

The Community Impact of Liquor Licensing Restrictions in the Town of Port Hedland

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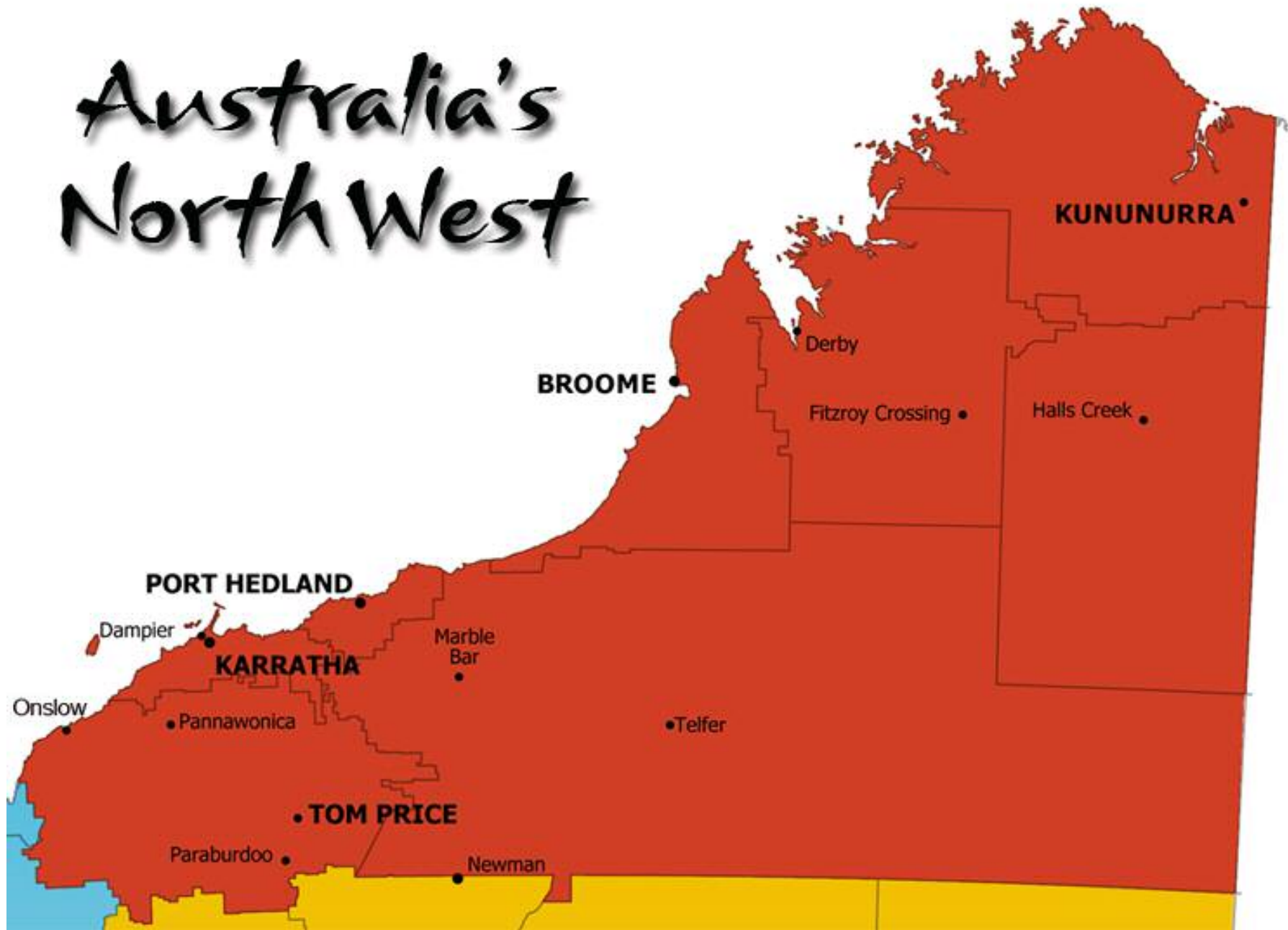
****Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health**

Western Australia

National Drug Research Institute

Preventing Harmful Drug Use In Australia

Australia's North West





The Restrictions Mandated on 1 January 2004

- No promotion or advertising of full strength beer, spirits, spirit mixers, or 2 litre wine casks
- Takeaway alcohol only to be sold from 11am to 9pm Monday to Saturday
- Table wine only to be sold in containers of 2 litres or less
- Fortified wine like Port and Sherry only to be sold in containers of less than 2 litres
- Spirits only to be sold in containers of 750mls or less

Previous Voluntary Restrictions

Mid 1996

- Takeaway alcohol only sold from 10.00am to 8.30pm Monday to Sunday (Implementation varied across premises and over time)
- Monitoring of the number of wine casks sold to any one individual

July 2002

- Takeaway alcohol only sold from 10.30am to 8.30pm Monday to Sunday
- Table wine only sold in containers of 2 litres or less
- Fortified wine like Port and Sherry only sold in containers of less than 2 litres (This measure was not universally implemented)

The Research Comprised Three Components

1. Large scale community surveys were undertaken in both the intervention community of the Town of Port Hedland and the control community of Roebourne Shire, in November 2003, immediate prior to the introduction of mandated restrictions (pre) and again 12 months later (post)

2. Pre and post interviews were conducted with key informants in Hedland at approximately the same times

3. The following consumption and harm data were collected from both intervention and control communities :

Total and specific beverage per capita adult alcohol consumption

Night time (10pm to 7 am) and Sunday hospital accident and emergency department occasions of service

Night time (10pm to 6am) assaults

The following harm data were also collected just in the intervention community:

Trauma related ambulance callouts

Disturbances attended by Police

Main Findings from the Community Survey and Key Informant Interviews

Main Local Alcohol Problems

Concern about public drinking and disturbance was prominent at pre, but dropped at post, which suggests that people in Hedland are less confronted by this problem. Similarly, concern about heavy drinking decreased pre to post

	Percentage of Responses at Pre		Percentage Change Between Pre and Post	
	Hedland N=679	Roebourne N=539	Hedland Pre N=679 Post N=634	Roebourne Pre N=539 Post N=650
Public Drinking, Causing Disturbance	20.47*	2.6*	-16.65#	101.15#
Violence, Abuse, Harassment	15.17	11.5	-1.05	-13.04
Selling to Youth, Underage Drinking	8.54	15.96	7.26	11.84
Parents, Family, Domestic Problems	7.95	7.79	41.13#	-9.11
Heavy, Excessive Drinking	7.81*	3.9*	-39.31#	73.59#

* Significant differences between intervention and control communities at $p < .05$ using t-tests

Significant change from pre to post at $p < .05$ using t-tests

Knowledge of the Restrictions

At pre and post, community respondents and key informants in Hedland were knowledgeable about the sales restrictions as a strategy to reduce community alcohol problems. This is important because it suggests that community opinion on the restrictions is based on good awareness

	Percentage of Responses at Pre		Percentage Change Between Pre and Post	
	Hedland N=202	Roebourne N=106	Hedland Pre N=202 Post N=228	Roebourne Pre N=106 Post N=93
Supply reduction (pub closed, reduced trading hours)	50.99*	13.21*	22.14	-27.55
Community programs, agreements, bylaws (accords)	14.85	25.47	0.4	25.28
Health services, facilities (e.g., sobering up centre)	9.41	16.98	-25.4	-56.12
Individual education, counseling and treatment	8.42	17.92	-53.09#	0.95
Police enforcement	8.42	8.49	-27.08	62.9
Community facilities (youth club, skate park)	6.44	8.49	-52.33	-37.34
Advertisement of health risks	0.99*	8.49*	165.66	50.41

* Significant differences between intervention and control communities at $p < .05$ using t-tests

Significant change from pre to post at $p < .05$ using t-tests

Support for the Restrictions

The community survey indicated that at pre there was weak support in Hedland for local advertising and sale restrictions. This support was maintained during their full application, despite the trend in the control community against greater control of alcohol. Key informants were generally enthusiastic about the harm reduction potential of sales restrictions and expressed little opposition

Intervention or control community	Support for restricting local advertising or promotion			Significant Difference	Support for restricting local sales		Significant Difference
	Mean				Mean		
	Strongly Support 1	Support 2	Don't Know 3		Against 4	Strongly Against 5	
Intervention Hedland	Pretest	2.30		*	Pretest	2.57	*
	Post-test	2.39			Post-test	2.67	
Control Roebourne	Pretest	2.10		* #	Pretest	2.25	* #
	Post-test	2.38		#	Post-test	2.58	#

* Significant Differences between Hedland and Roebourne at $p < .05$ using t-tests.

Significant Differences from Pre to Post Intervention at $p < .05$ using t-tests.

Effect of the Restrictions

Community respondents indicated at pre that they would not be personally affected by any of the planned restrictions. Most were prepared to accept the restrictions, but there was a degree of scepticism about their effectiveness. At post, more respondents indicated they were affected by restrictions on takeaway times and there was greater scepticism about the ability of the restrictions to reduce harm, although in both cases the change was slight. These trends suggest that the restrictions have not greatly inconvenienced the community.

Support for the restrictions was stronger among the key informants, but again waned slightly over time. Here three themes stood out.

- 1. The overall level of harm had been reduced.**
- 2. The community was not greatly concerned about the restrictions.**
- 3. Most people adapted by purchasing alcohol at other times**

	Intervention Hedland		Significant Differences
	Pre-test Mean N=365	Post-test Mean N=370	
“Would you personally be/Have you personally been affected by the following restrictions?” (1 = A lot / 2 = A little / 3 = Not at all)			
Affected by no advertising or promotion	2.69	2.65	
Affected by restrictions on takeaway times	2.49	2.28	*
Affected by ban on 4 litre wine casks	2.69	2.70	
Affected by ban on 2 litre fortified wine casks	2.76	2.76	
Affected by ban on spirits in containers larger than 750 mls	2.55	2.57	
“Would you be prepared to accept the following restrictions/Are you prepared to accept the following restrictions continuing on if they reduced alcohol harm in the community?” (1 = Yes / 2 = No / 1.5 = Unsure)			
Accept no advertising or promotion if reduces alcohol harm	1.27	1.31	
Accept restrictions on takeaway times if reduces alcohol harm	1.32	1.38	
Accept ban on 4 litre wine casks if reduces alcohol harm	1.23	1.24	
Accept ban on 2 litre fortified wine casks if reduces alcohol harm	1.22	1.21	
Accept ban on spirits in containers larger than 750 mls if reduces alcohol harm	1.28	1.33	
“Do you think the following restrictions will reduce/have reduced community harm?” (1 = Yes / 2 = No / 1.5 = Unsure)			
Community harm reduced by no advertising or promotion	1.58	1.65	*
Community harm reduced by restrictions on takeaway times	1.47	1.57	*
Community harm reduced by ban on 4 litre wine casks	1.47	1.54	*
Community harm reduced by ban on 2 litre fortified wine casks	1.47	1.53	*
Community harm reduced by ban on spirits in containers larger than 750	1.50	1.57	*

* Significant Differences from Pre to Post Intervention at $p < .05$ using t-tests.

Further Advertising and Sales Restrictions

At pre, community respondents in Hedland wanted more control of drunks and a broader range of restrictions on the supply of alcohol. At post, there was less mention of the need to control drunks, but greater support for quantity limitations. Support for easing restrictions remained negligible at both times.

Regulation of drinking was also important to the key informants, who placed greater emphasis on responsible service by licensees.

These trends suggest that the community is more satisfied with the way public alcohol problems are being handled, but sees no need to ease control

	Intervention Hedland		
	Pre-test	Post-test	Significant Differences
	% N=155	% N=130	
More control of drunks	21.94	6.15	*
Not sell to drunks	15.48	10.77	
Not sell to underage people/children	12.90	17.69	
Further reduce trading hours	9.68	14.62	
Limit quantity sold per day/week	8.39	24.62	*
Ban advertising that glamorises drinking	7.74	10.00	
Advertise the consequences of heavy/problematic drinking	5.16	2.31	
More education	2.58	1.54	
Higher penalties for non-compliance	2.58	0.00	
Further reduce container size	2.58	1.54	
Nothing will make a difference	2.58	0.77	
No glass containers	1.94	4.62	
Lift all restrictions / No more restrictions	1.94	3.08	

* Significant Differences from Pre to Post Intervention at $p < .05$ using t-tests.

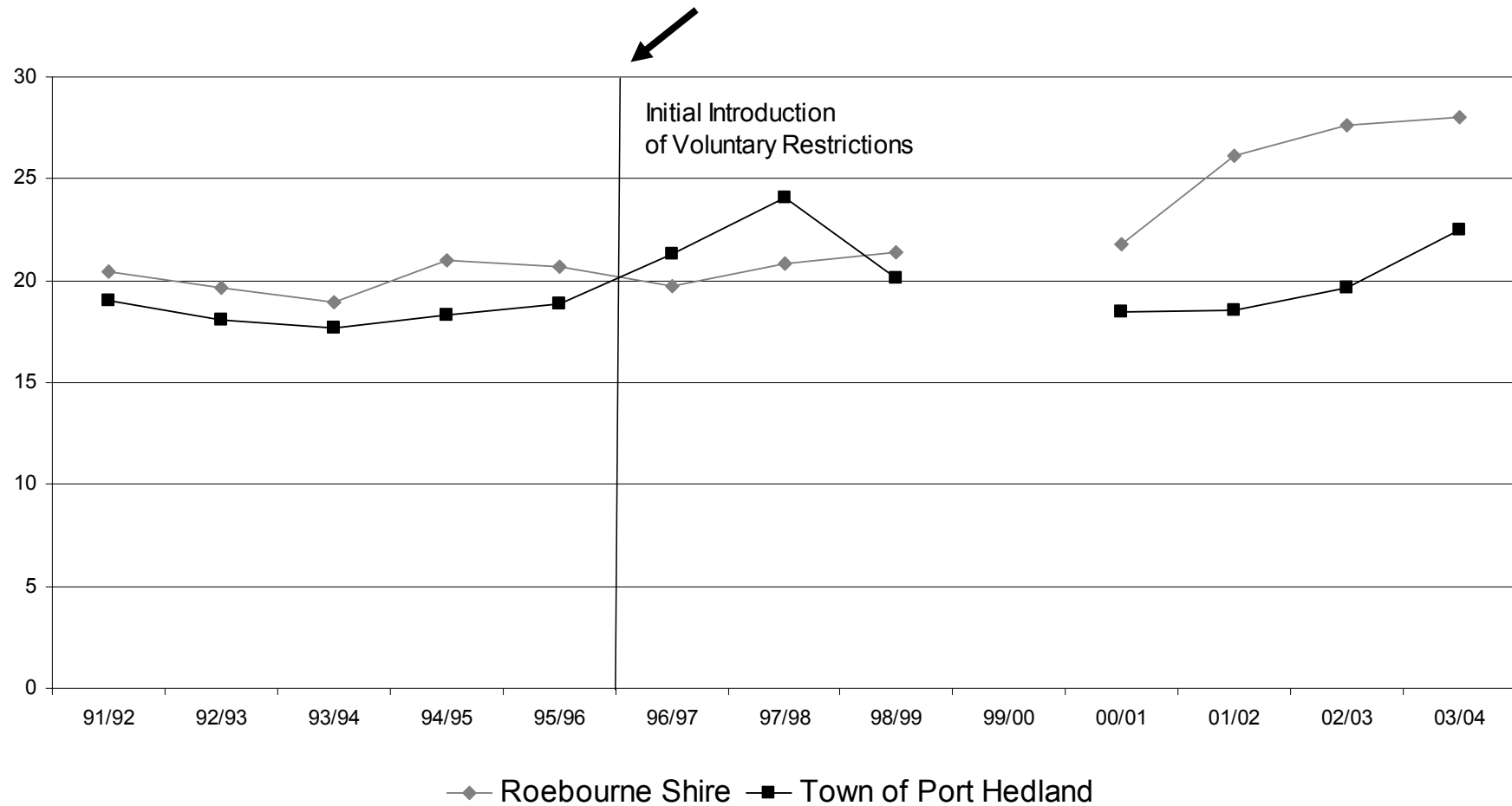
Serial Measures of Alcohol Consumption and Harm

Alcohol Consumption

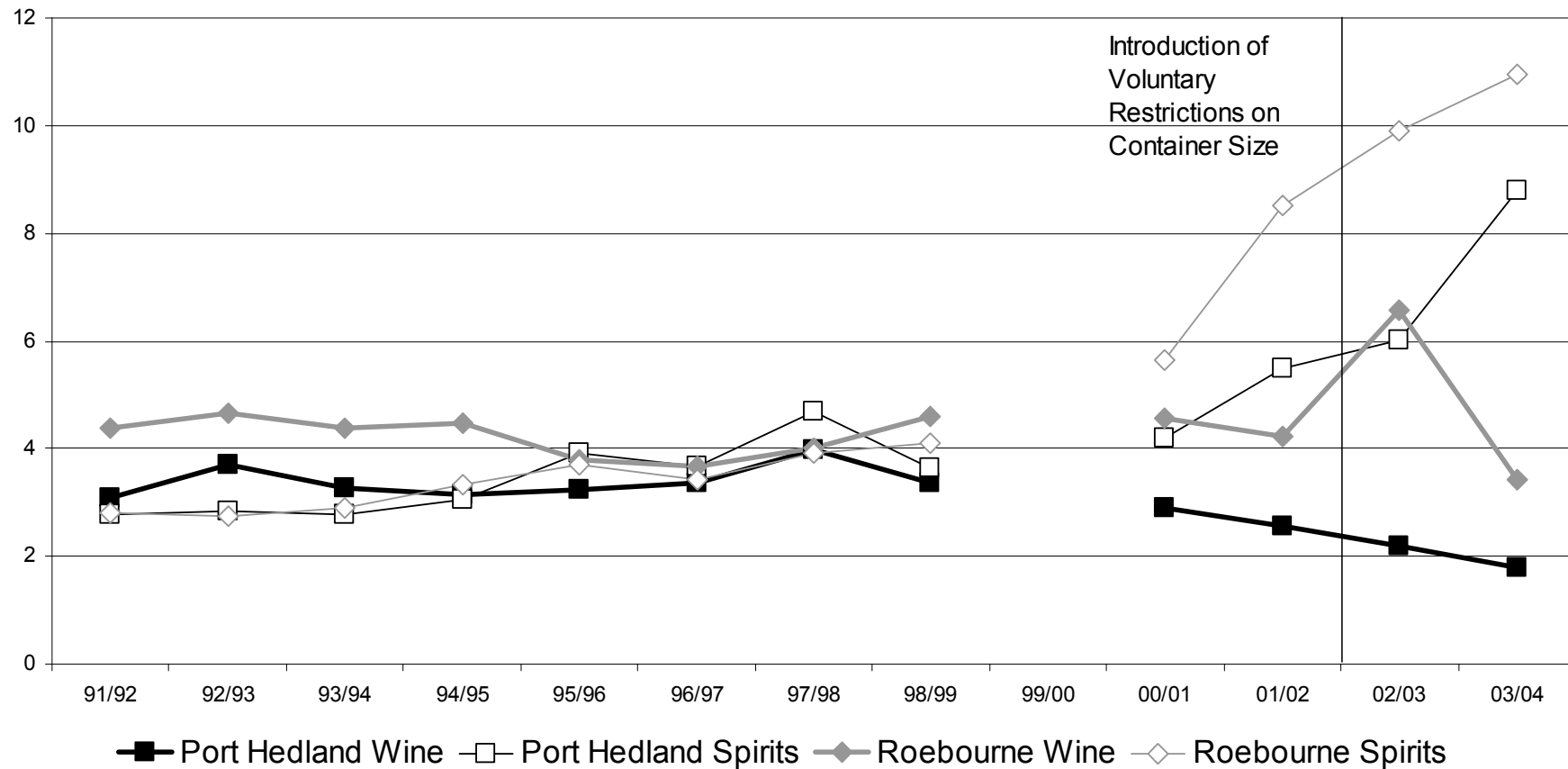
Alcohol consumption in Hedland remained essentially steady when the initial voluntary restrictions were introduced in mid 1996, whereas it rose by approximately 20% in Roebourne Shire.

In addition, per capita consumption of wine, which was subject to voluntary restrictions on large containers from July 2002, decreased in Hedland from this time, while remaining stable in Roebourne Shire

Annual Per Capita Alcohol Consumption (15 years +) in Litres of Alcohol



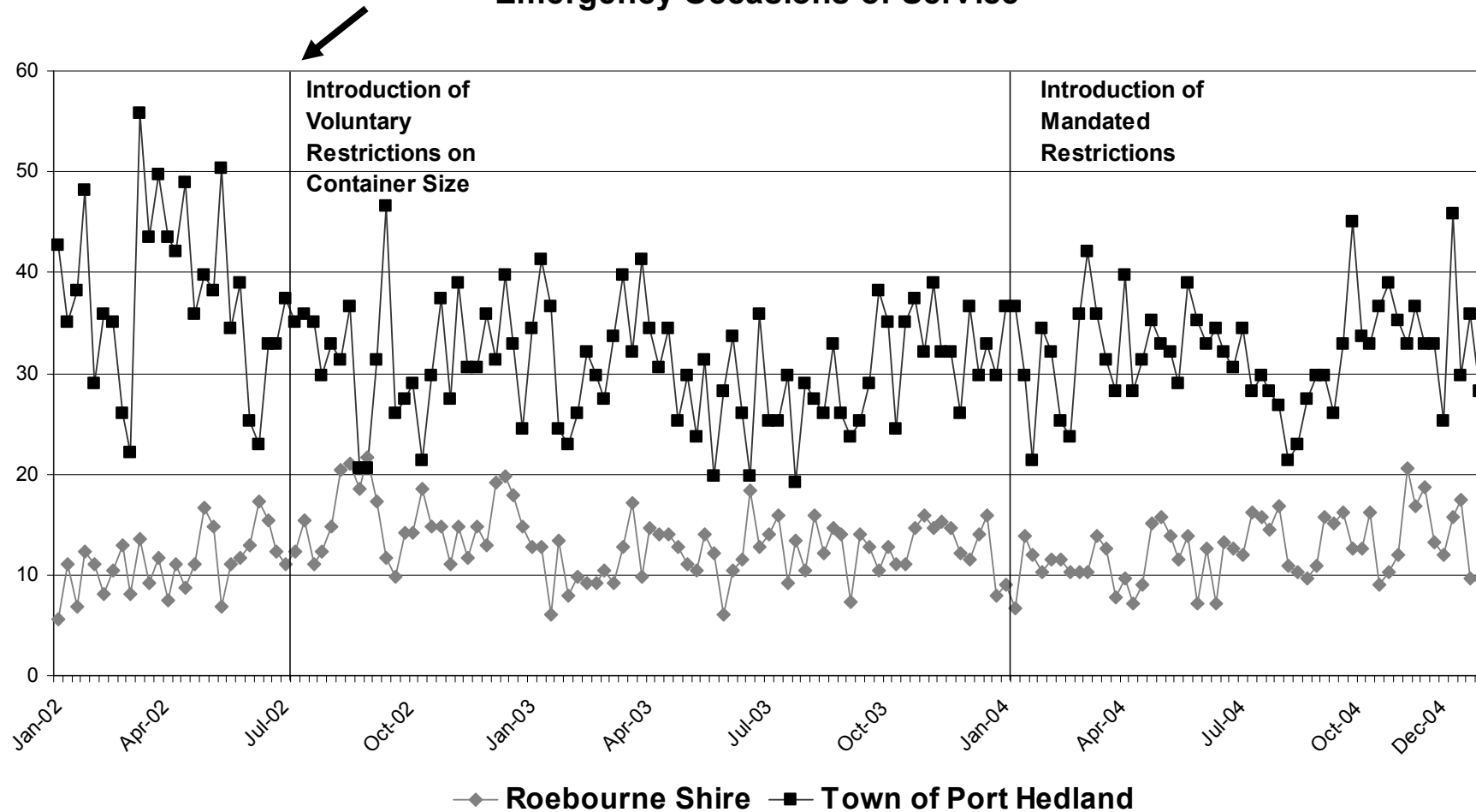
Annual Per Capita Consumption (15 years +) in Litres of Alcohol By Selected Beverage Type



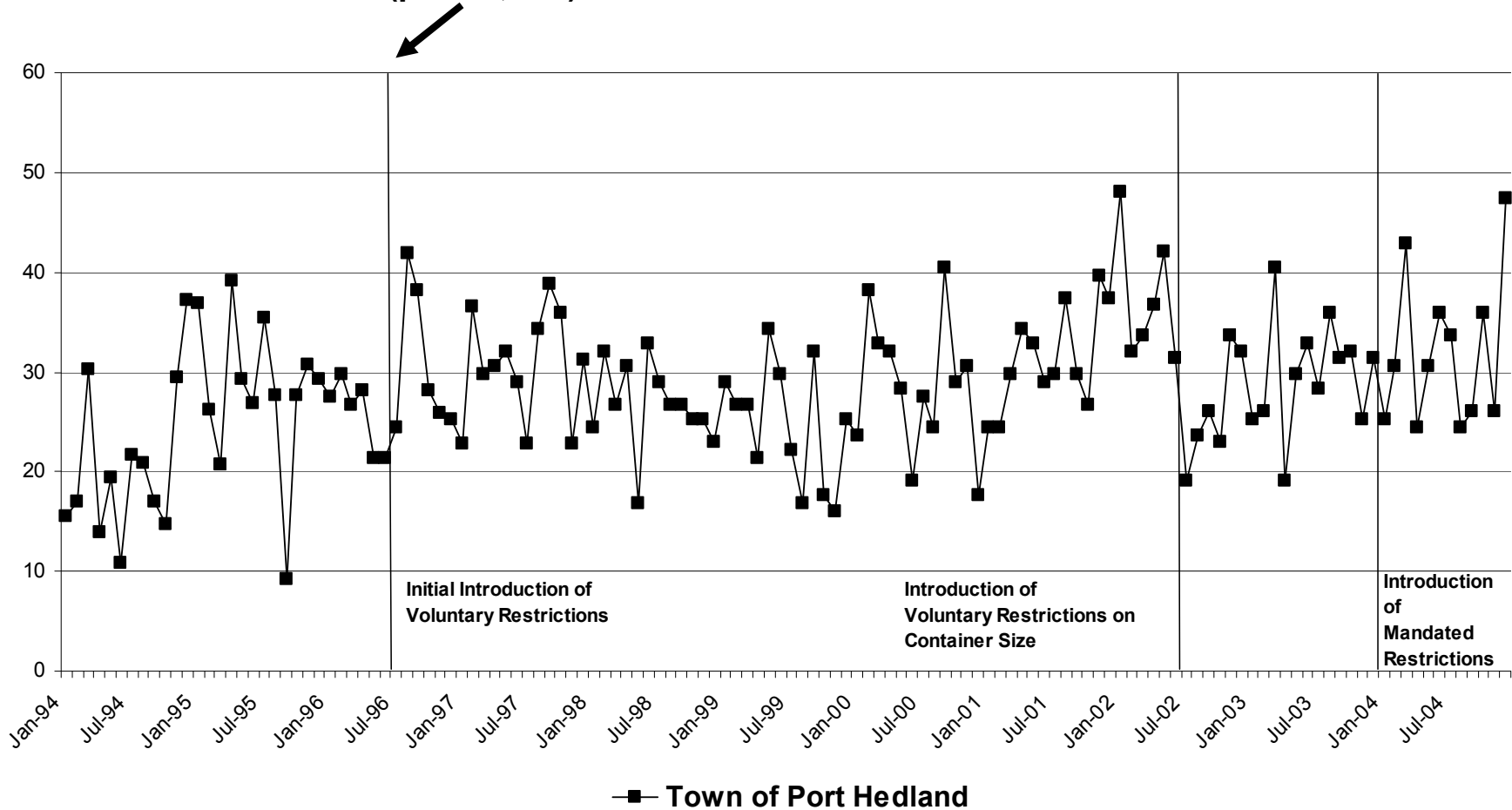
Serial Measures of Alcohol Harm

Night time hospital accident and emergency occasions of service decreased in Hedland when voluntary restrictions on large wine containers were introduced in July 2002, as did trauma related ambulance callouts, but there was no change in these measures when mandated restrictions were introduced on 1 January 2004

Rates (per 10,000) of Night Time (22:00 to 07:00) Hospital Accident and Emergency Occasions of Service



Rates (per 10,000) of Trauma Related Ambulance Callouts

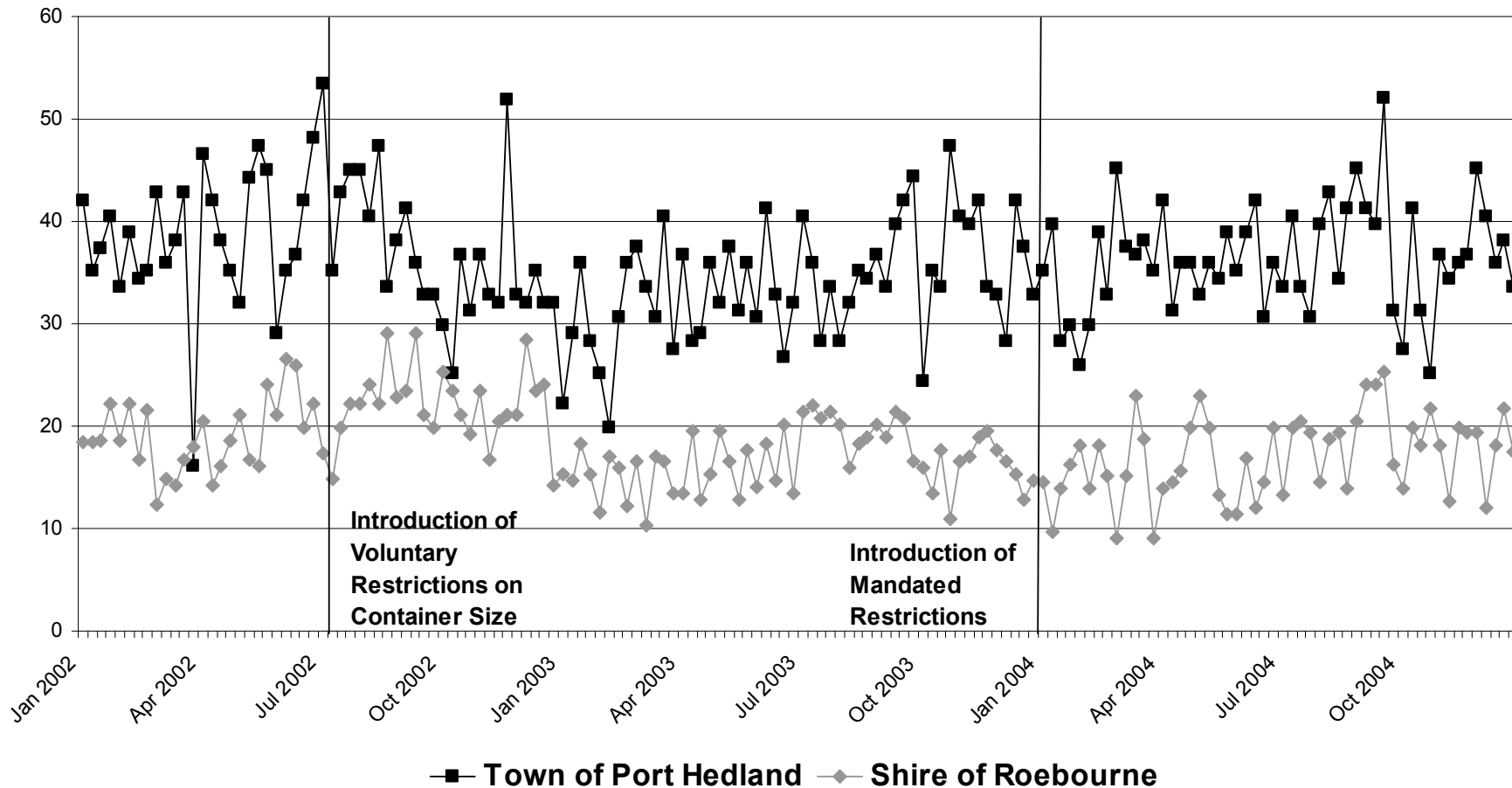


Serial Measures of Alcohol Harm

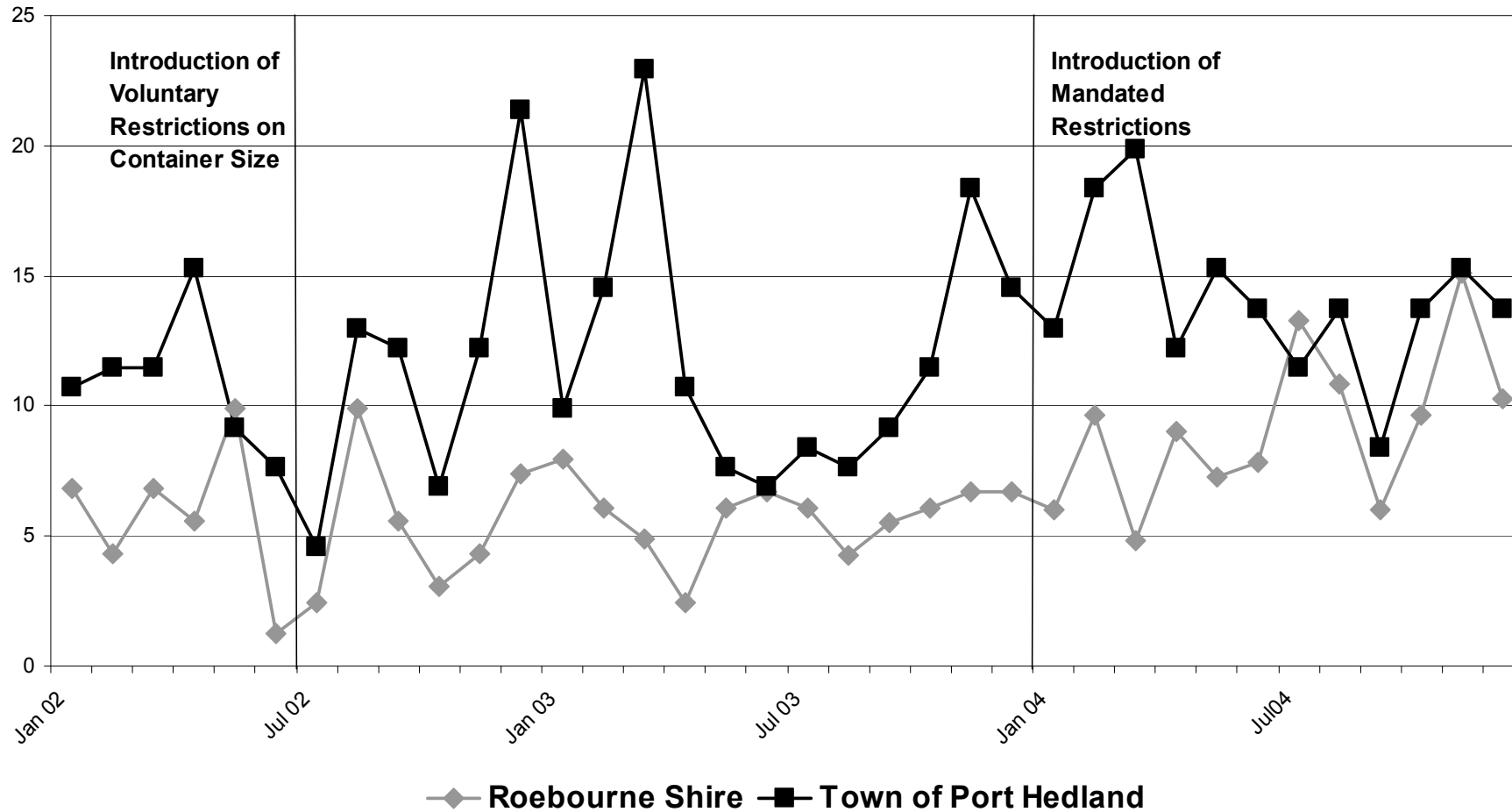
A measure more focused on the effect of the mandated restrictions, accident and emergency service rates on Sundays, similarly revealed no change on 1 January 2004

There was no change in rates of night time assaults at either time

Rates (per 10,000) of Hospital Accident and Emergency Occassions of Service on Sundays



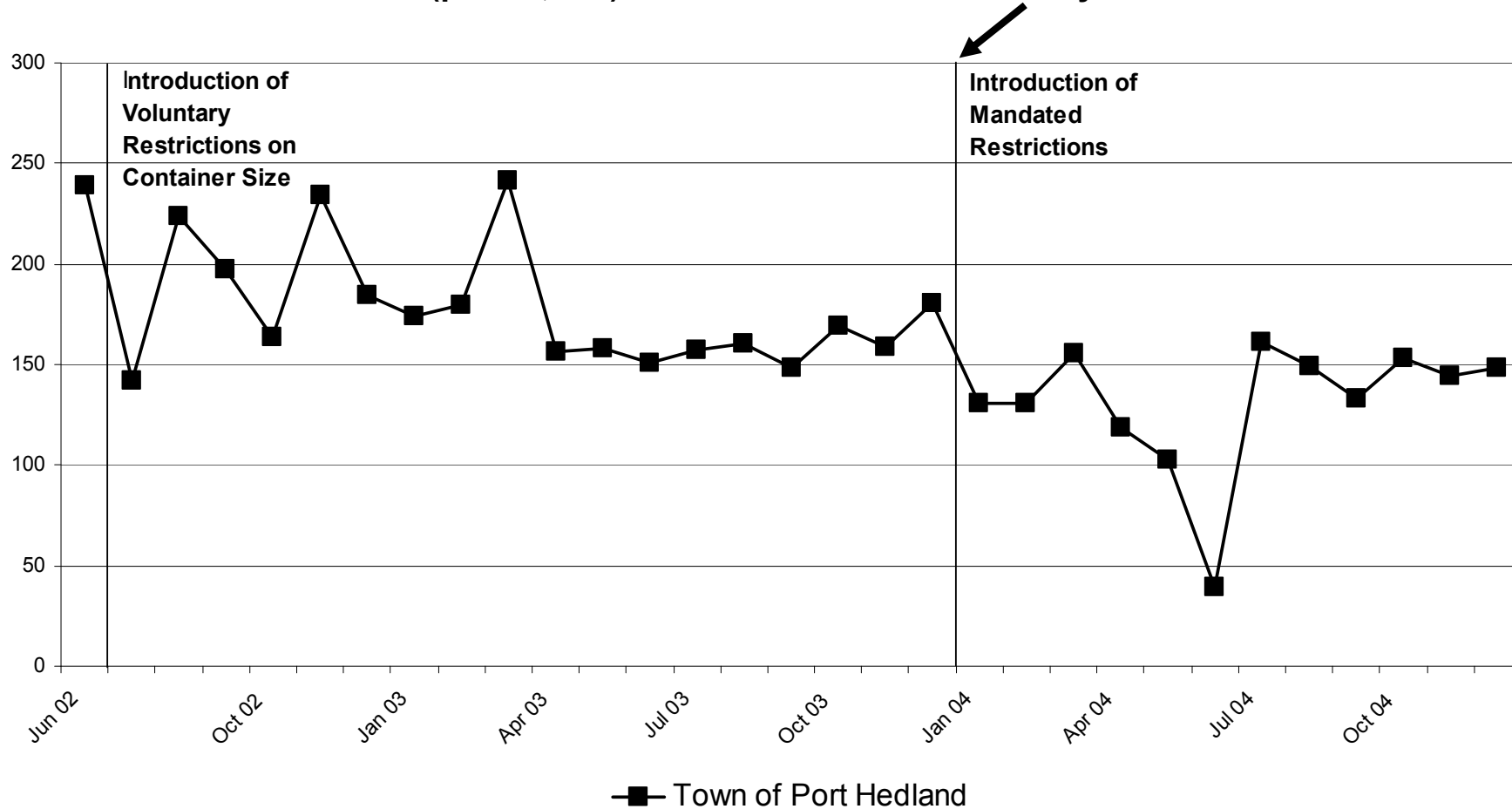
Rates (per 10,000) of Night Time (22:00 to 06:00) Assaults



Serial Measures of Alcohol Harm

The only proxy measure of alcohol related harm that showed a decrease when mandated restrictions were introduced was disturbances attended by Police. This seems to be a particularly sensitive local measure because of the well identified link with alcohol consumption and the large number of cases involved

Rates (per 10,000) of Disturbances Attended by Police



Comment on the Change in Consumption and Harm With Mandatory Restrictions

It is unrealistic to expect that the one substantial new measure that accompanied mandatory restrictions, cessation of Sunday takeaway sales, would have a major effect on consumption, as most people will adjust their purchasing habits

The detected improvement in disturbances is understandable in terms of how reduced availability would affect heavily dependent drinkers, who have more limited capacity to adjust. Here, stopping sales on one day is likely to stop their drinking on that day and as their drinking is the major cause of public disturbance, this form of harm is likely to decrease proportionately

Conclusion

This mixed method study has identified how the Town of Port Hedland views its alcohol problems and how alcohol advertising and sales restrictions have impacted on the community

There was good knowledge of and support for the restrictions when implementation was voluntary and there has been little opposition since compliance was mandated

Serial measures of consumption and harm indicated that the restrictions have made a difference, although not necessarily at the time of mandatory compliance

Conclusion (cont.)

Continuing to mandate compliance is important

The restrictions derived from extensive consultation and there is little indication that the community wants any of the measures reversed

There is evidence that the mix addresses different problems in the community

Their legal status indicates official concern and support in relation to community alcohol problems

Their permanence and enforceability institutionalises the previous voluntary changes and stops the need to continually revisit the issue

They provide a clear benchmark as to what the community has the right to expect in terms of future promotion and availability of alcohol

These factors underpin the further development of local policy and program initiatives, which are needed to complement the restrictions on availability