

Wide support for 'night caps' on drinking in public

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Young people among those in favour of proposed alcohol curbs: Survey

THERE is strong backing from all segments of Singaporeans, including young people, for the proposed laws to clamp down on late-night public drinking.

This finding in a phone survey commissioned by government feedback unit Reach after a plan to ban drinking in public from 10.30pm to 7am, and stop retail shops from selling alcohol after 10.30pm, was presented in Parliament last week.

Overall, 81 per cent of the 1,145 polled said they were in favour of the Liquor Control (Supply and Consumption) Bill, which is expected to be debated at the end of this week.

In the group aged between 15 and 29, at least seven in 10 backed the Bill.

The survey polled around 200 people from that age group.

The support was even stronger among older respondents, peaking at 92 per cent among those aged 60 and above.

Reach said that those polled from Jan 20 to Jan 26 were chosen randomly and were "representative" of the national population in terms of gender, age and race.

More than eight in 10 of those surveyed did not think that their lifestyle and activities would be affected by the possible new regulations.

Former Nominated MP Eugene Tan said: "I believe the majority don't feel the restrictions are a curb since they don't drink very much. And the hours - 10.30pm to 7am - are when many of them are indoors. But for the younger ones, perhaps it will present an inconvenience. It is a drastic change from what they are accustomed to."

Some people online had described the new laws as too strict.

Institute of Policy Studies senior research fellow Gillian Koh suggested that the views of some may have been over-represented online.

"It's a medium the young are very comfortable with so that's where you will find their views," she said. "The older folks can afford to drink in pubs and restaurants, and in their own homes. But the young certainly prefer to party away from the scrutiny of their parents."

Eighty per cent also agreed that the ban would help to reduce cases of public drunkenness.

Housewife Alice Lee, 66, hopes that the curbs will help to cut down noise and litter as well.

But student Xu Jing Wei, 20, hopes that if the Bill is passed, the authorities will carve out public areas where young people can drink in public after 10.30pm, since the alcohol in clubs is too costly for them.

He said: "We just want a nice place outside to chill over drinks."