeine stimulant's masking effect on alcohol.


"People feel that they haven't drunk as much as they actually have," he said.

"It could then lead to increased risk about higher levels of intoxication or risky behaviour."

Hunter Life Education executive officer David Baker said the mix of depressant alcohol and stimulant caffeine was allowing people to drink for longer periods.

Potential health problems included intoxication and increased heart rate.

The organisation advocated education to help people make informed choices.

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RESTRICT: Warners Bay Hotel staff member Jamie Feki mixes a Red Bull for a customer.

- Picture by Anita Jones