

## Confusion with amendments to licensed premises close times not needed

Law abiding citizens do not condone alcohol fuelled violence however overindulgence in alcohol is inevitable. The best community and its leaders can do is educate people to exercise common sense, provide reasonable parameters, and educate licenced venues to comply with requirements of Responsible Service of Alcohol RSA.

It is apparent that licenced venues in Queensland are accepting of compromise and prepared to readily accept amendment to licenced venue operating hours reducing closing time from 5:00am to 3:00am.

Recent proposal by the Queensland Government tabling 2:00am last drinks and provisional on location ability to have a 3:00am close pending acceptance of a 1:00am lockout is inconsistent, confusing and could be seen as attempt to hold venues to ransom through the easier option being to simply accept a 2:00am close with no lockout.

Amendments to any legislation that presents real ability to significantly impact any industry and mass job loss in Queensland should be made through balanced consideration of all factors including an aim to reduce alcohol fuelled violence as well as employment preservation especially in a ailing economy such as Queensland which currently ranks fifth in Australia, lagging behind, ACT, Tasmania and South Australia.

A 'one size fits all approach' is ignorant and has ability to very negatively impact certain regions, for example Cairns in far North Queensland depends largely upon tourism and much of the tourism being younger and back packer who depend on an in moment party set as part of their travelling experience.

I work in the industry as a night manager of a licenced venue and have previously served several years as a police officer. Having seen both sides of alcohol fuelled violence, societal licenced venue social interaction and impact on policing logistics and having policed with progressive closures 2:00am, 4:00am and 6:00am which sees a morphing congregation at one licenced venue I have personal experience with impacts on society, community standards and policing logistics.

Unfortunately introduction of 1:00am lockouts will not reduce alcohol consumption, it will however impact employment in Queensland, largely that of students who struggle with financial independence; it will also see redistribution of unmonitored, suburban alcohol consumption with more house and yard parties which in real terms may likely not see a reduction in alcohol fuelled violence but rather increase in alcohol fuelled violence in unpoliced areas which in turn may prove a greater stretch on state-wide policing resources.

An example of lockout pushing people onto the street and failing in New South Wales where there is an imposed 1:30am lockout is a brawl that stopped traffic, involving some 20 people with two being arrested<sup>1</sup>.

Concern in part grows as there is diminishing focus on 'common sense' in society and successive governments that continue to shift liability from an individual and/or government to small business.

A very recent working example that I happened to be a witness and first aid provider to the victim of was an incident where a colleague, unprovoked aggressively struck a young patron multiple times rendering the victim unconscious, bleeding and with significant injury. The offender in this incident has significant martial arts training, was a bar manager and possesses a Responsible Management of Licensed Venues (RMLV) Certificate. Concerning as consequence of this individual's actions assaulting a patron he was fined a mere 3,000 dollars with no conviction being recorded, yet the venue is left with a significant increase to annual public liabilities premiums. (video footage of the incident is available)<sup>2</sup>.

This matter presents as concerning trend, with consequence failing to meet the expectations of the Queensland community and proving contrary to objectives of the previous and standing government in terms of vigorously campaigning "one punch can kill".

Coupling a more considered approach with a 'three strikes and you're out' scenario where certain incidents at venues could reduce a venue's trading hours could provide greater balance by acknowledging venues that actively minimize certain incidents

Steven Isles  


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<sup>1</sup> Bamford, M 2015, 'Huge brawl outside Sydney nightclub stops traffic', *The Daily Telegraph*, 9 November, <http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/huge-brawl-outside-sydney-nightclub-stops-traffic/story-fni0cx4q-1227600433574>

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, C, 2015, 'Bar boss put drunk on deck', *Townsville Bulletin*, 12 December, <http://www.townsvillebulletin.com.au/news/bar-boss-put-drunk-on-deck/story-fnjfzs4b-1227642844688>