

Inquiry into the Decriminalisation of Certain Public Offences, and Health and Welfare Responses

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Submitter Comments:

Begging should not be decriminalised. Poverty, poor mental health is no excuse for begging. As one living in both poverty and dealing with mental health issues, I haven't used those reasons or any other reason to beg, harass people going about their business in the CBD, shopping centres. It is poor form to be harassed by a drunk or drugged up person wanting money, or you offer (if you're comfortable) to buy a meal, drink and if you give it to the person, they throw it away because they want money to buy smokes, buy drugs or buy alcohol. There is a massive safety issue with having strangers coming up to you and asking for money. What will they do if you say no to them? Assault you, stab you, keep annoying you, abuse you. As a teenager walking through King George square on a Friday night to catch a bus home and being asked by drunk people for money, smokes is a scary experience. Even around south bank it's happened and again it's scary even when you're with a group of friends. Safety in numbers doesn't stop these people. Police/security aren't around to help/report to.

Submitter Recommendations:

Being drunk in public shouldn't be decriminalised. It often goes hand in hand with begging and both are a scary experience to go through. Too many intoxicated people get aggressive and violence happens. Social issues again are no excuse for being drunk in public. Lives have been lost, forever changed because intoxicated people have assaulted people, stabbed people, through themselves invincible and drowned as a result of going swimming after a night out, driven a vehicle, dv occurred at home, residence because of they were intoxicated. There aren't enough services now to support those with mental health issues, substance abuse, dv abusers, police, paramedics and the wait times to get the support is outrageous. Getting help is worse in the regions. Who is going to supply the staff and services to run, staff and fund these diversion services. The pandemic has shown there aren't enough doctors, nurses, paramedics, psychologists, counsellors, social workers. Decriminalising begging and being drunk in public is just going to add to the wait time to get into these services. The public wait lists were already serious before the pandemic and are worse now. More police need to be recruited by the state government to keep up with the population growth within Queensland, to be out in the community rather than being held up in hospitals with paramedics because of ambulance ramping, delays in admitting patients into the public hospital emergency departments. Police staffing is a whole issue that the government and the police commissioner need to urgently address.