

Spiked-drink rape growing concern

By State Political Reporter
GREG KELTON

SEXUAL assaults involving "drink spiking" are on the increase in South Australia, with 20 cases reported in the first nine months of this financial year.

This compares with only 25 for the 12 months of 2002-03.

Police and rape centre figures show that from July 1, 2001, to December 31, 2003, there were 662 alcohol-related sexual assaults reported to the Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Service.

Of these, 617 were females and 45 were males.

On average, over the past three years, between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of all "stranger rapes" are associated with drink spiking through drugs and/or alcohol.

Police Minister Kevin Foley has told Parliament in a written reply to a question from Australian Democrats Leader Sandra Kanck that 82 of the females (13.3 per cent) and five of the males (11.1 per cent) reported possible alcohol-assisted sexual assault. "The extent of drink spiking with illicit substances remains unknown and problematic in assessing," he says.

He also revealed:

POLICE have convened a working party to identify effective reporting mechanisms of drink spiking incidents.

THE Australian Institute of Criminology is researching the issue of drink spiking.

THE Drug and Alcohol Services Council has been working with SA Police and other agencies on identifying and responding to incidents.

Yarrow Place director Vanessa Swan told *The Advertiser* she believed the reported rates of drink spiking were going up. She was not sure whether this was because more people were having their drinks spiked or because more people were becoming aware of the problem and reporting it.



LUCKY ESCAPE: Melody had her drink spiked at a nightclub, but was rescued from the situation by friends. Picture: BRENTON EDWARDS

Clubs, bars shun drug test kit

By Youth Affairs Reporter
CARLA CARUSO

ADELAIDE nightclubs and bars are reluctant to sell a credit card-sized drug tester that can tell if a drink has been spiked.

The Drink Spike Detector, which tests for GHB (also known as grievous bodily harm) or ketamine - the two most common illicit drugs used to spike drinks - is sold at some pharmacies in Adelaide.

But clubs and bars are hesitant to take them on, saying other strategies - such as signage or having bar staff dump unattended drinks - are more effective.

Dean Sunshine, director of Drink Safe Technologies, which produces the "drink detective", said venues think that by having them "it's bad for business".

Nightclubs Garage and Savvy have trialled the testers and said they did not sell, largely due to the price - \$10 for a six-drug test.

Of the clubs and bars contacted by *The Advertiser*, including The Archer Hotel, Adelaide UniBar and Cargo, only one stocked the product - the Crown and Anchor Hotel.

Melody, 23, of Semaphore, was taken to hospital with convulsions after she had her drink spiked at a city nightspot a few years ago.

"My drink was pretty much sitting on a bench right in front of me, where I was dancing with a friend," she said. "I remember a guy dancing next to us ... He must have walked me outside. A friend found me outside McDonald's and the guy was getting his car. If my friend hadn't rocked up, who knows what would have happened."