



Highland Park calms down

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By HEATHER McCracken

The largest liquor ban on private land in Manukau is in place at Highland Park to clamp down on violence and disorder.

Police, security guards and liquor licensing inspectors say the ban will reduce crime and make policing the area easier.

Behaviour in the Highland Park Home Centre has already improved as a result of more police attention and improved security measures.

The liquor ban was one of the measures put in place after a public meeting last month to address reports of violence and robberies in Highland Park.

A follow-up meeting on Tuesday drew a much smaller turnout to discuss the impact of the changes.

Manukau City Council licensing inspector Paul Radich says there is now a significant security presence in the carpark.

"The security guards are far more proactive, they're walking around, they're making themselves known.

"My general observation is it's better but there's still a significant amount of work to do down here," he says.

The body corporate has cut back trees screening the underground carpark and installed judder bars.

Signs advertising the liquor ban were expected to go up this week, encompassing Caltex, Blockbuster, O'Hagans, PlaceMakers and the Highland Park Home Centre, including Village Skycity Cinemas.

Concerns were raised at the meeting that police would not have the resources to respond to liquor ban breaches.

Senior sergeant Andrew Berry says police will be actively enforcing the ban.

"We can't be there every night the licensed premises are open but we have a plan in place as to how we will police that," he says.

"It's not just a policing role, the licensed premises and their security staff have a role to play."

Mr Berry says calls to police have already dropped following an operation focused on youth crime in May.

Village Skycity Cinemas manager Bridget Davy says security guards had not logged any incidents of note over the past six weeks.

Guardian Angels member Phoenix says the volunteer group had been patrolling in Highland Park over the past three weekends.

He says they observed youths drinking in the carpark and saw two fights break out between groups.

"We were told by a 16-year-old she had been coming here drinking since she was 13," he says.

Patrols were now shifting to Manurewa but could return to Highland Park in the future.

Education trust worker Michelle Schumann says parents needed to take responsibility for knowing where their children were.

"Parents are the ones who are ultimately responsible for their kids, they can't just dump them here for the evening."

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