

Playing it safe this festive season

Respect our staff and venues this Christmas.

That's the message from a dedicated group doing their part to keep the community safe as celebrations begin this festive season.

The Nepean Liquor Accord is a collection of local licensed venues, community groups and government agencies devoted to preventing alcohol-related issues, anti-social behaviour and violence.

"Our Accord includes all clubs, pubs, bottle shops, bars, plus many restaurants from the Penrith and St Marys area," Accord Chairman David Want said.

The Chairman wants to ensure all venues and staff are treated with respect during the busy period.

"We will welcome and respect everybody that enters our venues, and patrons must also behave in this manner in return – it's a two-way street," Want said.

"Patrons need to understand that having a liquor licence is a serious responsibility and people who don't respect our staff or fail to follow management direction will be asked to leave and possibly be refused entry at our fellow Accord venues."

In addition to acting respectfully,



underage drinking is high on the Accord's priority list, and they're working with Nepean Police Area Command to implement the best prevention strategies.

According to Want, local businesses have recently come across many different types of fake identification, and when this occurs, venues communicate with one

another.

"Our venue-to-venue communication strategy gives everyone a heads up about a minor trying to enter their premises live, so we

can prevent such individuals from entering our venues at the entry," Want explained.

The group is also working with police to minimise drink spiking – a criminal offence punishable with fines and up to two years imprisonment. Recent changes to the Responsible Service of Alcohol handbook now means everyone working at a licensed premises has a role to play in eliminating spiking incidents, but there's also preventative actions patrons can undertake to stay safe on a night out.

The Accord said to keep an eye on your mates, have a 'Plan B', pace yourself and drink responsibly, don't accept drinks from others, and always be mindful of where your teenage children are.

Sergeant Hayden Burden from the Nepean Police Area Command Licensing Team reinforced the Accord's stance.

"We want the community to exercise safe practices over the season and to have a safe and happy new year," Burden said.

"Officers will be conducting proactive patrols in and around licensed premises with a focus on compliance in venues and patron behaviour."

