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The failure of political temperance: the politics of no-license in Broken Hill, 1883-1914

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In 1903 Broken Hill temperance worker Maria Braithwaite penned a short story full of pathos about a local drunkard named Gandy. Gandy lived with his orphaned niece Sue and nephew Pinch in a humpy at Dumpers Camp, was frequently unemployed, and squandered his spasmodic wages from the mines on drink, leading to his regular arrest for drunkenness. Gandy could not control his drinking for no matter how often he vowed 'never to touch another drop' he remained 'besotted' and his failure led his charges towards a life of poverty and wretchedness. With no money for medical treatment Sue became ill and died tragically, a furnace-like heat overcoming her body. Gandy knew it was his fault because of the demon drink and after hearing the hymn 'Are you coming home tonight?' took the abstinence pledge and became a great temperance man, an action which ensured his redemption, leaving him 'uplifted - purified - cleansed'.[1] Temperance here was a personal moral struggle, fought for the individual soul, and drunkenness intrinsically connected to social problems more broadly. In contrast, a public speech given by Reverend C. E. Schafer, to a local meeting of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in 1909, embodied a starkly different view of temperance. He depicted the cause as a political struggle between 'the temperance party' and 'the liquor party' to 'carry no-license' at the polls 'so as to render it impossible for the liquor party to open houses again'.[2] This was temperance as a political contest, fought at regular elections and aiming at prohibition of the legal sale of liquor.

Braithwaite's story and Schafer's speech occurred at the peak of strength of the temperance movement in New South Wales (NSW) and in Broken Hill itself. Braithwaite's story reflected themes — the addictive and destructive nature of alcohol, the redemptive power of temperance — that were constantly promoted in the press, on the

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1   M. Braithwaite (writing as Jack Rugby), 'Gandy and Co.', *Evening Journal*, 24 October 1903, p. 2.
2   *Barrier Miner*, 20 August 1909, p. 5.

platform and from the pulpit by temperance reformers throughout this period. They viewed alcohol and the liquor industry as 'a cancerous sore in the very midst of our national life', the overriding cause of individual distress and of broader social evils from poverty, ill-health, disease, madness and crime, and temperance, however conceived, as the only solution.[3] But as a result of these convictions, by the turn of the twentieth century the movement focused not only on persuading intemperate individuals like Gandy to abstain through 'moral suasion' but also on enforcing sobriety through legal coercion, utilising the process of local option — a public vote undertaken every three years to decide on the number of licensed premises that would operate in the community — with the aim of achieving 'no-license'.[4]

In this article, we use Broken Hill as a case study to analyse the fundamental failure of political temperance and the strategy of preventing drinking through voting at local option polls. As we demonstrate, despite enormous passion and energy displayed by temperance advocates, they consistently failed to achieve a meaningful change in drinking habits through their no-license campaigns. This failure had two main causes. Local option legislation never functioned effectively as a mechanism for license reduction undermining the campaigns of the movement. But more importantly, the voting public were never committed to the cause of legislative temperance. Often apathetic, substantial and sufficient numbers of those who did register a vote ignored the temperance campaign and supported the licensed sale of alcohol in their communities. Indeed, arguably, the intense politicisation of local option undermined the wider cause of temperance, and the ongoing efforts to persuade drinkers like Gandy to pledge themselves abstinent.

This study of temperance in Broken Hill complements existing scholarship on the broader movement in NSW (and Australia) by providing a detailed analysis of the operation of local option in a

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3   *Barrier Miner*, 2 April 1892, p. 2; F. B. Boyce, *The Drink Problem in Australia, or, The Plagues of Alcohol and the Remedies*, London, 1893.

4   The term 'moral suasion' was widely used within the temperance movement to distinguish campaigns based on persuading drinkers to abstain, and those based on lobbying government for stricter controls on alcohol. See B. Harrison, 'Two Roads to Social Reform: Francis Place and the ''Drunken Committee'' of 1834', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1968, pp. 272-300. He argues that the resort to compulsion was a feature of the more evangelical approach to social reform, in contrast to the rational secular stress on self-improvement, embodied in reformers like Francis Place, Jeremy Bentham and J. S. Mill.

specific regional community.[5] The most fruitful field of research on Australian temperance has been its connections with trans-national first-wave feminism, and more broadly, the relationship between drinking, gender and democratic politics. Broken Hill clearly illustrates the importance of women to the movement, not least to its failure in a town with disproportionate numbers of men.[6] There are also many important studies of the growing medicalisation of habitual drunkenness in the late nineteenth century, its complex connections to the temperance movement, and the way this intellectual shift gradually undermined the moralising concerns which underlay temperance.[7] Quentin Beresford's thesis is still the key work on the rise of the political anti-drink movement in NSW and our study bears out his broad conclusion that temperance reformers 'failed to appreciate the social and cultural forces which stimulated widespread habits of drinking'.[8] Walter Phillips, J. D. Bollen and Richard Broome have all

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5   For studies of New South Wales temperance see, M. Roe, *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia, 1835-1851*, Parkville (Vic), 1965, chs 8-9; M. Allen, 'The Temperance Shift: Drunkenness, Responsibility and the Regulation of Alcohol in NSW, 1788-1856', PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 2013; Q. Beresford, 'Drinkers and the Anti-Drink Movement in Sydney, 1870-1930', PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1984; R. Fitzgerald and T. L. Jordan, *Under the Influence*, Sydney, 2009, ch. 4. One partial exception is Jennifer Sloggett's thesis on temperance in Newcastle, but she is largely concerned with religious divisions and their intersection with social class. See J. Sloggett, 'Temperance and class: with particular reference to Newcastle and the south Maitland coalfields, 1860-1928', PhD thesis, University of Newcastle, 1989.

6   A. Blainey, 'The prohibition and total abstinence movement in Australia 1880-1910', in R. Dare (ed.), *Food, Power and Community: Essays in the History of Food and Drink*, Adelaide, 1999, pp. 142-152; A. Hyslop, 'Christian temperance and social reform: the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Victoria 1887-1912', in S. Willis (ed.), *Women, Faith and Fetes*, Melbourne 1977, pp. 43-62; E. Windschuttle, 'Women, class and temperance: moral reform in Eastern Australia 1832-1857', *Push from the Bush*, No. 3, 1978, pp. 5-25; J. Pixley, 'Wowser and Pro-Woman Politics: Temperance against Australian Patriarchy', *Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 1991, pp. 293-314; D. E. Kirkby, 'Drinking "The Good Life": Australia c.1880-1980', in M. P. Holt (ed.), *Alcohol: A Social and Cultural History*, Oxford, 2006, pp. 203-223; I. Tyrell, 'International Aspects of the Woman's Temperance Movement in Australia: The Influence of the American WCTU, 1882-1914', *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 12, 1983, pp. 284-304.

7   M. Lewis, 'The Early Alcoholism Treatment Movement in Australia, 1859-1939', *Drug and Alcohol Review*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1992, pp. 75-84; S. Garton, '"Once a Drunkard Always a Drunkard": Social Reform and the Problem of "Habitual Drunkenness" in Australia, 1880-1914', *Labour History*, Vol. 53, 1987, pp. 38-53; D. Adair, 'Respectable, Sober and Industrious? Attitudes to Alcohol in Early Colonial Adelaide', *Labour History*, Vol. 70, 1996, pp. 131-55; A. Piper, 'All the Waters of Lethe: An Experience of Female Alcoholism in Federation Queensland', *Queensland Review*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2011, pp. 85-97.

8   Beresford, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

examined the temperance movement in connection with the rise of political Protestantism, in alliance with the first Liberal party, an alliance that was certainly at play in Broken Hill.[9] More importantly for Broken Hill, political temperance inspired considerable resistance to 'wowserism', which was exploited by the liquor industry to oppose local option, as Broome, Dunstan and Hogan have shown.[10]

More broadly, our argument builds on Brian Harrison's classic study of British temperance as a movement of and for respectability, and its prohibitionist campaigns (up to 1872) as largely symbolic rather than instrumental.[11] Tony Dingle's study of Prohibitionist politics in Britain in the last quarter of the nineteenth century is more directly relevant, and his conclusions are similar to Beresford's: Prohibitionists were effective political agitators but poor temperance reformers. Their determined advocacy of an idealistic but hopelessly impractical solution prevented the passing of any workable measure of reform.[12] This argument, which seems to apply to legislative temperance throughout the British world, is thrown into relief by our more detailed study of Broken Hill.[13] As we show, the contest over no-license politicised the issue of temperance and inspired a reaction, not just by the liquor industry but by drinkers, and even some non-drinkers, who rejected state intervention into their social life. We begin with some brief discussion of Broken Hill and its drinking culture

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9   W. Phillips, *Defending "a Christian Country": Churchmen and Society in New South Wales in the 1880s and After*, St. Lucia (Qld), 1981; J. D. Bollen, *Protestantism and Social Reform in New South Wales 1890-1910*, Melbourne, 1972; R. Broome, *Treasure in Earthen Vessels: Protestant Christianity in New South Wales Society, 1900-1914*, St. Lucia, 1980. J. Brett has extended these arguments into the twentieth century: *Australian Liberals and the Moral Middle Class: From Alfred Deakin to John Howard*, Port Melbourne (Vic), 2003, ch. 3.

10   Broome, *op. cit.,* ch. 7; M. Hogan, *The Sectarian Strand: Religion in Australian History*, Ringwood (Vic), 1987; K. Dunstan, *Wowsers; Being an Account of the Prudery Exhibited by Certain Outstanding Men and Women in Such Matters as Drinking, Smoking, Prostitution, Censorship and Gambling*, Melbourne, 1968.

11   B. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-72*, London, 1971, pp. 368-386. See also similar arguments for American temperance as a 'symbolic crusade', in J. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement*, 2nd ed., Urbana (US), 1986.

12   A. E. Dingle, *The Campaign for Prohibition in Victorian England: The United Kingdom Alliance, 1872-1895*, London, 1980. See also L. L. Shiman, *Crusade against Drink in Victorian England*, Basingstoke, 1988.

13   New Zealand may be an exception. See A. R. Grigg, 'Prohibition, the Church and Labour: A Programme for Social Reform, 1890-1914', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 1981, pp. 135-54; P. Christoffel, 'Prohibition and the Myth of 1919', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 2008, pp. 154-75.

before examining the historical context for the emergence of legislative temperance. We then explore the public debate around alcohol in the early years of Broken Hill before analysing the nine local option polls held between 1883 and 1914 in detail. The failure to persuade Broken Hill to outlaw drinking or even reduce licenses embodies the larger failure of the legislative temperance movement.

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Broken Hill is a particularly good place to analyse the impact and effectiveness of legislative temperance. As a mining town with both a militant labour movement and a disproportionate number of single male workers who relied on the town's many hotels, it embodied the drinking culture that the temperance movement sought to destroy. Further, the mines which led to the establishment of the town and gave it its purpose, were on strike in 1883, the same year that local option legislation was first put to use in NSW.[14] The intense mining activity gave Broken Hill a reputation as an unrestrained, working-class settlement — a 'Gibraltar of unionism and site of industrial unrest' where tough, hardy men withstood the realities of a forbidding environment. The mines operated twenty-four hours a day six days a week and in the early years workers needed to apply every day to the mining offices for a job. This provided little security and even when lucky enough to gain work, men faced the possibility of contracting pneumonia, lead poisoning and phthisis (pulmonary tuberculosis) caused by cold and dusty conditions and of death resulting from cave-ins and fires caused by the easily-ignited timber workings of the mine.[15] These risks and the harsh conditions of the Barrier were not conducive to family life and so the town had a disproportionately male population throughout the period under study: 1.49 men to every woman in 1891, 1.27 in 1900 and 1.2 in 1910.[16] The uncertain lives of single male miners led many to live in cheaply-constructed temporary dwellings, built from corrugated iron and weatherboard which offered little relief from the extreme temperatures of the region.[17] These were the conditions in which Gandy's struggle with drink developed.

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[14]   R. H. B. Kearns, *Broken Hill 1883-1893: Discovery and Development*, Broken Hill, 1973, p. 14; G. Blainey, *The Rise of Broken Hill*, Melbourne, 1968, p. 29.

[15]   E. Eklund, *Mining Towns: Making a Living, Making a Life*, Sydney, 2012, pp. 36, 41.

[16]   Kearns, *op. cit.,* p. 20; R. J. Solomon, *The Richest Lode: Broken Hill 1883-1988,* Sydney, 1988, p. 126.

[17]   *The Barrier Silver and Tin Fields in 1888: Being a Series of Letters Written by a Special Correspondent of 'The South Australian Register', 'Adelaide Observer' and 'Evening Journal'*, Adelaide, 1970 [1886], p. 6.

Despite its semi-desert climate, physical isolation and harsh working conditions, Broken Hill rapidly developed into a prosperous town. On the back of the mineral boom the population increased from an estimated 6,000 in 1887 to 23,900 by the end of 1899.[18] As it grew, a strong union movement developed in tandem, fighting for better working conditions for miners, which led to Broken Hill becoming synonymous with the fight for worker's rights especially during the industrial upheavals of 1892 and 1909.[19] Thus fighting in defence of individual rights and organising to do so was a part of the town's identity and it would come to the fore when challenged by the zeal of the anti-drink crusade.

One of the major features that symbolised Broken Hill's prosperity was the rapid increase in hotels — from three in 1885 to eighty in 1889 (Table 3).[20] While married men needed to provide a home for their families, large numbers of single men came to Broken Hill in the hope of high wages and steady work in the mines, and hotels filled their need for temporary and convenient accommodation.[21] The local *Barrier Miner* newspaper regularly contained a 'Hotels' column which boasted of 'first class', 'excellent' and 'superior' accommodation for boarders, as well as emphasising the quality of their catering and the availability of stabling.[22] But for the temperance movement, these features were the lures used by a fundamentally corrupt industry to entrap the unwary, causing drunkenness, violence, disease, madness and death.[23] Broken Hill thus embodied a hard-drinking culture which has long been a mythical feature of Australian identity, and the focus of temperance critique. Historian Russel Ward famously claimed of colonial Australia that '[t]o judge from contemporary accounts, no people on the face of the earth ever absorbed more alcohol per head of population'.[24] This is

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[18]   For 1887, see Kearns, *op. cit.,* p. 20. For 1899, see T. A. Coghlan, *A Statistical Account of the Seven Colonies of Australasia: 1899-1900*, Sydney, 1900, p. 296.

[19]   For more on Broken Hill's union identity see B. Dickey, 'The Broken Hill Strike, 1892', *Labour History*, No. 11, 1966, pp. 40-53; B. Ellem and J. Shields, 'Making the ''Gibraltar of Unionism'': Union Organising and Peak Union Agency in Broken Hill, 1886-1930', *Labour History*, No. 83, 2002, pp. 65-88.

[20]   Note that Table 3 lists the 40 hotels in the Silverton district for 1885. Only 3 of these were in the nascent town itself.

[21]   Blainey, *Rise of Broken Hill*, p. 112. He notes that Broken Hill's lowest paid labourers received 12s 6d a day compared to 7s a day in Melbourne.

[22]   Examples include *Barrier Miner*, 3 January 1895 p. 1, 30 March 1889, p. 1, 1 April 1889 p. 1. 22 May 1896, p. 1; 1 January 1890, p. 1.

[23]   Boyce, *op. cit.,* ch. 1.

[24]   R. B. Ward, *The Australian Legend*, 2nd ed, Melbourne, 1966, p. 35.

not only empirically false, but, as Ward acknowledged, was based on the perceptions of nineteenth-century observers who were often influenced by, if not members of, the temperance movement.[25] In fact Australian alcohol consumption almost certainly decreased substantially from a peak in the 1830s, partially as a result of the temperance movement. By the period covered in this article, there were approximately four litres of pure alcohol available per person in NSW, at least 50% less than in England and Wales during the same period; about half the available alcohol per Australian in 2015-6, and about third to a half of what was available in NSW in the 1830s.[26]

However, drinking habits in Australia were changing significantly at the turn of the twentieth century with refrigeration, the consequent rise of domestically-brewed lager beer, and the consolidation of the brewing industry and its practice of 'tied houses' (public houses that were owned by a brewer) all helping shape a distinctive masculine pub culture.[27] Ward was more perceptive about the origins of this culture, at least in rural areas like Broken Hill, when he described the legendary Australian as one who 'drinks deeply on occasion', and depicted the drunken 'spree', after a period of hard labour, as 'a traditional pattern of behaviour' in the bush, that was further promoted by the gold rushes into an 'outback tradition of work and burst'.[28] Associated with this pattern of episodic drunkenness — binge-

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[25]   A. E. Dingle, *Drink and Drinking in Nineteenth Century Australia: A Statistical Commentary*, Melbourne, 1978; A. E. Dingle, '"The Truly Magnificent Thirst": An Historical Survey of Australian Drinking Habits', *Historical Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 75, 1980, pp. 227-49; N. G. Butlin, 'Yo Ho Ho and How Many Bottles of Rum?', *Australian Economic History Review*, Vol. 23, 1983, pp. 1-27. Ward's sources included Louisa Meredith, who described drunkenness as 'a universal failing' among the working classes (at a time when actual consumption was falling dramatically), arguing that '[t]he advocates of the temperance and tee-total societies have, I believe, effected considerable good, but much more remains to be done'. Louisa Meredith, *Notes and Sketches of New South Wales: During a Residence in That Colony from 1839 to 1844*, London, 1844, pp. 54-8, 75-7.

[26]   See Allen, 'Temperance Shift', Appendix 1. For comparison, we used Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for total Available Alcohol, divided by population. The ABS currently calculates alcohol per adult (15+) but it is difficult to make similar calculations for the nineteenth century, and the assumption that children did not drink may well be wrong. See Australian Bureau of Statistics, '4307.0.55.001 - Apparent Consumption of Alcohol, Australia, 2016-17', <www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4307.0.55.001> (3 September 2018). For English figures we used G. B. Wilson, *Alcohol and the Nation*, London, 1940, pp. 331-333.

[27]   B. J. Stubbs, 'A New Drink for Young Australia: From Ale to Lager Beer in New South Wales, 1880 to 1930', in Dare (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 126-141; J. M. Freeland, *Australian Pub*, Melbourne, 1966.

[28]   Ward, *op. cit.*, pp. 2, 100-2, 121-2, 188-90.

drinking as we call it today — were significant cultural practices which helped to bind working men together, notably the 'shouting' or 'treating' of rounds, an egalitarian ritual associated with generosity and mateship but one which temperance advocates argued (with some justice) led to increased drunkenness.[29] But while temperance advocates often pointed to rates of arrest for drunkenness as evidence of the scale of the problem, they clearly tell us far more about the capacity and concerns of the police.[30] Indeed, notwithstanding regular expressions of concern about the problem of drunkenness, arrests in Broken Hill were not significantly higher than the colony as a whole, and certainly lower than metropolitan Sydney.[31] The masculine culture of binge-drinking was undoubtedly a feature of early Broken Hill, but we cannot say with any certainty whether overall rates of drinking or drunkenness were disproportionate to the colony at large.

However, it was in response to the persistent nature of such problems, or perceived problems, that the temperance movement shifted from moral suasion to legislative restraint. In all countries with an active temperance movement there was a shared evolution over the nineteenth century. Early temperance societies, largely composed of an evangelical social elite and focused on persuading the urban poor to give up spirits, often through the mechanism of the abstinence pledge, were replaced by a later mass movement among the respectable middle and working classes, which increasingly sought to prevent all drinking by lobbying for stricter government regulation.[32] This pattern holds for NSW, where temperance membership expanded steadily from the 1850s and became increasingly political from the late 1860s.[33] There were a growing number of dedicated temperance societies, the

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[29]   Beresford, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-173; Kirkby, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-8. For temperance criticism see *The Catholic Press*, 26 March 1903, p. 7.

[30]   M. Allen, 'Policing a Free Society: Drunkenness and Liberty in Colonial New South Wales', *History Australia*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2015, pp. 150-3; M. Sturma, 'Police and Drunkards in Sydney, 1841-1851', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 1981, pp. 48-56. In any case, arrests for drunkenness in Broken Hill appear to have been substantially below the rate for the colony as a whole.

[31]   For comparisons of the arrest rate see, *Barrier Miner*, 11 January 1894, p. 2; 25 January 1895, p. 4; 1 April 1897, p. 2; Allen, 'Temperance Shift', Appendix 4. For public concern see for example, *Barrier Miner*, 9 April 1889, p. 2; 11 January 1897, p. 4; 5 January 1900, p. 4; 2 February 1904, p. 4; 13 January 1913, p. 2.

[32]   For more on this history see Allen, 'Temperance Shift', ch. 9; Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*; I. Tyrrell, *Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America*, Westport (US), 1979.

[33]   The earlier flourishing of temperance in the 1830s was followed by a stark decline in the late 1840s and a recovery in the 1850s. See: Allen, 'Temperance Shift', ch. 9.

most significant of which were the NSW Alliance for the Suppression of Intemperance (established in the colony in 1857), the Sons and Daughters of Temperance (1864), the Independent Order of Good Templars (1874), the Church of England Temperance Society (1874), the Rechabites (c. 1880), and the WCTU (1882).[34] Temperance in NSW had a total active membership in the tens of thousands by 1883 (when the colony had about 800,000 people) and probably one hundred thousand by 1914 (1,900,000), and there were many more who sympathised with the broader cause.[35]

The Political Association for the Suppression of Intemperance (PASI), modelled on the United Kingdom Alliance for the Suppression of the Liquor Traffic (U.K. Alliance), was the first explicitly political temperance body in NSW, founded in 1866. It echoed its British forebear in lobbying the government for a permissive liquor bill — an early version of local option which allowed local communities to hold a plebiscite with the power to reduce the number of licenses in their district.[36] PASI was driven by an increasingly activist and politicized Protestant clergy, concerned about urban poverty and committed to social reform more broadly, and the permissive bill and Sabbatarian opposition to Sunday trading became a symbol of their larger cause.[37] At the time, licenses were issued by magistrates benches and as a police magistrate reported to a Select Committee in 1870, they were 'all but bound to grant a license if the accommodation is sufficient, and the

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[34]   E. J. H. Knapp, 'A Brief History of the Temperance Movement in New South Wales', in *Temperance in Australia : The Memorial Volume of the International Temperance Convention*, Melbourne, 1889, pp. 27-36; J. Roseby, 'The New South Wales Alliance for the Suppression of Intemperance', in *Temperance in Australia*, pp. 37-39. Confusingly this first NSW Alliance was not a political organisation describing itself as 'unsectarian and Non-Political' at its establishment in 1857. See New South Wales Alliance for the Suppression of Intemperance, *Prospectus,* Sydney, 1857.

[35]   Unfortunately calculating the membership of temperance societies is very difficult, Not only did societies have a vested interest in exaggerating membership but where figures are given they often count the number of signatories to a pledge of abstinence, rather than active members. Both of these are conservative estimates of active membership based on an informed analysis of the available data. Notably over 30,000 signed petitions against Sunday trading in 1880-1, the Local Option League claimed 60,000 active members in 1887, and 145,000 signed a petition for six o'clock closing in 1916, while a clear majority (62% or 329,582 voters - only 54% of the electorate participated) voted for six o'clock in the referendum that year, indicative of broader support. Beresford, *op. cit.*, pp. 93, 144, 235, 244; W. Phillips, '"Six O'Clock Swill": The Introduction of Early Closing of Hotel Bars in Australia', *Historical Studies*, Vol. 19, 1980, pp. 250-66.

[36]   Beresford, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14, 19-20; Dingle, *Campaign for Prohibition*, ch. 1.

[37]   Beresford, *op. cit.*, ch. 2.

applicant of good character'.[38] This was in large part due to the effective lobbying of the Licensed Victuallers Association (LVA) who had successfully persuaded the government to increase opening hours in 1862, their influence being based on the importance of licensing fees to colonial revenue.[39] Though PASI failed to secure a Permissive Bill or further restrict Sunday trading, their reformist agenda was debated in parliament throughout the 1870s and their petitioning campaign helped to consolidate the temperance movement and the Protestant churches around political lobbying as the main means of achieving moral and social reform.[40]

By the early 1880s political temperance, as part of a larger politicized Protestantism, was an increasingly effective and powerful lobby and the Henry Parkes government, elected in 1880, was both sympathetic to their agenda and beholden to their political support.[41] During the 1880 election, temperance societies began the practice of surveying candidates for their views on liquor reform and published lists of those who pledged to support local option legislation, activism which was widely seen as significant in the government's increased majority.[42] Also that year, delegates at the International Temperance Conference in Melbourne, resolved that each colony should form a collective political body, similar to the U.K. Alliance, to lobby their government for local option.[43] Even before they could formally organise in NSW, Parkes passed a new and updated Licensing Act (1882) which introduced the first version of local option, and ordered all houses to be closed on Sundays. The Act emerged from a highly politicised lobbying process over several years, with churches and temperance societies competing against the liquor industry to influence the legislation. It echoed temperance concerns by establishing new licensing boards and liquor inspectors, with powers to fine and even remove licenses from publicans who breached the strict regulations; but it also allowed for liberal opening hours (6 am to

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38   New South Wales Legislative Council, Select Committee into the Sale of Liquors Licensing Act Amendment Bill, 1870, cited in Beresford, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

39   *Licensed Publicans Act*, No 2, 1838, s. 51; *Sale of Liquors Licensing Act of 1862*, s. 40; Beresford, *op. cit.*, ch. 3.

40   Beresford, *op. cit.*, ch. 3.

41   A. W. Martin, 'Henry Parkes and Electoral Manipulation, 1872-82', *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*, Vol. 8, No. 31, 1958, pp. 268-80; Beresford, *op. cit.*, chs. 4-5.

42   Beresford, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-9.

43   H. G. Rudd and H. T. C. Cox (eds), *International Temperance Conference Melbourne, 1880. Papers, Debates, and General Proceedings*, Melbourne, 1880, p. 27; *Leader*, 13 November 1880, p. 21.

midnight), and a flawed system of local option under which a two-thirds majority of ratepayers (as opposed to the electoral franchise which had no property qualification) could reduce licenses in their district.[44] Thus although the legislation sought to appease temperance concerns, advocates saw it as hopelessly compromised. Ratepayers were a small fraction of all adults, and securing a two-thirds majority was unrealistic and would prove unachievable. Hence the temperance movement immediately began to lobby for further reform and especially a more effective form of local option.

In 1883, the New South Wales Local Option League was established as an organizing body for the broader movement's political campaign, and in 1898 they became the New South Wales Alliance for the Suppression of Intemperance (N.S.W. Alliance). Throughout our period they were the key organizing force for the political temperance movement, with representatives from different temperance societies agreeing to unite their resources at elections.[45] The long-time President, the Anglican minister, Reverend Francis Bertie Boyce, was probably the best-known temperance advocate of the time with his annual drink bills, a highly self-serving calculation of the cost of alcohol to the economy, a key focus of temperance lobbying.[46] The N.S.W. Alliance organized a colony-wide campaign around local option, under the 1882 Act, at the triennial municipal elections, but more importantly, they continued to campaign for more effective legislation, and for friendly candidates to parliament.[47] This effort was finally successful in 1905 when the Liberal government led by Joseph Carruthers, notably the first elected with female suffrage, passed a new Licensing Amendment Bill which linked local option to State elections and gave a vote to everyone on the electoral roll.[48] It was under this updated local option legislation that temperance in Broken Hill became especially fraught.

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[44] Beresford, *op. cit.*, ch. 5. For the franchise see J. Brett, *From Secret Ballot to Democracy Sausage: How Australia Got Compulsory Voting*, Sydney, 2019, ch. 2.

[45] Knapp, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-2; *Evening News*, 30 January 1883, p. 3; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 May 1898, p. 3.

[46] Boyce, *op. cit.,* p. 71.

[47] Licensing Act 1882, s. 34 (i).

[48] Licensing Amendment Act 1905; Beresford, *op. cit.*, ch. 7; Bollen, *op. cit.,* chs. 9-10; Broome, *op. cit.,* chs. 7-8.

Since Broken Hill was only established after the introduction of local option, temperance there was always politicised. Having said this, legal coercion was never a substitute for moral suasion and the anti-drink crusade consistently appealed for individuals to abstain to reduce the number of drinkers, to 'prove powers of strength to their weaker brethren', and, importantly, as a symbol of solidarity within the movement.[49] The earliest recorded temperance activity in the new town occurred in December 1887 when a torch-lit procession of more than 1,000 people listened attentively to addresses and sang temperance songs like 'Rescue the perishing', 'Sympathy with the fallen' and 'Where is my wandering boy tonight' and twenty newly minted teetotallers signed the pledge.[50]

The Order of Good Templars seem to have been the first active society and by 1890 they boasted a membership of 246 in the Pioneer Lodge, expanding during the next twenty years to form at least six separate lodges in the town.[51] Templars sought to spread the word of Gospel Temperance to young and old with juvenile temples which aimed to educate children about the evils of drinking, gambling, smoking and profanity.[52] Similarly, the Rechabites first advertised for members to join the 'wealthiest, safest and best temperance society in Australia' in 1891 and within two years had three male, three female and three juvenile tents and a membership of two hundred and fifty-eight.[53] Both groups offered financial support to members in times of sickness, death and hardship as well as regular meetings that were enlivened by visiting lecturers and missionaries. They attracted members through highly visible participation in Broken Hill society, holding children's picnics, coffee suppers and grand concerts, distinguished by music, banners, elaborate regalia, and fervent sermons on deliverance from the curse of drink.[54] But all members took the abstinence pledge and through that sacrifice gained the mutual support they needed to improve the lives of others.

Similarly, membership of the WCTU provided a mechanism of mutual support for women who, by accepting each other's

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49   *Barrier Miner*, 27 April 1908, p. 3.
50   *Christian Colonist*, 9 December 1887, p. 7.
51   *Christian Colonist*, 13 December 1889, p. 4.
52   *Barrier Miner*, 7 August 1890 p. 2; 26 July 1893, p. 2.
53   *Barrier Miner*, 25 June 1891, p. 2; *Advertiser*, 17 August 1893, p. 6.
54   *Barrier Miner*, 7 August 1893, p. 2; 15 April 1890, p. 3; 27 May 1891, p. 3; 21 April 1894, p. 3; 18 July 1910, p. 1.

commitment to taking the pledge, worked together to achieve a broad social reform agenda centred on prohibition.[55] Their opposition to alcohol stemmed from its impact on homes, women and children whose husbands and fathers spent their wages on drink, and its motto, 'For God and home and humanity', embraced the importance of domestic bliss, which was promoted through visiting and distributing tracts to mothers and wives who were 'anxious for the temperance cause to prosper'.[56] When Jessie Ackerman, the WCTU's second world missionary, visited Broken Hill in July 1889 she addressed only sixty women, but returning in 1891 a series of venues were packed out and the following year an enthusiastic following established enough local branches to form a District Union and hold its first annual convention.[57] Members conducted gaol visits, collected funds for the hospital and other charitable causes, and made and altered clothing for the needy, as well as holding temperance missions and lectures, often featuring American and English speakers, reflecting the transnational nature of the society.[58]

The original Barrier Temperance Alliance (BTA) also formed in the late 1880s as an off-shoot of the colonial body, established links with all the local temperance groups in order to provide a more coordinated approach to the political campaign against the liquor party. They urged supporters to unite in promoting the cause of license reduction through local option, especially at municipal elections where they sought to have favourable candidates elected to council and attacked those seen as allied with the liquor industry.[59] For example, the BTA publicly refused to support Mr Albert Brice for alderman despite the fact he favoured local option, because he supported compensation for publicans who lost their licenses.[60] In the lead-up to the 1890 poll they sought to publicise the temperance cause, calling on their several hundred members to remind voters of the need to proactively request a local option ballot paper, and organised regular meetings, culminating in a monster procession and rally at which 'gentleman

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55   J. Pargeter, *For God, Home and Humanity: National Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Australia: Centenary History 1891-1991*, Golden Grove (SA), 1995, p. 7.

56   F. Willard, *Glimpses of Fifty Years: The Autobiography of an American Woman*, Chicago, 1889, p. 606; *Christian Colonist*, 4 October 1889, p. 3; *Barrier Miner*, 18 July 1893 p. 2.

57   *Christian Colonist*, 2 August 1889, p. 3; Pargeter, *op. cit.*, p. 7; *Christian Colonist*, 17 June 1893, p. 3; 30 August 1891, p. 6; 3 June 1892, p. 3.

58   *Christian Colonist*, 12 February 1892, p. 5; 17 June 1892, p. 3.

59   *Barrier Miner*, 12 June 1907, p. 3.

60   *Barrier Miner*, 28 January 1890, p. 3.

advocates of local option' spoke. The president attended the farewell of John Cann, Broken Hill's MLA in 1890 and the secretary represented local residents when they opposed new hotel license applications in the district licensing court.[61]

The BTA was particularly active after the new local option legislation was introduced in 1905. In December 1906 the Mayor, Alderman Ivey, as president called for a more aggressive approach and the active involvement of such prominent officials helped increase public interest in the temperance campaign.[62] Albert Bruntnell, general secretary of the NSW. Alliance, conducted a ten day no-license campaign in 1907, and John Complin, in the same capacity, held a fifteen-day mission in 1912.[63] Bruntnell's most popular lecture, 'From Pub to Platform', outlined the story of his birth in a hotel followed by years associated with the liquor traffic which exposed him to the bad effects of alcohol on innocent wives and children, and convinced him of the need for activism through local option, to solve the drink problem democratically.[64] The use of touring temperance speakers could be very effective, as for example when the British preacher Edward Tennyson Smith spoke in Broken Hill, persuading 250 listeners to pledge to vote no-license at the coming election.[65]

Supplementing the temperance societies were the town's Protestant churches, especially the Methodists. During Broken Hill's early years a steady influx of Cornish miners from the failing South Australian tin mines created a strong, close-knit community of Wesleyans, Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians and members of the United Methodist Free Church. They soon represented just over thirty per cent of the population and were highly active in the temperance cause while the Baptist and Congregational churches formed smaller but important pro-temperance congregations.[66] In 1887 Methodist,

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61   *Barrier Miner*, 24 January 1890, p. 3; 2 July 1891, p. 2.

62   *Register*, 11 December 1906, p. 5; *Barrier Miner*, 10 December 1906, p. 2.

63   *Barrier Miner*, 28 October 1912, p. 5.

64   *Barrier Miner*, 12 April 1907, p. 2.

65   *Barrier Miner*, 12 April 1912, p. 2; 22 April 1912, p. 5; P. T. Winskill, *Temperance Standard Bearers of the Nineteenth Century: A Biographical and Statistical Temperance Dictionary,* Manchester, 1898, p. 440.

66   P. J. Payton, 'The Cornish in South Australia: their influence and experience from immigration to assimilation 1836- 1936', PhD thesis, University of Adelaide, 1978, p. 127; W. Phillips, 'Christianity and its defence in New South Wales, circa 1880 to 1890', PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1969, p. 31; *Kapunda Herald*, 14 June 1889, p. 3.

Bible Christian and Congregational clergy came together to conduct a procession and open-air temperance meeting at which they lauded the benefits of temperance and appealed to the intemperate to sign the pledge.[67] In the following year the impact of a church-temperance collaboration was evident when Congregational minister, Reverend Mackay 'excited the ill will of the publican party' by his vigorous pursuit of temperance work.[68] Churches were also active in the movement's political campaigns encouraging votes for no-license from the pulpit and providing venues for meetings, lectures and missions.[69] The Blende Street Methodist Church acted as the temperance movement's Broken Hill headquarters for more than thirty years, especially under the leadership of the so-called 'fighting parson', the town's prominent local activist, Methodist minister Charles Schafer.[70]

Schafer was not averse to sensational publicity and the BTA used his services because 'he was prepared to make bold utterances on the liquor question'.[71] He charged the liquor trade with 'debasing manhood' and described it as the 'greatest home-cursing power in existence'.[72] Once referred to as the 'Barrier no-license gladiator', Reverend Schafer was showered with rotten eggs and fruit by hostile crowds on a visit to Adelaide at the invitation of the South Australian Temperance Alliance.[73] While condemning such behaviour he nonetheless claimed that the liquor people had played right into the hands of reformers by 'booming' at his meetings and attracting attention to the cause.[74] Never one to waver in his convictions, Reverend Schafer asserted that the liquor trade 'might just as well try to stop the dust from blowing in Broken Hill as to prevent no-license being accomplished'.[75]

The existence of temperance businesses provided further visibility to the anti-drink movement. Mrs Whitelaw ran a Coffee Palace in Blende Street in 1889 and Mrs Greenslade a Temperance Hotel in

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67   *Christian Colonist*, 9 December 1887, p. 7.
68   *Christian Colonist*, 24 August 1888, p. 3.
69   *Barrier Miner*, 18 May 1903, p. 3; 3 June 1890, p. 2; 18 April 1908, p. 5; *Christian Colonist*, 4 October 1889, p. 3
70   *Barrier Miner*, 1 May 1926, p. 5; 31 March 1910, p. 3; *Christian Colonist*, 3 June 1892, p. 3; *Barrier Miner*, 9 December 1907, p. 2; 14 April 1908, p. 2; 5 June 1916, p. 5.
71   *Barrier Miner*, 31 March 1910, p. 3.
72   *Barrier Miner*, 11 March 1909, p. 3.
73   *Barrier Miner*, 13 October 1901, p. 5; 14 September 1907, p. 5.
74   *Barrier Miner*, 7 March 1910, p. 8.
75   *Barrier Miner*, 28 February 1908, p. 4.

Chloride Street in 1891.[76] The most notable of the no-liquor establishments was the Coffee Palace Hotel which opened in December 1889 at a cost of £12,000. The hotel provided accommodation for 108 people, a dining room for 120 and the 'best accommodation in the Barrier to residents and visitors'.[77] Situated in the main thoroughfare of Argent Street it became a prominent landmark but was rapidly forced to abandon sobriety to compete with the town's hotels, successfully applying for a liquor license in 1892.[78] In addition, a dedicated Temperance Hall fitted out with a cabinet organ and piano was opened in Cobalt Street in 1892, holding a weekly social dance, and providing a venue for religious services, lectures, lodge meetings, weddings, birthdays and catered parties.[79]

In contrast to the temperance cause, there was quite limited organisation among opponents of license reform. Publicans joined the L.V.A., with a Broken Hill chapter first meeting in 1890.[80] They supported the activities of the larger organisation, organised petitions to Parliament in favour of designated Sunday trading hours, and organised and financially supported candidates at local and parliamentary elections, especially after 1905.[81] In particular they promoted a series of short-lived Liberty Leagues which attracted some attention and support for their arguments against no-license.[82] A meeting in September 1910 attracted 800 listeners to hear Mr W. Nulty, a prominent Union official and the local head of the Liquor Trades Defence Union, who argued that political temperance involved 'a small section of the community … trying to take away the liberties that the people enjoyed' and claimed that no-license was 'a class measure' since the wealthy would keep liquor in their cellars while the poor would be forced to break the law.[83] Similarly, in 1909 W. A. Gregory Lloyd, a travelling lecturer sent from Sydney by the Liquor Trades Defence

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76   *Barrier Miner*, 19 June 1889, p. 3; 8 September 1891, p. 3.

77   N. Schultz-Byard, *History of Broken Hill - The Palace Hotel*, podcast, ABC Broken Hill, 5 May 2011, <www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2011/05/05/3208417.htm> (9 August 2018); *Barrier Miner*, 2 January 1891, p. 1.

78   *Barrier Miner,* 1 January 1890, p. 1; 22 February 1890, p. 1; 25 February 1890, p. 3; 2 May 1891 p. 3.

79   *Barrier Miner*, 30 June 1892, p. 4, and 31 May 1892, p. 2.

80   D. Kirkby, T. Luckins and C. McConville, *The Australian Pub*, Sydney, 2010, p. 92; *Barrier Miner*, 11 January 1890, p. 2.

81   *Barrier Miner*, 2 September 1891, p. 2; 6 December 1893, p. 2; 30 January 1892, p. 2; 3 January 1906, p. 2; 5 December 1907, p. 2.

82   *Barrier Miner*, 24 November 1913, p. 5.

83   *Barrier Miner*, 20 September 1910, p. 2.

Union, told a 'magnificent meeting' of Broken Hill citizens that the liquor problem was not a publican's question but a public question and hotels were public houses not publicans' houses. He asserted that temperance reform should be about moderation, not prohibition, which would only lead to secret drinking and sly-grog selling.[84] But there was clearly no comparison between the organised strength of temperance and its opponents and, especially after 1905, the movement eagerly anticipated a final victory over the demon drink.

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Between 1883 and 1914 Broken Hill held nine local option polls. The first took place on 7th February 1890 and up to and including the 1905 poll, they happened at triennial intervals and under the regulations of the 1882 Licensing Act. The town's four wards — Wills, Sturt, Burke and King — held independent polls, voting was not compulsory and only male and female adult rate-payers were eligible. Voters were required to answer two questions: whether any new licenses should be granted (A); and whether any existing licenses should be removed (B); but under the Licensing Amendment of 1883, eleven twentieths of total votes polled were required for a decision which would then be administered by a Special Licensing Court. Until 1898 ratepayers could have up to four votes depending on the value of their property; from 1899 onwards all ratepayers had a single vote.[85] This system of voting by ratepayers was widely criticised as undemocratic, since ratepayers were a minority of the population in most municipalities, and even of the electorate.[86] The justification, as it had been for election to the upper house, was that property-owners had a stake in the community, which entitled them to be consulted, an argument that was particularly relevant to Broken Hill with its highly transient population and small number of ratepayers (see Table 1). The results of each of Broken Hill's polls are listed in Table 2.

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[84]   *Barrier Miner*, 7 December 1909, p. 3.
[85]   Liquor Act 1898, s. 28.4; *New South Wales Statistical Register for 1892 and Previous Years*, Sydney, 1894, p. 636.
[86]   Beresford, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

Table 1 - Broken Hill population and number of ratepayers						
Local Option poll	**1890**	**1893**	**1896**	**1899**	**1902**	**1905**
Population	19,792	19,680	18,580	23,900	27,500	28,110
No. of ratepayers	3,714	4,699	4,375	3,455	3,506	5,872
Source: *New South Wales Statistical Registers*, 1890-1905						

Despite temperance reformers enthusiastically distributing how-to-vote instructions, the town's first poll in 1890 recorded a little over 1,100 votes, less than a third of the eligible ratepayers, many of whom were entitled to cast more than one vote.[87] In the lead-up to the concurrent municipal election the BTA invited friendly candidates to address a public meeting and while only one of the six attended the crowd were reassured that any candidate who was safe on the question of local option would be safe on any other and 'would not lack intelligence'.[88] Of particular note was the temperance party's choice of Rechabite Brother H. J. Hookings who succeeded in Sturt ward, and local option supporters Zebina Lane and A.C. Topperwein who succeeded in King and Burke wards respectively.[89] Despite this, only one ward (Sturt) voted to remove licenses possibly reflecting confusion about the new system, given that almost a third of votes cast were informal.[90] For 1893 and 1896 individual Ward results are unavailable but the town as a whole voted to remove licenses and it seems likely that the temperance movement influenced these results which led to significant reductions in licensed houses relative to population, as the town grew and licenses fell (see Table 3).[91] In contrast, in 1899, 1902 and 1905 the results were ambivalent with voters rejecting new licenses and license reduction. The LVA had become increasingly active in campaigning for the rights of publicans and despite the campaign and successful votes the number of licenses increased, accommodating the ongoing growth of the town. The total number of votes at these ratepayer polls remained small, never more

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[87]   *New South Wales Statistical Register for 1890*, p. 587.
[88]   *Barrier Miner*, 21 January 1890, p. 2.
[89]   *Barrier Miner*, 8 February 1890, p. 2.
[90]   There were 229 informal votes. *Barrier Miner*, 8 February 1890, p. 2.
[91]   Kearns, *op. cit.,* p. 51.

than 5% of the population, and even the granting of female suffrage (in 1902, in time for the 1905 poll) made little difference.

After the passing of the 1905 Liquor Act the local option fight became much more passionate and politicised, with higher participation and more energetic campaigns on both sides.[92] All voters — including recently enfranchised women — were now eligible, replacing the flawed polling of ratepayers, and a third question (C) invited voters to ban all licenses from their community, an existential threat to publicans, and a long-desired dream for the temperance movement. However, a successful vote for No License required a three fifths majority of voters.[93] As a result, the campaign was now explicitly framed by both sides over the question of 'no-license'. For temperance it would mean 'all the bells of heaven have rung the ship of Temperance in' but for their opponents it would mean being 'crushed under the heel of teetotal fanaticism'.[94]

In consequence, the 1907 poll aroused a level of interest not seen at any of Broken Hill's previous local option elections. Cabs, private vehicles and drays took voters in a steady flow throughout the day and argumentative crowds blocked the front of the Town Hall polling booth where pro and anti-liquor trade touts 'said their bitterest things concerning opponents' tactics'.[95] Female voters were reported to have taken an especial interest in the campaign, and targeted appeals were made for their support.[96] In an emblematic example, a 'Mother of Six' was reportedly forced to beg for credit at the butcher, baker and grocer because her husband had misspent his earnings on liquor. Apparently, nowhere in NSW needed local option as much as Broken Hill. [97]

The town's estimated population of 33,590 voted in one of two state electorates, Broken Hill or Sturt, and the 4,000 people who cast their vote in each electorate represented just over half of those on the electoral roll, a high turnout given the absence of a concurrent general election.[98] In both electorates, a simple majority voted for no-license

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92   *Barrier Miner,* 31 March 1905, p. 2.
93   Examples are *Barrier Miner,* 8 October 1910, p. 5; 1 December 1913, p. 4.
94   Boyce, *op, cit.,* p. 296; *Barrier Miner,* 15 May 1906, p. 4.
95   *Barrier Miner,* 11 September 1907, p. 2.
96   *Barrier Miner,* 7 September 1907, p. 1; 11 September 1907, p. 2; *Chronicle,* 14 September 1907, p. 36.
97   *Barrier Miner,* 7 September 1907, p. 3.
98   *Barrier Miner,* 9 September 1907, p. 4.

but not the required three-fifths; and thus the final result was for a reduced number. This aligned with the state as a whole where thirty-five of sixty electorates and a majority of 32,000 voters favoured license reduction, resulting in the closure of 293 hotels from a total of 3,023.[99] In Broken Hill the anti-drink crusade declared the win a great victory that would be sure to encourage even more fervour for prohibition at the next poll. An important social and moral question had been 'nobly answered' by those with the country's welfare at heart and now it only remained for the process of deciding which hotels would close.[100]

Under the local option rules established by the Liquor (Amendment) Act of 1905, at least four of Broken Hill's forty-eight hotels and three of Sturt's twenty-five hotels would close, with the priority being those twice convicted of breaches of the Act in the preceding three years. At the Special Licensing Court hearing which began in December 1907 representatives from the LVA and the South Australian Brewing Company, which owned thirty-two of the town's hotels, argued that the first consideration of the Bench should be the requirements of specific neighbourhoods. A cabman, real estate agent and several hotel licensees as well as the licensing sub-inspector also raised concern over the town's inadequate supply of accommodation which would be exacerbated by the closing of hotels.[101] The court demurred, ordering the closure of nine licenses (6 in Broken Hill and 3 in Sturt) but this decision was subsequently overturned after the South Australian Brewing Company appealed to the Supreme Court.[102]

Outraged temperance advocates hastily convened a meeting, and the BTA resolved to ask the local members for Broken Hill and Sturt, John Cann and Arthur Griffiths — both elected with temperance support — to demand action from the Premier. The N.S.W. Alliance called publicly for a second Licensing Court to reconsider the matter but instead the government referred the matter to the High Court, only to have the appeal upheld.[103] By April 1909 a lengthy nineteen months had passed and only two premises in Broken Hill had actually closed.[104] Finally, in October 1909 the Under Secretary for Justice

99   'Local Option - New South Wales', *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, No. 15, 1922, Melbourne, p. 1027.
100   *Barrier Miner*, 14 September 1907, p. 5.
101   *Barrier Miner*, 5 December 1907, p. 2.
102   *Barrier Miner*, 9 December 1907, p. 2; 27 April 1908, p. 3; 4 August 1908, p. 2.
103   *Barrier Miner*, 4 August 1908, p. 2; 15 August 1908, p. 8.
104   *Barrier Miner*, 1 September 1908, p. 3; 28 March 1908, p. 5; 12 March 1908, p. 1.

informed the BTA that despite the government's best endeavours no further steps could be taken to make the 1907 local option vote effective.[105] In the days following the decision, the *Barrier Miner* speculated that the town had been the victim of an experimental and 'not too luminous' piece of legislation and that the ruling set a precedent for all future Special Licensing Courts held in Broken Hill.[106] With only twelve months remaining until the next local option poll temperance advocates were already rallying to ensure every citizen cast their vote to 'draw the curtain over years of misery' caused by intoxicating liquor.[107]

Table 2 - Broken Hill local option results							
Date	Ward / Electorate	New Licenses		Total	Remove Licenses		Total
		YES	NO		YES	NO	
1890	Wills	**161**	99	260	**149**	107	256
	Sturt	**91**	97	188	89	**95**	184
	Burke	**69**	46	115	**56**	44	100
	King	**12**	4	16	8	**8**	16
	Total	333	246	579	302	254	556
1893	B. Hill	350	364	714	413	289	702
1896	B. Hill	110	235	345	262	181	446
1899	Wills	189	**222**	411	205	**197**	402
	Sturt	112	**187**	290	133	**168**	301
	King	**116**	112	228	110	**119**	229
	Burke	**105**	122	227	100	**130**	230

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[105] *Barrier Miner*, 30 October 1909, p. 5.
[106] *Barrier Miner*, 8 September 1909, p.4.
[107] *Barrier Miner*, 28 April 1910, p. 3.

	Total	522	643	1156	548	614	1162
1902	Wills	236	**379**	615	294	**320**	614
	Sturt	121	**175**	296	144	**150**	294
	King	115	**146**	261	129	**132**	261
	Burke	8	**19**	27	10	**17**	27
	Total	480	719	1199	577	619	1196
1905	Wills	82	**190**	272	95	**172**	217
	Sturt	165	**284**	449	214	**238**	452
	Burke	136	**217**	353	167	**177**	344
	King	135	**192**	327	165	**163**	328
	Total	518	883	1401	641	750	1341

Date	Electorate	Continue Existing Licenses	Reduce Existing Licenses	Grant No Licenses
1907	Broken Hill	1936	**123**	2372
	Sturt	1679	**109**	2379
1910	Broken Hill	**2926**	49	2428
	Sturt	**3198**	68	2831
1913	Sturt (Broken Hill)	**3793**	80	2509
	Willyama	**3459**	215	2221
Note: Bold indicates a winning vote under the rules governing that local option poll. Source: Government Gazette, 1890-1913.				

However, the 1910 vote dealt a crushing blow to no-license supporters when both electorates returned a majority vote for the

continuation of licenses.[108] Compared to the 1907 poll votes for continuation increased by 51 per cent in Broken Hill and 90 per cent in Sturt.[109] As soon as the result became known, members of the liquor industry gathered at the Grand Hotel to address a large cheering crowd, proudly referring to their victory as a fair and honourable fight against the exponents of prohibition.[110] In contrast, the BTA alleged that publicans had run a deceptive campaign, and bought votes by contributing to the miners' lockout fund, during the ongoing strike, and by promising increased wages to employees.[111] This disappointing result was repeated in 1913 in the newly formed state electorates of Willyama and Sturt, bucking a general trend for rural areas to reduce their licenses.[112] Thus despite energy and opportunity, the temperance movement failed to substantially change the drinking culture of Broken Hill.

Table 3: License Numbers					
Year	NSW Population	NSW Publicans' Licenses	NSW Population/ License	Broken Hill Population	Broken Hill Publicans' Licenses	Broken Hill Population/ License
1883	855398	3074	278			
1884	899203	3144	286			
1885	943867	3179	297	c.4000	16	250
1886	983518	3231	304			
1887	1014607	3270	310	c.6900	40	173
1888	1044290	3368	310	c.12600	89	142
1889	1074140	3405	315	c.16196	80	202
1890	1113275	3428	325	19792	83	238

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108   *Daily Herald*, 15 October 1910, p. 9.
109   *Government Gazette of the State of New South Wales*, Sydney: 1901-2001, 26 October 1910, pp. 5796, 5801.
110   *Barrier Miner*, 15 October 1910, p. 4.
111   *Barrier Miner*, 11 October 1910, p. 2; *Chronicle*, 9 September 1911, p. 42.
112   *Government Gazette*, 31 December 1913, p. 7745; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 December 1913, p. 8.

1891	1153170	3441	335	19789	93	213
1892	1183157	3441	344	c.19735	87	227
1893	1206497	3370	358	19680	88	224
1894	1231755	3290	374	19100	61	313
1895	1255503	3238	388	c.18840	63	299
1896	1272364	3176	401	18580	64	290
1897	1295589	3170	409	20790	61	341
1898	1317445	3153	418	22570	72	313
1899	1339214	3141	426	23900	72	332
1900	1360305	3163	430	c.25700	78	329
1901	1375455	3151	437	27500	75	367
1902	1401943			26970	77	350
1903	1425183	3128	456	27160	75	362
1904	1455458			28000	74	378
1905	1487884	3063	486	28110	74	380
1906	1521618	3055	498	c.30850	76	370
1907	1561572	3022	517	33590	75	448
1908	1583923	2980	532	32000	73	438
1909	1613899	2923	552	31000	73	425
1910	1643855	2865	574	c.30986	73	424
1911	1699376	2775	612	30972	73	424
1912	1785412	2723	656	32500	73	445
1913	1844727	2717	679	33900	73	464
1914	1880241	2658	707	30500	73	418

Sources: NSW Statistical Registers, 1883-1914; R. H. B. Kearns, *Broken Hill 1883-*

1893: Discovery and Development, Broken Hill, 1973.

Note: Broken Hill populations marked circa (c.) are estimates. For 1884 and 1887 they are for the Silverton district as a whole, for 1888 they are Broken Hill and Silverton combined, from 1889 they are the Broken Hill Municipality. All figures ignore the extensive Aboriginal population of Broken Hill; not only were they not counted in censuses but they were also technically forbidden to enter a licensed house. License numbers are for publicans' licenses only (ignoring other categories of license like wine licenses). There are no district level figures from 1908 but newspaper records indicate that the number in Broken Hill remained unchanged until 1914.

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Because temperance advocates believed people could be made moral by legislation they placed great faith in local option. The measure was intended to deal with the sale of liquor in hotels by weakening the convivial surroundings of public drinking, but none of the nine polls undertaken in Broken Hill delivered any real change to the town's drinking culture. Though the number of hotels relative to population halved in the period under study (from one per two hundred to over one per four hundred) there is no evidence that this had a significant effect on the availability or consumption of alcohol, other than concentrating drinkers and increasing the value of licenses for those who continued to hold them. One key reason for this failure was the serious limitations of local option legislation, especially before, but even after 1905. The localised nature of local option meant that even No License decisions only applied to the specific voting district. As Broken Hill MLA William Ferguson remarked, a law that closed hotels on one side of the street while leaving them open on the other was 'obviously weak at the knees'.[113] In Broken Hill and most country towns the distance between hotels was only ever a short walk and drinkers simply moved to another venue in response to the decisions of the Licensing Court. Moreover, the use of political boundaries to create a sober community throughout the town was not only illogical but unworkable. Drinkers did not necessarily do their drinking in the same ward or electorate where they exercised their vote.

A second key reason for failure was that eligibility to vote was restrictive, particularly in the early years when Broken Hill had a transient population. The property-based vote of ratepayers

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113   *Barrier Miner*, 11 October 1897, p. 2.

disenfranchised the majority of the community including many temperance advocates and on average, no more than twenty-five per cent of the population were eligible to vote prior to 1905 (see Table 1).[114] The fact that outstanding rates could sometimes, but not always, preclude a ratepayer from voting, and that owners of multiple properties had multiple votes, exacerbated the partiality of the process and did little to lessen the belief of working men — the creators of Broken Hill's wealth and the frequenters of public houses — that a class bias lay at the heart of local option.[115] When eligibility to vote changed from ratepayer to parliamentary elector it weakened these criticisms but made little difference as the proportion of the population who voted remained small. The situation was compounded when people turned out to vote and were told their names were not on the roll.[116]

Third, the required majorities made it difficult for temperance to achieve its aims. The need for eleven-twentieths of the total votes polled and at least 30% turnout, made it difficult for the anti-drink crusade to achieve a conclusive victory and similarly, after 1905 the need for a three-fifths majority for No License made the temperance ideal practically unattainable.[117] The fundamental weakness of political temperance was that it never had the necessary popular support to achieve its goals. Until the introduction of compulsory voting in NSW in 1928, many voters declined to exercise their rights, and this was especially common for No-License polls.[118] Though popular support for temperance probably peaked in this period, local option remained for the most part a battle between passionate minorities, with results decisively shaped by turnout, as was reflected in the Broken Hill polls.[119] Even at the critical no-license poll in 1907, which attracted the highest turnout, only 55% of eligible voters — and less than 15% of the white population — chose to vote, the numbers probably hurt by the fact that the MLA, J. H. Cann, ran unopposed.[120]

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[114]   *New South Wales Statistical Registers*, 1890-1916; B. Kennedy, *Silver, Sin and Sixpenny Ale: A Social History of Broken Hill, 1883-1921*, Melbourne, 1978, p. 15.

[115]   *Barrier Miner*, 14 February 1893, p. 2.

[116]   *Barrier Miner*, 14 September 1907, p. 5.

[117]   Licensing Act 1882, s. 34 xii; Liquor (Amendment) Act 1905, s. 68.

[118]   *Barrier Miner*, 12 October 1910, p. 4; 25 January 1890, p. 2; 23 January 1903, p. 2.

[119]   *Official Year Book of New South Wales 1904-1905*, Sydney, 1906, p. 367.

[120]   For 1907 the population was 33,590, the number of electors on the roll was 8,049, and the number of votes was 4,434. *New South Wales Statistical Register for 1909*, pp. 445, 634, 673.

Temperance reformers had to combat not only public apathy, but also active resistance. The inference that people were incapable of making the right decisions about alcohol without moral or legislative direction provoked the ire of many, perhaps especially in a highly unionised and politicised town like Broken Hill which experienced bitter strikes in 1889, 1892 and 1909, during which hotels served as significant informal meeting places.[121] Opponents of no-license were not necessarily supporters of the liquor industry; in many cases they simply resented legislative compulsion. Such sentiments were actively promoted in parliament and reported in the press, and the Liberty Leagues embodied this sentiment, even if they were not genuinely popular like temperance.[122] In the lead-up to the 1907 Poll, the *Barrier Miner* argued that it was discriminatory to take away men's freedom to drink at a hotel and unfair that a drunken minority should make criminals of the rest of the working community.[123] Many found the temperance movement's strenuous proselytizing disrespectful and offensive. Reformers were often described as extreme, unreasonable, uncompromising and obstructionist, a 'kill-joy crowd' who possessed a 'warped sense of judgement' and a 'blunted sense of justice'.[124] This fed into the idea of the wowser, a unique Australian term for a 'typical religious do-gooder' intent on depriving ordinary people of their pleasures, which emerged during this period of temperance activism and was promoted particularly the tabloid *Truth*.[125]

In Broken Hill this caricature of temperance resonated and undermined the campaign for No License. The demand for the closure of the town's numerous and well-patronised public houses, was out of sympathy with their integral place in community life.[126] In 1891 Broken Hill had a population of 19,905 but only 3,623 dwellings, many of which were small and roughly made with no lighting or sanitation. Nearly 500 tents dotted the area and provided only the barest minimum of shelter.[127] With limited personal comforts, public houses

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121   G. Dale, *The Industrial History of Broken Hill*, Melbourne, 1918, p. 172.
122   *Barrier Miner*, 24 May 1895, p. 2; 2 August 1915, p. 3.
123   *Barrier Miner*, 6 September 1907, p. 3.
124   *Barrier Miner*, 17 September 1915, p. 1; 16 June 1905, p. 4; 24 June 1905, p. 6; 15 March 1905, p. 4.
125   Hogan, *op. cit.*, p. 145. Dunstan, *op. cit.,* ch. 3. See also C. Pearl, *Wild Men of* Sydney, Sydney, 1977; *Truth*, 8 March 1908, p. 6.
126   J. Kneale 'The place of drink: temperance and the public 1856-194', *Social and Cultural Geography*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2010, p. 45.
127   *Barrier Miner*, 14 February 1891, p. 2.

provided a space in which locals could relax and socialise. The predominantly male population of the early mining boom patronised the Barrier district's hotels, enjoying the hospitality of licensees who advertised beer that was always cool, the best brands of wine and spirits and 'well-appointed billiard saloons'.[128] In the early 1890s, Kenny's Hotel — the 'most magnificent *hospitium* on the Barrier' — had an exterior of exquisite mouldings, sweeping arches and a broad sheltering balcony.[129] Inside could be found a superbly carved front counter, side parlours, retiring room, smoking room, billiard room and a dining room which served fish, joints, desserts, salads and fruit. Whether well-to-do or not, Kenny's provided more than just a place to drink. According to a *Barrier Miner* report it served the needs of the community so well that 'a prohibitionist would be undone in such a place and a Local Optionist renounce his fanaticism straightaway'.[130]

Given the town's isolation, public houses not only served the local population but also many travellers. Tickets on the Royal Mail Line coach to White Cliffs and Tibooburra were purchased at the Southern Cross Hotel and for the Wilcannia Cobb and Co. service at the Wilcannia Club Hotel.[131] By implication this meant hotels often acted as conduits for state-wide news. Many occupied the best sites in town, often on street corners, which made them a directional landmark and a symbol of the town's growing prosperity. It was common for businesses to advertise their location in the local newspaper by their proximity to a hotel. Teeth could be extracted at Massey's Chemist opposite the Exchange Hotel, the very latest in ladies and gentlemen's wear purchased at Poolman's Tailor opposite the Freemason's Hotel and grills and fish served anytime at the Sydney Fish and Oyster Saloon next door to the Tattersall's Hotel.[132] Interestingly, members of various temperance societies assembled at the York Hotel in 1890 before making their way to the Post Office for a local option address and in 1892 the Good Templars assembled at the Duke of Cornwall Hotel as part of a temperance march to the Central Reserve, spectacles that no doubt led to a wry response from the hotels' patrons.[133]

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128   *Barrier Miner*, 30 March 1891, p. 1.
129   *Barrier Miner*, 7 March 1891, p. 3.
130   *Ibid.*
131   *Barrier Miner*, 2 June 1902, p. 3; 20 February 1895, p. 3.
132   *Barrier Miner*, 24 June 1889, p. 1; 13 November 1896, p. 3; 3 July 1901 p. 4; 27 May 1916, p. 1.
133   *Barrier Miner*, 8 August 1892, p. 2

Hotels also contributed significantly to the local economy. They employed a large local workforce of cooks, housemaids, boys for yard work, general servants, waitresses and bar staff whose wages stayed in the town and they generated non-direct employment for transport and building maintenance workers. Other businesses operated from hotel rooms such as the solicitor John Edwards at the Grand Hotel and E. W. Aldridge who sold homing pigeons at the Duke of Cornwall.[134] The growth of sporting clubs and organisations brought another dimension to the public house, transforming it from a place to enjoy a drink with congenial company to a community venue. The local football, cricket, and miniature rifle clubs, Unions, (non-temperance) friendly societies, organisers of public meetings and company shareholders were among the many groups that used the meeting rooms offered by hotels.[135] Hotels also acted as polling places for elections, assembly points for funeral processions and even as venues for wrestling tournaments.[136] Capturing their overriding social importance, the *Barrier Miner* claimed the Broken Hill citizen:

> … is a hotel-frequenting animal to a greater or lesser degree. Though he may sleep-for residential purposes-in a 12 x 8 tin hut, he is not habitually solitary; he is, in fact, gregarious, and herds with his kind at meal times and other opportune occasions … and so he still remains a frequenter of hotels; his business demands, it and custom sanctions it.[137]

In 1907, when the temperance crusade focused fully on abolishing all licenses, Broken Hill had seventy-five hotels and, with one exception, all of those listed fifteen years previously were still operating, a sure sign of their importance to community life.[138] Indeed, this social importance was the basis of the South Australian Brewing Company's appeal against the proposed closure of nine hotels. In delivering his judgement, Justice Cohen censured the Licensing Court on depriving a public house of its valuable license without taking into consideration the importance of 'public convenience and requirements of locality' —

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134   *Barrier Miner*, 1 March 1889, p. 2; 9 July 1895, p. 3.
135   *Barrier Miner*, 10 July 1901, p. 3; 15 January 1890 p. 3; 5 January 1910, p. 3; 2 March 1889 p. 3; 9 January 1895, p. 3; 16 February 1906, p. 3; 1 March 1889, p. 2.
136   *Barrier Miner*, 14 February 1893, p. 4; 18 December 1908, p. 3; 18 April 1889, p. 3.
137   *Barrier Miner*, 10 March 1891, p. 2.
138   *Barrier Miner*, 31 December 1892, p. 2.

in plain English the value that hotels had for the community.[139] The public houses of Broken Hill and surrounds which began in the 1880s as places to drink and take meals had developed over time as essential features of community life. While local option united the temperance movement in Broken Hill around a cause, it failed to convince the public, or change the town's drinking culture. The predominantly male population of the mining town did not accept the principle of no-license, and its advocates were often viewed as fanatical wowsers.

The temperance movement continued their campaign after 1914, and indeed the war years saw their greatest legislative triumph. In 1916, in the context of wartime austerity, six o'clock closing was introduced in NSW and most Australian States. But this would prove to be the high tide of political temperance. Following the war, early closing was made permanent, and the temperance movement secured a state government promise of a referendum on prohibition; but by the time it was eventually held in 1928, temperance was in decline and less than a third of the State voted in favour.[140] The social importance of hotels was increasingly apparent to voters, political Protestantism had a declining influence on elections and the medical understanding of inebriety encouraged a more targeted approach to dealing with alcohol problems.[141] Schafer's vision of temperance as a political contest became increasingly irrelevant in twentieth-century Australia. While Broken Hill continued to suffer from alcohol problems, the public turned away from a temperance movement that was seen as fundamentally politicised and all local temperance societies, other than the WCTU, ceased to hold meetings in the 1930s.[142] The persistence of the WCTU probably reflects their larger social agenda and their more sympathetic and personal approach to the problem of drunkenness. Ironically, Braithwaite's now largely abandoned vision of temperance as a redemptive personal moral struggle might have better suited the times.

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139   Ex parte South Australian Brewing Co., Ltd. (Broken Hill Electorate) and (Sturt Electorate), 1905, p. 366, <austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/cases/nsw/NSWStRp/1908/53.html?context> (26 September 2018).

140   Phillips, 'Six O'Clock Swill'; Beresford, *op. cit.*, chs. 8-9.

141   See D. Kirkby, *Barmaids: A History of Women's Work in Pubs*, Melbourne, 1997, ch. 7. On the decline of political temperance see Bollen, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-181; Broome, *op. cit.*, ch. 8. On medicalisation and inebriety see Garton, 'Habitual Drunkenness'.

142   Records of temperance meetings in the *Barrier Miner* cease in the 1930s, apart from the WCTU, for which see, for example, *Barrier Miner*, 16 June 1949, p. 5.