



To: The Research Director
 Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
 Parliament Ho
 Brisbane QLD 4000

From: Just Let It Go Foundation
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My name is Simon Turner. I am a founding Director of the Just Let It Go Foundation, A Harm Prevention Charity, built in honor of Bruce Steensen, a 53 year old Queensland man, who was allegedly assaulted on sunshine coast in 2014. Previous to my work in establishing both the foundation and the Just Let It Go campaign, which was launched by the Attorney General of Queensland Hon Yvette D'Ath in July 2015, I was the campaign manager of the One punch can Kill campaign for 2 years and the lobbyist for the Queensland Homicide Victims Support Group for last 5 years.

During my time representing the organisation I gained an in depth knowledge and understanding of the effects of homicide, and developed a greater awareness and understanding of assaults in Queensland. As the One Punch can Kill campaign manager, I prepared funding applications and submissions to the previous Queensland's governments safe night out strategy. I also made submissions, recommendations and contributions to Educations Queensland Alcohol and Other Drug Curriculum for high school students from 7-12. It was during my time with the campaign that I became aware of numerous research documents into the risk and harm of alcohol fuelled violence and crime prevention strategies including the National Crime Prevention Framework, a document which is particularly applicable to reducing the risk of harm to young people.

In 2015 I undertook research to design and produce for the One Punch can Kill campaign, a business case outlining the need to address levels violence, particularly assault amongst young people. The following extract is from the final draft of this unpublished document. The extract I submit purports a concern for rates of assaults amongst young people in Queensland,

Problem Statement

In Queensland, assault continues to be the single most common crime committed against a person, with police obtaining over 63,000 convictions in the previous three and a half years to date.

Date	2012	2013	2014	2015 to date	Total
Number of assaults	19365	18688	17942	7756	63751

*includes common, serious and grievous assault, QPSBA.

Previous to this in Queensland, in 2011-1012, "assaults account(ed) for 66% of offences against the person" (page 10, QPS Stat Review) which dominated this broad offence group. This was an "increase of 5%" (page 10, QPS Stat Review) from 2011 which is attributed to a rise in the number of common and serious assaults. The total number of assaults in Queensland during the period of 2011-12 reported to police was 20,331 (page 10, QPS Stat Review) which equates to 449 recorded incidents of assault per 100,000 people or 4.5 incidents per 1000 people per annum. Since 2012, recorded incidents of assault have continued to decrease across Queensland.



Whilst the state's highest rates of assaults were recorded in Far North and North Queensland, incidents of assaults were prominent across all communities and regions of Queensland. Though much research indicates that crime is directly associated with social and economic disadvantage, Queensland Police Service crime statistics also reveal the demographical landscape of crime. This reading of statistics increases the visibility of violent behaviours amongst age cohorts including young people aged 14-35 years.

In Queensland in 2011-12 "both males and females in the fifteen to nineteen year age cohort were most likely to offend" by committing an assault. (p 93, QPS Stat Review) In this age cohort, "males aged fifteen to nineteen years were most likely to offend." (p 10, QPS Stat Review) With "73% of offenders" committing assault being male" (p 10, QPS Stat Review) almost half of these offenders (47%) were "male aged fifteen to thirty four years." (p 93, QPS Stat Review).

What these statistics indicate is there is an overrepresentation of high school aged adolescent males committing assaults in Queensland. The QPS statistical review further highlights the risks being taken by young people when noting "after the age of nineteen years, the likelihood of committing assault offences, decreases with increasing age for both males and females." (p 93, QPS Stat Review) What the QPS statistical review also reveals is the majority of assaults occur within age cohorts in all communities of varying wealth and sociability's across the state. Though research suggests there is a direct relationship between social and economic disadvantage and increased rates of crime, it is more evident that the highest rates of offending occur amongst youth cultures across Queensland.

This evidence that identifies levels of violence within age cohorts clearly shows that adolescent youth and young adults are most at risk of harm by being assaulted in Queensland. In particular the review noted "Fifteen to nineteen year old females were most likely to have been victims of offences against the person" (p 9, QPS Stat Review) and "more females aged fifteen to nineteen years were victims compared with females in other age groups" and like males, "the likelihood of being a victim of assault decreased with increasing age after nineteen years. (p 71, QPS Stat Review) This assessment clearly identifies 15-19 females in Queensland to be most at risk of being assaulted, most likely by a male within their same age cohort. Whilst the majority of these assaults were committed by young males, the number of assaults committed by adolescent females is increasing at a faster rate. Whilst assaults rates have declined over the previous five years, The Australian Institute of Criminology's, National Crime Prevention Framework recognizes that "there is evidence of a growth in violent offending" (p 12, NCPF) by adolescent and young adult aged cohorts, indicating that Australians are increasingly becoming more violent at a younger adolescent age.

In addition to high school aged cohorts increasingly committing more assaults "for every age cohort except fifteen to nineteen years, males were more likely to be victims of assault than females (60% of victims were male). Although combined, males aged fifteen to twenty-nine years were most likely to be victims of an assault".(page 71, QPS Stat Review) Added to statistics of females in Queensland ages 15-19, it is evident that young people are most at risk of being assaulted in Queensland by a person of their own age cohort. This level of peer to peer violence is also supported by the National Crime Prevention Framework's view that young people who "witness a crime are more likely to commit or be engaged in crime". (p 12, NCPF)

It is accurate to suggest that the majority of assaults in Queensland occur within adolescent age cohorts and that males are responsible for committing the majority of offences whilst girls of the same age are most at risk of being assaulted. The propensity to resolve social conflict with violence is not simply a reflection of a poor social or economic comparative position, but more so of underdeveloped and anti-social behaviors at play in adolescent peer environments. The NCPF goes further to reinforce this notion by



stating that "there is significant evidence to show that young people are disproportionately affected by crime. While the majority of young people are not involved in crime, people under the age of 25 are overrepresented as both offenders and victims." (p 12, NCPF) The framework also concludes that "young people who have experienced or witnessed violence are at an increased risk of becoming violent offenders themselves. Males comprise the majority of young people involved in crime, although rates of female delinquency appear to be increasing" with a "growth in violent offending." (p 12, NCPF)

By identifying the risk of harm from assault through cohorts the need to address social behaviors of youth as a preventative measure is clearly evident. Early intervention "that address (es) the underlying social and economic causes of crime" (p 4, NCPF) is required to "limit the supply of motivated offenders." (p 4, NCPF) To achieve this the NCPF suggests "a clear strategy for engaging the most vulnerable sections of the community (in terms of their risk of offending, becoming a victim of crime, or feeling unsafe) is important in the development and implementation of crime prevention programs and projects." (p 10, NCPF)

The QPS Statistical Review reveals, across Queensland incidents of assaults are largely contained within age cohorts and therefore related to social rather than economic pressures. It appears that young people are increasingly becoming more violent in their behaviors and this again is predominately being played out amongst peers. It is reasonable to conclude that when evidence from QPS statistics and the National Crime Prevention Framework is compared a number of congruent findings emerge relating to social environments of young people where;

1. Young people over exposed to violence
2. Increasing numbers of assaults are appearing in younger (adolescent) age cohorts
3. Teenage males are committing the majority of assaults
4. Assaults of teenaged females remains the highest in this cohort
5. Females are increasingly becoming more physically violent and at a younger age
6. Majority of assaults occur within age cohorts
7. Risky physical behaviors leading to harm, like assault are most common
8. Young people are most at risk of being assaulted
9. Violence is an accepted social behavior amongst youth cultures
10. The consumption of alcohol and recreational drugs has traditionally been seen as the primary influencer of anti-social and violent behavior

Social anthropologist Dr Anne Fox recently completed a study on drinking cultures in entertainment precincts, (night time economies) in Australia and New Zealand. The report clearly finds that alcohol itself is not the key driver of violence, but rather the issue of violence Dr Fox suggests is most accurately read within cultural contexts and frameworks of social behaviors. It should be noted that for close to two decades it has been widely accepted that substance use and misuse of alcohol and recreational drugs are major contributing factors to incidents of assaults in Australia, with the National Drug Strategy estimating that "47% of all perpetrators of assault and 43% of all victims of assault were intoxicated prior to the event."

Earlier this year at a conference in Queensland A/Prof Miller delivered the research paper "Reducing Alcohol Supply, Alcohol Demand and Alcohol Related Harm" and stated in his address that "alcohol related intoxication and harm increases by between 15-20% every hour of trading after midnight." (p 17, NDLER) Where this paper diverges from traditional reference to the notion of "alcohol fueled violence" is in the correlation of statistics related to incidents of harm, which include injuries sustained from no violent acts,



common accidents, self-harm or where other injuries were sustained where alcohol was consumed. Much of this statistical compiling is sourced from hospital admissions of victims.

Though she recognizes there are links between an increase in harm from risky behaviors of young people consuming alcohol and other drugs, Dr Fox's study suggests that social and cultural behaviors are the major drivers that contribute to incidents of violence in night time economies and not alcohol itself. Her study consists of four major themes;

1. The central point of the report is that it's the wider culture that determines the behavior whilst drinking, not just the drinking.

Dr Fox recognises different societies, with comparable levels of alcohol consumption, have very different levels of anti-social and violent behavior in their NTEs. She suggests that rather than alcohol or drugs being the driver for violence, it is our collective cultural attitudes and social practices that are best placed to explain the differences in anti-social and violent behaviors.

2. The physical effects of alcohol do not determine a behavioral response.

One of Dr Fox's key findings is that— although many people believe it can — alcohol cannot hi-jack someone's better nature and make them act in a violent manner. Dr Fox does not deny that alcohol can have some very definite physiological effects and agrees that the "consumption of alcohol significantly increases the risk of both short-term and long-term harm, however Dr Fox goes further to explain:

"Just because alcohol relaxes and reduces anxiety does not mean it causes inexplicable changes in behavior or character or blocks impulse control."

And

"..If alcohol alone makes people violent, we would expect to find incidents of violence spread evenly across the full range of drinkers, from female post- menopausal librarians to young male rugby players, but we don't. We would also expect to find an equal incidence of violence among drinkers in all societies, but we don't. We would expect to find equal levels of violence in all drinking situations, from weddings to funerals to Saturday nights out on the town, but we don't. The conclusion of this, and many previous studies, is that alcohol can, in certain cultures and situations, be a facilitator of aggression if aggression is there to begin with, both in the individual and in the cultural environment. It does not produce it where it doesn't already exist."

3. Violent individuals, a violence-reinforcing culture and violent situations are the three interlinked drivers of anti-social behavior and violence in the night-time economy.

Dr Fox suggests that violence is a result of individual behaviors in socio cultural environments where there may be social and economic pressures and conditions. Dr Fox goes further to suggest we "must address the cultural reinforces of violence, misogyny, and aggressive masculinity in all its cultural expressions in order to create more positive and socially acceptable behaviors. Dr Fox argues that:

"Direct intervention is needed to tackle the behavior of the minority of Australians exhibiting a pre-disposition to violence and a reduction in situational cues that trigger their behavior. Australia and New Zealand must, "Continue and enhance social and family support mechanisms to reduce the cycle of abusive parenting and poor socio-economic conditions that lead to the creation of a cohort of violent and often disempowered individuals."



And

“The socially sanctioned ‘license to transgress’ must evolve to encourage only pro-social, positive. The rules must be seen as reasonable and proportionate by the community. The aim of cultural change should be to link male status to pro-social behaviors and particularly, to link male status with effective control of drunkenness and violence. Over-reaction and loss of control need to be stigmatised.”

And

“A serious and dispassionate review of the way in which young people become part of adult culture is most definitely called for, including the best way to prepare them to be part of a society in which drinking and nightlife is prevalent. Consideration should be given to how parents and children are educated about alcohol, to help guide them how best to manage their child’s initiation into drinking, if they choose to drink.”

And

“There should be a de-emphasis on the consumption of alcohol for its own sake and a refocus on entertainment and group conviviality. We need to encourage the establishment of night-time venues where alcohol is ancillary to the entertainment, not the centre of it.”

4. A dispassionate review of alcohol education is needed

Dr Fox suggests education needs to be relevant and engaging to the age cohort or demographic at risk of anti-social behavior. Whilst these behaviors are developed during adolescence, education needs to be socially and culturally relevant and contextual, not simply defamatory of behaviors or perpetuate existing cultural beliefs towards alcohol. Dr Fox writes:

“Previous research has shown that behavioral consequences of drinking are largely determined by cultural expectations. On the research evidence available, it is clear that changes in beliefs and expectancies about the effects of alcohol can and do lead to changes in behavior associated with drinking. Educational programs which reinforce existing beliefs and expectations about disinhibition, intoxication and aggression will increase the prevalence of these anti-social behavioral effects. If young people view alcohol misuse and problem drinking as ‘the norm’, they are less likely to become responsible, sensible drinkers themselves.”

And

“Elements of effective programs include: Increase social ability / life-skills training; offer a balanced portrayal of both negative and positive consequences of drinking; change normative beliefs; deliver unbiased information about alcohol’s real effects; demonstrate that self-control over behavior is always possible, even when very drunk; deliver alcohol education via credible presenters.”

Dr Fox finds that when a culture views the consumption of alcohol as a primary source of entertainment and a fundamental reason for socializing, a cultural flaw appears to exist. When such social behaviors and practices of consumption are generally recognised as culturally acceptable, the risk of other anti-social and behaviors is increased. The Australian Institute of Criminology’s research into the key issues in alcohol-related violence support Dr Fox’s position, recognizing that “there is a well-established drinking culture in Australia of ‘drinking to get drunk’, whereby the consumption of



alcohol, frequently at excessive and harmful levels, is associated with many forms of entertainment and participation in social events”

The application of Dr Anne Fox’s findings is reflective of behaviors exhibited by age cohorts most at risk of offending or becoming a victim of assault in Queensland. Substances themselves are not the root cause of violence amongst our youth, but rather it is their behaviors, attitudes and afforded cultural and social status of alcohol and other drugs that require social interventions to address such behaviors to effectively reduce incidents of harm. For Queensland youth (14-18 years) the high school playgrounds of today are their night clubs of tomorrow. Our senior high school students will soon be adults and will act out behaviors adopted during their adolescence in their new adult social environments. To reduce the risk of harm from violent social behaviors, the subject of violence needs to be actively addresses as an early intervention for this adolescent age cohort. Whether this takes place in the classroom, through sporting clubs, or through social media, Dr Fox’s suggests what is critical is for a cultural change to occur through meaningful and social relevant educational engagement and dialogue.

To effectively achieve this change through dialogue, both parties (teacher and student) need to engage. Yet the traditional role of teachers or significant adult others as influences was recorded over 25 years ago as losing significance and influence in shaping both behaviors and knowledge of youth. It has been reasonably expected that teachers play a significant role in the lives of early adolescents as they have such extended periods of time with young people and hold positions traditionally seen as important to the development of their students. However, contrary to this popular belief, Galbo as early as 1989 reported that “teachers are seldom found to be significant for a large portion of adolescents (approximately 10% of all significant adults).” (p. 5)

In 1992 Hendry et al, found “that teachers do not play a supportive role in the lives of their adolescent students”. There is also further research that supports the notion of the limited influence of school-based teachers on children and adolescents. “With respect to children’s and adolescents’ perceptions of the important adults in the school setting, 12% of elementary children and 5% of senior high school students reported that they would turn to teachers or coaches for advice” (Schonert-Reichl & Offer, 1992, p. 33). Despite their presence, the role of the teacher/parent authority figure is not the most significant social influencer for adolescents. As Marsland points out, with the onset of adolescence young people will begin to change their source of influence. “The crucial social meaning of youth is the withdrawal from adult control and influence compared with childhood. Peer groups are the milieu into which young people withdraw. Time and space is handed over to young people to work out for themselves in auto-socialization the developmental problems of self and identity which cannot be handled by the simple direct socialization appropriate to childhood”. (Marsland, 1987, p. 12)

Although documented, the waning of authority positions like parents and teachers as major influences of adolescents creates a potential barrier for the delivery of Dr Fox’s social reform. Traditional methods of education may not necessarily carry the same social capital or value for youth, who may be reluctant to engage on perceived social issues like violence, alcohol and drug use. However, Marsland’s findings do align and support recent research and evidence of the prolific use of social media by youth and its potential as an intergenerational social educational tool. Social media plays a significant and influential role in the daily lives of adolescents across Australia, with the Australia Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) revealing that “90% of 12-17 year olds and 97% of 16-17 year olds engage with social media services.”

On her popular blog *Mom of One*, Carolyn Knorr recently published an article titled *The Most Disturbing YouTube Videos* (and what to do about them). She writes “Of all the wild videos [kids watch on YouTube](#), some of the most disturbing are the ones of people fighting. Playground brawls, gang fights, teachers bullying students, students mocking teachers until the teacher snaps -- they all play out in grainy videos captured and uploaded via cell phone. There's even an entire category of victims seeking revenge on their bullies -- making it difficult for kids to figure out who's right and who's wrong.” These poignant remarks regarding adolescent capacities to determine right from wrong, is a clear indicator of the influence social media currently has with young people. More so it also reveals that young people readily accept peer influence as a form of validation for violent and other risky behaviors.

Further to this concern, which is not simply an observation of the immense popularity of social media platforms with youth is; the relative ease and knowledge young people have to compose, record, edit and publish (personal and social media) of their liking. Knorr also notes in her post that, “There are so many of them (videos) -- and that the number of viewers keeps on increasing -- indicates just how popular they are.” The One Punch Can Kill Campaign’s recent research into violent video content on social media revealed on YouTube the number of videos freely available under the following searches;

Search	Result
Fight video	36.2 million
School fight video	28.7 million
Australia fight	908K
Australia school fight	202K
Australia high school fight	600K
high school fight	1.35 million
Brutal fight	501K
Brutal school fight	103K
Aussie fight 2015	1.64 million
Crazy Aussie fight	563K
Nightclub fight	123K

The prolific number of violent videos featuring assaults, available online poses unprecedented influence and risk for young people. The influence that violent content has in the social media spaces of adolescents is a very real factor on their developing social and cultural behaviors. In addition to accessing violent content, at no time in our modern histories have youth had the ability to record, edit, publish and promote violent behaviors. This alarming realization is compounded by the understanding that this developing social



behavior amongst their peers is seen as socially acceptable entertainment, which continues to increase the risk of youth of becoming engaged with violence either an offender or victim.

In summary, the problem statement identifies a number of key issues in reducing risk and harm of assault in the lives of Queensland's young people youth and adults. Though clearly contained within QPS crime statistics, the identification of those most at risk of being involved in an act of violence is not simply the sole concern that is presented in this Problem Statement. Rather as the research of Dr Anne Fox suggests violence is a cultural issue and not simply the result of generally consuming alcohol and other drugs, which has long been the view held in Australia. Bottle shops and take away venues represent licensed venues in Queensland where entertainment is linked solely to the consumption of alcohol. Nightclubs and night time economies are places of popular socialization and popularisation by young people, where this age cohorts' social behaviours and attitudes are the central drivers of violence.

Within the social cultural environment of young people, there also exists a number of interrelated factors that act as inhibitors to delivering preventative measures. The erosion of the teacher student influence, the reluctance of young people to engage in debate on social behaviors during formal school settings and the constant increase of peer influencers all inhibit traditional mechanics of modern education.

Despite this our youth are not lost, in fact they are easily identifiable in the new world of social media. Unfortunately risk mitigations of traditional education and social skills development do not exist nor regulate these new social media spaces. The prolific amount of violent material and anti-social behavior related to the staging, recording and sharing of violent content across social media platforms also represents adolescent values and social acceptance of violence which is reflected in the overrepresentation of recorded assaults in their lives.

In point summary it is evident that

- Assaults are the most common crime committed in Queensland and account for 66% against people.
- Assaults rates have decreased since 2012
- Prevention and early intervention methods that address social and cultural issues are effective measures to reduce crime
- Increasingly more assaults in Queensland are being committed by the age cohort (14-19)
- The older we get the less violent we become – violence is a behavior issue not a substance issue
- Cultural change and attitudes towards alcohol will reduce incidents of alcohol related violence
- Peer influence is the major social influencer in young people's lives
- Young people are overexposed to violence and violent media
- Substance blame is an outdated premise for policy development
- Alcohol fueled violence is an unquantifiable term
- Alcohol related harm is an inappropriate measurement of assault



Recorded incidents

As tabled, QPS statistics show that in Queensland's on average 4.5 per assaults are recorded per thousand people in a year, which, slowly but steadily has been decreasing since a 2011. The Valley precinct, the largest of entertainment precincts in Queensland records on average 390 assaults per annum. It is conservatively estimated that 30,000 young people patronise the precinct each week, predominately between Thursday to Sunday. Thus the Valley precinct alone caters for;

1,560,000 patrons per annum

390 assaults recorded assaults per annum

Which equates to **1 assault per 4000 patrons per annum**

Compared to the Queensland average of

449 assaults per 100,000 people

Which equates to **1 assault per 222 people per annum**

Clearly, this statistic reveals that

1. Assaults in precincts are significantly lower than the state average
2. There is no identifiable need to reduce the trading our hours of nightclubs in precincts

It is the view of the proposed legislation that alcohol is the root of all evil that alcohol is the primary reason why young people socialise and therefore are violent, yet this proposition is neither evident nor supported by QPS statistics on assaults or shared by international research into night time economies in Australia, is not recognisable in statistics nor is congruent with the findings of Dr Anne Fox. Further, Prof Millers *Chicken Little* theory that the sky falls in after midnight and nothing good happens after midnight is centred on a predictive model, and not actual incidents of assaults. His papers sole determination is that alcohol is the sole cause of injury and harm, which is unquantifiable or reflective of behaviours in Queensland Entertainment Precincts.

What is evident, is the research document underpinning this proposed bill is misleading, does not equate rates of assaults, links other forms of harm to the emotive notion of "alcohol fuelled violence" and is both incomplete in its analysis and findings. It should also be noted that the proposed legislation does not match or marry the recommendations of this document which inevitably demands that the sale of alcohol cease at midnight. It is therefore not unreasonable to highlight that the alleged intention of the legislation is not supported or aligned to the research paper it sources as a framework.

The Just Let it Go Foundation would like to raise to the committee recent findings that identify where assaults are prevalent in Queensland communities. The major driver of assault and violence in Queensland is not linked to the entertainment and social activities of young people but to assaults in the home and acts of domestic violence. The foundation also wishes to highlight that both alcohol and gambling are seen as the two major drivers of domestic violence in Queensland. The issue with identifying these causes in statistics is the very low rate of formal complaints and prosecutions of domestic violence. On average in Queensland it is estimated that between 7-15 assaults occur in the home, before acts of domestic violence are reported. Statistics tabled in the Not Now Not Ever report into domestic violence and statistics from DV connect illustrate

During the period 2006 –2012 there was an average of 23 deaths a year in Queensland linked to domestic and family violence – and that this figure equalled 44% of the state's homicides for that period



DVConnect reports

- Each year DVConnect receives over 55,000 incoming calls relating to domestic violence, family violence and sexual assault.
- DVConnect Womensline takes over 4000 calls every month from women who are in fear of, or in immediate threat of danger from Domestic or Family Violence.
- On average we assist over 350 women and often more than 400 children to be moved to safety every month.
- Many callers to Womensline are looking for information, crisis counselling or support for themselves or on behalf of a client, friend or family member. They may be calling for themselves and are living with violence but are not in a position to leave at the time of the call and may call a number of times before making the decision.

It is evident in these simple statistics that there is a need to legislate and address acts of alcohol fuelled violence in the home, where reported incidents are dramatically higher than all entertainment precincts combined and also significantly higher than the states average for the number of assaults recorded in Queensland. The fact of the matter is this; **if you want to address alcohol fuelled violence - banning the consumption alcohol in the home is fundamental to reform.**

The second major driver other than “drugs and alcohol” of domestic violence, supported by international research is gambling. The following article from the University of Melbourne is tabled as evidence.

Problem gambling and family violence strongly linked: new study

6 September 2013

Over half the people presenting at gambling counseling services in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania reported family violence in the previous 12 months, according to a new study.

Led by the Problem Gambling Research and Treatment Centre (PGRTC) at the University of Melbourne, with researchers from Monash and Flinders Universities, the study screened 120 help-seeking family members of problem gamblers in clinical services for both family violence and problem gambling.

Fifty three per cent of participants reported some form of family violence in the past 12 months. Victimization was experienced by 44 per cent of those participants, and was most likely to be an outcome of gamblers’ anger brought on by immediate gambling losses and frustration.

Conversely, the perpetration of family violence was more likely to occur as a reaction to deeply-rooted and accumulated anger and mistrust, with 33 per cent of participants who reported family violence reporting perpetration. Twenty two per cent reported both victimisation and perpetration.

Parents, current and ex-partners were most likely to be both perpetrators and victims of family violence. Of the participants who were interviewed in depth, most reported that problematic gambling generally preceded the family violence.

Chief Investigator Professor Alun Jackson said the participants who reported being both a victim and a perpetrator of family violence were of particular concern.

“This behaviour can indicate displaced violence where, for example a problem gambler mother is victimised by a partner or ex-partner and in turn becomes violent with other family members, typically children,” he explained. “This is in addition to the child abuse caused directly by a violent problem gambling parent or relative.”

Professor Jackson said previous studies have focused on violence between partners.



“This study shows we need to go beyond looking just at intimate partner violence, to understand the intergenerational effects and design appropriate family-based interventions,” he said.

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It is tabled in the article that gambling is a fundamental driver of domestic and the majority of assaults, both reported and unreported occur in the family home, not nightclubs as this proposed legislation infers. It is at this point in the Just Let It Go Foundations submission that I wish to draw to the attention of the committee the potential Risk of Harm the proposed Tackling Alcohol Fuelled Violence Legislation will have on families in Queensland.

To be blunt the, Tackling Alcohol Fuelled Violence Legislation is misleading in name and nature, in both its proposed objectives and actions of the bill. The foundation firmly holds the view the Bill will increase the risk of harm from alcohol violence in particular to women in Queensland. As evidenced in the submission, Entertainment Precincts in Queensland are not the major contributors or drivers of assaults coined under the term alcohol fuelled violence. The proposed legislation and its amendments will;

1. Increase the trading hours of pubs and clubs in suburbs.
2. Increase the sale of take-way alcohol in pubs and clubs in suburbs
3. Increase the hours of gambling for poker machines in pubs and clubs in suburbs
4. Not reduce the trading hours of casinos and international licensed canteens in Queensland

Entertainment precincts in Queensland have been designed and have received funding for significant crime prevention assets including CCTV's. (sourced from the Commonwealth Attorney Generals, Crime Prevention Fund) These spaces have been purposely designed to attract young people to socialise. There is also a significant allocation of QPS assets to assist in the management of these spaces. Further to this, investments made by nightclub owners include extra security and *in house* paramedics. In addition humanitarian services like Chaplin Watch are also active in these designated spaces. In the previous six months the Just let It Go Foundation has worked with associated industries to further identify preventative measures that will effectively reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour, will increase the safety and movements of young people in precincts, promote appropriate standards of behaviour and design campaigns that will encourage peer influence to denounce anti-social and risky behaviours.

In effect this legislation will increase the trading hours of suburban clubs and pubs, where resources and preventative measures are neither in place nor adequate to deal with, as the legislation research suggests, an increase at these venues in the likelihood of violence with the extension of trading till 2 am. Ironically, under the proposed legislation you would not be able to enter a nightclub in a precinct after a 1am lockout, yet at 1.45am in the morning you will be able to enter a suburban club or pub and purchase alcohol. On this sole point alone, the legislation appears to be fundamentally flawed, ill-conceived and poorly targeted.

The proposed legislation also allows for an increase in the sale of takeaway alcohol, which also increases the risk of harm of alcohol fuelled violence. Not only will it extend the period of sale for takeaway alcohol, it fundamentally undermines the principle of the “responsible service of alcohol”. Takeaway bottle shops which have spread like a recent cancer across communities and suburbs of Queensland are in need of urgent review. The apparently unexplainable increase of licensees for bottle shops is both alarming and not in line with consumer demands or needs. Bottle shops and takeaway outlets do not practice a responsible service of alcohol, predominately because the alcohol purchased is not consumed on the licenced premises. Literally any member of the public of the age of 18 can purchase several litres of alcohol in various forms including cases of beer, bottles of wine and litres of spirits. These amounts are drastically higher than the standard drinks available and able to be consumed in nightclubs. However what is more alarming is the intended place where this takeaway alcohol is predominately consumed, which is the home. With the extension of trading hours and availability of takeaway alcohol to members of clubs, an



increased level of drinking at later hours in home environments and subsequently and more so consequently the risk and harm of assaults to women and children in family home environments will increase. This legislation in effect will literally fuel the fire of alcohol related violence and domestic violence in Queensland.

As tabled, the extension of gambling hours of poker machines in suburban pubs and clubs will increase the risk and harm to families in Queensland. It will contribute to an increase in gambling addiction, to an increase in family debt and failure to meet cost of living expenses. This in turn leads to increased levels of family tensions, disagreements and arguments which are evidenced in acts of physical and mental abuse, commonly referred to as domestic violence. In the face of the current report Not Now Not Ever, this legislation should no doubt be withdrawn from the legislative assembly of Queensland. The Foundation at this point would directly question the assemblage of this proposed legislation and believe questions should be asked as to how the extension of poker machines has anything to do with or will reduce Alcohol Fuelled violence in Queensland.

The exclusion of licensed venues from the proposed legislation including casinos and industrial canteens is perceivably a major inhibitor to the proposed legislations objectives. The suggestion by the Office of Gaming and Liquor Licensing that somehow, due to a variation of some licenses, venues which serve more alcohol than nightclubs for longer periods of time and have more gambling facilities than any other licensed venues including clubs, are exempt is to put it bluntly - absurd. Not only is it absurd, it is hypocritical, immoral, discriminatory, deceptive and ill conceived. Casinos are not the choice of young people to socialise in; they dramatically increase the risk of harm to young people and play a major role in the destruction of the family fabric of Queensland. They are culturally divorced spaces where the artificial allure of riches and fortune create addictions that are both detrimental to individuals and families including children.

The Just Let It Go Foundation firmly believes the committee has a responsibility to seek answers as on how the office of Liquor and Gaming of the Queensland government have constructed this Bill and why the Bill seeks to increase the hours of trading of suburban clubs including increasing the sale of takeaway alcohol, increase gambling in suburban clubs and allow casinos to sell alcohol and gambling 24hrs a day, all of which will increase the risk of harm to Queenslanders. The foundation is aware of whom the bone of contention should be firmly pointed at and would suggest to the committee that not even the caucus of the current Queensland government supports this proposed legislation. Our democracy and its inherent freedoms cannot ever be allowed to be prescribed by any single member of parliament. There is no mandate for this reform, election promise or not; and there is no need to reduce the trading hours of nightclubs in precincts. However the Just Let It Go Foundation firmly holds the position that the introduction of this Bill will increase the risk of harm to families in Queensland, will increase the sale of alcohol for some at the expense of others and will turn a blind eye to big business. Put simply Queensland does not need more or bigger casinos and to infer that casinos are a creditable form of state development and of value to Queenslanders is ridiculous.

Nightclub precincts are a soft target; they belong to our youth and young business owners. They employ young people; they entertain young people, foster the music industry and create a greater metropolitan atmosphere for young people to socialise. Yet this proposed legislation will only destroy these current small business models and as evidenced interstate drive them out of business. The Just Let It Go Foundation recommends the proposed legislation be marked R.T.S and posted back to the antagonist it originated from. This legislation does not serve Queensland; it simply seeks to serve the narrow minded obsession of an individual member of the current legislative assembly.

This reported has been compiled by Simon Turner, Director of the Just Let It Go Foundation



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