

Heath's legacy

LOS ANGELES: Heath Ledger's daughter, Matilda, 3, has been officially named as sole beneficiary of his life-insurance policy, worth up to \$10 million.

Matilda's custodian, John LaViolette, and lawyer William Shernoff emerged from Superior Court Judge Luis Lavin's chambers after a Friday hearing.

"It is finalised and everybody is happy," Mr LaViolette said. Asked if the money would go to Matilda, Mr Shernoff replied: "Yes." Ledger took out the policy seven months before his body was found in his New York unit.

Ice ring arrests

POLICE have arrested three men after an undercover investigation into an alleged ice syndicate supplying the Illawarra region, south of Sydney.

The men, aged 36, 34 and 32, were in a car pulled over by police at Dapto.

Two of them were charged with supplying a prohibited drug, ongoing supply of a prohibited drug and conspiracy to supply a prohibited drug.

The 36-year-old was charged with profiting from the proceeds of crime.

They will appear in court at a later date.

Two hurt in 8m fall

TWO people fell 8m yesterday after a balcony railing gave way at Wollongong.

Ambulance crews were called to a house in the suburb of Balgownie about 9.25am after reports that a man and a woman, aged in their twenties, had fallen from a balcony.

A spokesman said the man suffered chest and abdominal injuries and a broken leg.

The woman had chest and abdominal injuries. Both were conscious.

They were taken to Wollongong Hospital, where they are in a stable condition.

Assault on model

A MAN posing as a modelling agent sexually assaulted a woman during a bogus job interview, Parramatta Local Court heard yesterday.

The 35-year-old Double Bay man allegedly lured the woman, 22, to a bar in Sydney's CBD on Tuesday. Police said he then took her to an office block on Hunter St where the alleged assault took place.

After almost an hour the woman fled and raised the alarm with passers-by. The man will appear at Central Local Court tomorrow.

REVEALED

How crime figures are disguising what really went on in the city

Mardi Gras an excuse to run riot



By police reporter YONI BASHAN

CLANS of young men hijacked this year's gay and lesbian Mardi Gras in a night of drunken mayhem that forced part of the city to be locked down.

Police have spoken of a "running battle" with aggressive youths from the suburbs who caught trains to the city and ran riot in the central business district.

This revelation contrasts with the official police statement, released in the hours after the event, which focused on the good behaviour of revellers celebrating at the parade.

The press release said an increased number of glass bottles and containers on the night was the biggest concern for police.

But behind the scenes, some of the 800 officers who worked the streets told a different story, describing the night as a "zoo" once the Mardi Gras parade had ended.

They said the seriousness of the violence could not be understated, with five people stabbed by the end of the night.

"There were a thousand problems," one police officer told *The Sunday Telegraph*. "Hyde Park was a nightmare," another said.

Three main groups of troublemakers were singled out — drunk "clans" of Anglo, Lebanese and Islander youths using the Mardi Gras as an excuse to cut loose.

The biggest no-go area was Hyde Park, which had to be cleared and locked down by riot squad officers because of the mayhem.

Police said the park was a trouble spot because it was just out-



Mayhem: Police deal with an incident in George St early last Sunday

side the alcohol-free zone imposed by authorities around the Oxford St parade route.

Among those stabbed was a 21-year-old man from Lalor Park who was left with wounds across his back.

A second stabbing happened nearby, involving an 18-year-old Ashfield teenager who was taken to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

Another 18-year-old man was knifed at St Andrews Place, but the investigation was dropped and the suspect released because

the victim refused to make a formal statement to police.

Central Metropolitan Region commander Assistant Commissioner Catherine Burn was one of those at the helm of the police security operation.

Ms Burn said most people had been generally well behaved, but conceded that Hyde Park had been a serious problem zone.

"I decided to clear out Hyde Park. There were issues. There was trouble, without a doubt, and to me that's a problem."

Some officers said they had been assaulted when they tried to disperse large groups of teenagers roaming through the area.

Known to police as "white caps" because of their headwear, the youths could be seen intimidating people and picking fights at random with innocent bystanders.

Eventually, as the problems came to a head, an executive order was made and the park was cleared out by public order and riot squad police.

"If police are getting injured, it's unacceptable," Assistant Commissioner Burn said.

"I think the common factor was alcohol, and this bizarre desire to come into the city, get drunk and cause problems."

A total of 39 arrests were made. Since the event, high-level debriefings have taken place and police are now considering making Hyde Park off limits during next year's Mardi Gras parade.

The violence was not thought to be associated with hate crimes.

Ambulance crews were inundated with calls for help as street fights broke out.

The vast majority of cases attended to by paramedics were dealt with at children's hospitals.

"We probably saw double the number of patients we would on a routine Saturday night," Ambulance NSW spokeswoman Penelope Little said.

Were you there?
What did you see?

sundaytelegraph.com.au

Let's end this drunken mayhem

LET'S talk about something. Let's talk about grog.

I know people might think I'm a broken record when it comes to this, but it needs to be said — we risk drowning in a crisis of our own making.

Last Saturday night Sydney witnessed a well-run and well-supported Mardi Gras parade.

But the trouble is, many of the spectators never made it past Hyde Park, and if they did they could only see a float through the glass bottom of a beer bottle.

Teenagers, many of them girls, were drunk, and drunk early.

Police were constantly attending unconscious and convulsing young women and the call for ambulances was constant.

To put it politely, Hyde Park last Saturday night



Andrew Scipione

was a zoo. How many parents knew their teenagers were there?

By 7pm, police gave up counting the number of tip-outs they did — emptying bottles of booze in an alcohol-free zone. They didn't stop doing it, they were just too busy to count.

Right through to dawn there was one violent incident after another. People who should never have been there were caught up in some macabre mayhem.

The park was a sea of broken bottles while drivers on surrounding roads dodged drunks.

By night's end, even hardened cops were shocked by the personal danger those young people were placing themselves in. Their potential to become a victim of crime was so real.

There's no denying society has a booze problem.

Alcohol has risen to be the number-one problem for police and it has put at risk the health and well-being of our communities.

It's the common denominator when things turn ugly. Normal people who wouldn't think of breaking the law so easily abandon their senses and become an offender or a victim under the influence of alcohol.

Sensible drinking is fine. Responsible drinking is to be encouraged. But alcohol is not a licence to discard your social responsibilities or disregard the law.

There are far too many people who seem to think that with a few drinks on board they are entitled to abuse a stranger in the street, walk on someone's car, pick a fight, vomit in public or smash bottles.

What about the drunks who think they're Superman because they can walk across a busy road? It happens every night.

Friends might laugh it off as Dutch courage. Let's call it what it really is — drunken stupidity.

Of course, what all those victims are really doing is outsourcing the responsibility to others to pick up the pieces. The drain on resources is enormous.

Police know the horror stories — they see it every day. So, too, do the ambulance officers. Hospital emergency departments

are overwhelmed by alcohol-fuelled victims, patching them up knowing they'll be back on the booze celebrating a lucky escape.

And all these workers can expect to be assaulted by the drunks just because they were doing their job.

Half the assaults on our streets have alcohol as a factor, so too 25 per cent of all sexual assaults, along with 25 per cent of the domestic violence and 25 per cent of all robberies.

This is about our community coming together in a realistic way to reduce alcohol-related crimes.

By all means let's celebrate next year's Mardi Gras, but I promise we won't tolerate what happened in Hyde Park again.

Andrew Scipione is NSW Police Commissioner.