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Punters warned ahead of weekend heat Be a winner not a boozer

Aaron Langmaid

PUNTERS are pushing the limits by smuggling in booze and drinking to excess during racing's biggest week.

Paramedics have issued a plea to racegoers to drink less alcohol ahead of another packed day at Flemington.

But concerns are mounting over what impact a shift in temperature will have for spectators this weekend.

Temperatures will soar to more than 30 degrees after a string of unseasonable cold days.

The hotter weather is likely to stretch the resources of St John volunteers and metropolitan ambulance officers who dealt with more than 132 patients during the Melbourne Cup.

The VRC will continue its crackdown targeting patrons who sneak in alcohol.

It follows a string of embarrassing confrontations



on Tuesday where security officers literally sniffed out and disposed of any alcohol brought in off site.

But some patrons said it was the only way they could afford to attend.

"It's no wonder people bring alcohol in when drinks are so expensive," Alex McLeod, 24, from Perth said. "I brought in a couple of small bottles of Jack Daniel's and have only had to buy a few Cokes."

Security clamps will continue with bags checked on arrival and security staff boosting police patrols.

A VRC spokesman said traditionally Stakes Day punters had been well behaved but said this weekend free water outlets would be a priority.

"Crowd behaviour has been really good so far and the Victoria Police have been very happy with the processes in place at Flemington," he said.

St John Ambulance first aid manager Andrew Foran said paramedics had coped so far, but were preparing for peak demand on Saturday.

"Certainly we are seeing a lot of younger people drinking alcohol," he said.

"We would just ask people to look after themselves and their friends. The heat can have a big impact."

Today's Oaks Day patrons should prepare for a shower or two and a mild 18C.

Patchy drizzle is expected tomorrow ahead of warmer conditions for Stakes Day on Saturday.

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