



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Sydney's youth safer for longer on city streets

A program that has already helped more than 5,000 young people avoid the risk of late night alcohol related violence in the city centre has been extended into Kings Cross.

The initial trial of the Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador Program, set up by the Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation, proved so successful the program has secured funding for the next three years.

Under the initiative, which operates with the support of the City of Sydney, the Salvation Army's Salvos Street Teams provide on-street assistance and a sanctuary for intoxicated young people who are vulnerable to crime.

The success of the program since it began just before Christmas has led to further funding of \$400,000 a year for the next three years from the City of Sydney, NSW Government, Macquarie Group Foundation, Crown Resorts Foundation and the Packer Family Foundation. This additional funding will allow the program to expand its operations from the inner city to Kings Cross.

Ralph Kelly of the Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation said he was proud of what the Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador Program has achieved since its inception.

"We've seen many interventions since we started this program to help vulnerable young people and many young Sydneysiders have made it home from a night out safely as a result of the amazing efforts of the Take Kare Ambassadors". Mr Kelly said.

"However, this is just the beginning. As a responsible community, we all have roles to play in education around responsible drinking, drug misuse and we need to bring about behavioural change."

Take Kare Ambassador teams patrol central Sydney during peak late night hours to identify and offer practical support to people who are vulnerable, intoxicated, lost and in need of assistance to get transport home.

Just recently two Take Kare Ambassadors were credited with saving the life of a badly bashed man they found in Haymarket, giving him lifesaving first aid until paramedics arrived.

The Safe Space operates in Sydney Square next to Town Hall from 10pm to 4am on Friday and Saturday nights. It provides a refuge where trained Salvation Army Street Team volunteers administer basic first aid, and provide free water, phone and internet access, and help vulnerable people get home safely.

"More than 190 people have already trained as volunteer Take Kare ambassadors, and together with Salvos Street Teams, have helped hundreds of young people who otherwise could have been at risk," Lord Mayor Clover Moore said.

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“The City is proud to be supporting this important program and I’m delighted it will now include Kings Cross.”

NSW Attorney General, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton, says the NSW Government is proud to partner with the initiative and has reaffirmed the government’s commitment to reducing alcohol related violence on the streets of Sydney.

“The Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassador Program does a great job in helping people who might be at risk before they get into trouble,” Ms Upton said.

“Giving vulnerable people a safe haven or offering them helping hand is a practical solution to keep people safe and reduce alcohol-related violence.”

The program provides valuable support to existing organisations operating in the city at night, such as the NSW Police and St Vincent’s Hospital.

“So many of the alcohol related presentations we see most nights are avoidable. The Safe Space and Take Kare initiatives are providing critical support to diffuse those situations that often result in harms,” said Associate Professor Anthony Schembri, CEO of St. Vincent’s Hospital Emergency Department.

“I am confident that the extension of these supports to Kings Cross will see a further reduction in alcohol related injuries presenting through our Emergency doors.”

Salvos Street Teams Operations Coordinator, Nate Brown, says this initiative has been a significant step in helping make the city a safer place at night.

“Every weekend this program provides critical support to hundreds of young people,” Mr Brown said.

“Our team of volunteers have become a vital part of the city’s night life, providing a helping hand when people need it most.”

The Safe Space and Take Kare Ambassadors Program is operated by Salvos Street Teams in partnership with the Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation, City of Sydney, NSW Government, NSW Police, St Vincent’s Hospital, local community groups, business owners and other service providers.

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