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Ban on patched bikies in bars and clubs is the state's call

- by: Meagan Dillon
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Mourners after the funeral service for Anthony Zervas, brother of Hell's Angel leader Peter Zervas. Picture: Sam Mooy

Source: Herald Sun

- **Editorial: Colour them banned** (<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/opinion/colour-them-banned/story-e6frfhqo-1226614381331>)

OUTLAW bikies brandishing their colours could be permanently barred from Melbourne pubs and clubs - but only if the Victorian Government empowers authorities to do it.

Temporary bans on bikies wearing patches in licensed venues are being enforced elsewhere in Australia.

The State Government has not ruled out giving authorities the power to issue temporary or permanent blanket bans on patched members having a beer at licensed venues.

When asked if Victoria would consider changing legislation to include patch bans, Crime Prevention Minister Andrew McIntosh's spokesman James Talia said: "We're open to it if police decide they need this power. We're not ruling it out, but it's not on the agenda.

"Any legislation changes would be directed at police, not licensing inspectors."

But Victoria Police - responsible for issuing bans on behalf of the licensing commission - said it would not comment on legislation changes.

The commission also refused to comment on policy.

Up to 300 Comanchero bikies from around Australia hit Melbourne at the weekend for their national run. But patched Hells Angels members who descended on Darwin for their general meeting were not afforded the luxury of drinking a beer at a bar.

Last Tuesday, the NT Licensing Commission issued an emergency directive banning bikies in colours from Territory pubs and clubs until April 11.

The NT Government has the power to make temporary licence conditions under the Northern Territory Liquor Act.

The move was described as a "one-off" but the Government did not rule out future bans.

Victorian authorities do not have the power to place temporary or permanent blanket bans on bikie colours in pubs and clubs.

Instead police are encouraging strip clubs, bars and nightclubs to knock back bikies based on their dress code.

Detective Superintendent Brett Guerin said some late-night licensees had implemented self-imposed bans to keep members in club colours out of their venues.

Crown casino placed a ban on patched bikies about six months ago, but the move reportedly created conflict between members and bouncers. Det Supt Guerin said the self-imposed bans had been working to reduce the potential for conflict.

"Police have seen incidents escalate in the past between patch-wearing OMCG members inside licensed venues," he said.

"(We) support any strategies that mitigate the risk of violent behaviour."



<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/special-reports/bikies>

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