



# AIRLIE BEACH

Proposed Policy Response/Submission

## LABOURS 'TACKLING ALCOHOL FUELED VIOLENCE' POLICY CHANGES

This document has been prepared for current government and stakeholders consideration in relation to proposed new liquor licencing laws. This has been written by Safe Night Airlie Beach CBD Precinct Inc. who represents licences within the Airlie Beach Safe Night Precinct. AUGUST 2015 (updated DECEMBER 2015)

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## Airlie Beach Overview

Airlie Beach is a unique town full of vibrancy, adventure and community spirit. It is a part of the larger Whitsunday Region with a population of over 34,000. Airlie Beach is a part of the Mackay employment services area, which currently has an unemployment rate of 6.8%. The Accommodation, and Foods Services Industry at the 2011 census employed 2,212 people. Within the previous governments Airlie Beach Safe Night Precinct there are 32 Licenced venues 6 of which will be directly impacted by some of the proposed changes, with a likely flow on effect on the other licensees and economic output in general.

Airlie Beach is a small community with an active liquor accord / Safe Night association. Its members are active in meetings and are engaging when there are greater community needs and problems we can help resolve or manage events such as The Whitsunday Reef Festival, Airlie Beach Music Festival and Schoolies. Four of the six above mentioned licenced venues are located in the main street of Airlie and are small businesses that are owned and operated locally and contribute both financially and socially to the wider community. In today's economic and industry climate it is not always easy to compete and remain viable all year round. Rising licensing fees and music bodies fees are already taking a toll on the bottom line with the late night liquor Licensing raising from pre 2006 from \$35 per annum to \$25,000.00 and Music Industry fees raising from \$3,500 per annum to upwards of \$70,000.00 per annum. Operating in the small business world, external environment challenges that are imposed can be difficult to manage. Small operators do not have the cash flow backing that larger corporations have behind them, small business operators would be extremely vulnerable if the labour government goes ahead with their proposed restrictions. The simple logic would be that if trading hours are restricted, competition becomes more crucial with volume of sales needing to be pushed in a shorter time frame resulting in the opposite intention of the proposed changes which is increased RSA.

The Whitsundays nightlife economy according to data gathered by Our Nightlife Queensland hosts approximately 40,000 patrons per week equating to an annual industry value of \$33million (Source: Our Nightlife Queensland). It could be estimated that a quarter of the jobs within the Accommodation and Food Services banner are attributed to jobs in our nightlife economy. It is feared that these jobs will be at direct risk if the government implements a 1am lockout and 3am cessation of service. The margin on selling non-alcoholic drinks is not great enough to cover staff and entertainment cost beyond 3am and these venues do not have facilities to sell food or offer gambling services. So essentially earlier closer times simply equates to reduced trading hours and does not just effect the late night venues, but also other businesses such as restaurants and live music venues might see an earlier reduction in patrons in order to ensure they can enjoy and get into the clubs or skip these entirely.

In the 2013/2014 fiscal year the Whitsundays hosted approximately 684,000 domestic and international overnight visitors. Approximately 72.85% of international visitors are from European countries. In 2013/2014 overnight holiday visitors dropped by 1.9% overall. The proposed 1am lockout and 3am cessation will make the Whitsundays less attractive to visitors with the vibrancy of our nightlife economy a crucial element to its tourist appeal. In much of Europe governments are removing restrictions and increasing trading hours with a much better success rate of reducing violence. The Whitsundays as a whole has a variety of

appealing activities including those that make up the nightlife economy but if bars close because the viability of being able to remain operational ceases, less people will stick around in town which means less money being spent in town supporting other retail, accommodation and food industries who are also mostly small business owners who live locally and depend on a strong tourist industry to survive. It is the belief of our members that the nightlife industry is an integral part of the local economy and should be helped and fostered to deal with local issues in much the same way as other industries, who have worked with government and other bodies in improving their safety and general obligations to the wider community.

## Safe Night Out Strategy Update

Since the safe night out strategy was implemented in Oct 2014, police have seen improvements in RSA by bars and proper exclusions by security officers assisting in reducing the levels of violence in Airlie Beach SNP. Approximately 5 banning notices are issued each weekend, for the financial year ended 30 June 2015 an overall reduction in assaults by 23.5% has been seen and police attribute this to SNP Activities. Police in Airlie beach are supportive of SNP initiatives such as proper signage and would like to see CCTV installed in the main street. There are approximately 55 people with banning notices 32 having a local address and there have been a total 123 banning notices since 1/10/2014. Ban notices have strongly helped correct bad behaviour of our locals and security are pleased with this as it has almost removed repeat nuisance personalities from our streets.

Our SNP board have applied for 3 rounds of funding to implement initiatives that they feel will promote and foster a safer environment for patrons. These initiatives include a trial bus service (funding approved) ID Scanners (application approval on hold) and signage (approval pending) designed to make visitors aware they are in a safe night precinct. Part of these applications include room for future evaluation to be undertaken as well as marketing and communications strategies to help keep our public and visitors aware of the safe night precinct initiatives aimed at ensuring they can have a fun time as well as a safe time, whilst enjoying the Airlie Beach nightlife. The last application also included money to purchase water to hand out free at night to help promote responsible drinking. The current government took 10 months to approve our second application, we would love to see the pending other two approved so we can move forward in creating a safe Airlie Beach Nightlife without imposing these proposed hours of operation laws. We are a tight knit community who want to see all our visitors and locals alike have a fun but safe night out, no-one understands our towns and its needs like we need to and we would like to see an industry that is supported in achieving a reduction in incidents as a community. We as a board feel these changes that are state wide is a one shoe fits all solution that will not be detrimental to our region. We are far from Sydney, new castle, Brisbane the Gold Coast or the Valley, our demographics and problems are vastly smaller and different and we feel its largely unfair to paint us with the same brush. I think you will find precincts like Cairns and Townsville are vastly different also.

The Airlie Beach Safe Night Precinct Inc. Currently has 13 members who are all unanimous in opposing the proposed labour policy of 1am lockout and 3am closing but welcomes further

collaboration with stakeholders and government to create valuable on solutions to reduce harm on our streets.

## 2am Cessation no lockout.

This 'compromise' is very concerning. At 2am in Airlie Beach you have 5 venues still operating often at peak, 3am you have 4 venues operating or just closing and 5am 2 venues. So in the current state of play you have patrons leaving at staggered times throughout the night. We know here in Airlie Beach that problems can occur at 9pm or 11:00pm etc. and that venue operation times have not much to do with the attitude that's engrained in someone who likes or is inclined to cause trouble. If we as a community can implement policy's to help improve RSA and guidelines and training to our staff and security on refusing entry for example, we think we can change the mindset of patrons one to reduce pre-loading and two know that we as a community will not tolerate anti-social behaviour. These initiatives however need to be supported by government policy and we feel if this bill gets through as it stands will only make things harder for us to achieve this.

At 2 am if 5 venues called last drinks and started closing you would have a minimum if not more then 1000 patrons leaving controlled environments and out on the street. This would put a huge pressure on police, food vendors and taxis to try clear the town quickly. It wouldn't clear quickly as our small town does not have the services to cope with such numbers at the one time. Our trial bus service as it stands is great but funding will run out and for a 21 seater bus to operate two nights a week is expensive (187.90 per hour for the bus plus \$43 per hour for security). Apart of our evaluation for this service is a feasibility assessment and planning for the future as it is something we would like to keep going if successful but if this Bill goes through 1000 plus people trying to get home at the same time will be impossible for us to manage with just one small bus.

When people are in venues they are closely watched by a network of CCTV cameras, staff and security who manage and deal with any problems that may occur. When these people are on the street and if there were 1000 of them there would not be enough police to manage and watch the situation. People would wander the streets, get food and wait (probably over an hour) for transport to get home. This situation will leave people frustrated, as many would not be ready to go home, which will increase the risk of violence and incidents occurring in our great town. This compromise is alarming and we fear it would only add to the problem not work towards solving it. We know there are currently not enough police resourcing or taxis to properly manage this situation and ensure people are safe.

## 1am Lockout and 3am Cessation of Alcohol Service proposal

Airlie Beach is largely opposed to the reduced trading hours of late night venues the Labour government wishes to implement. Reducing the trading hours of venues is simply a knee jerk reaction to show something is 'being done', we feel that this is an easy target to a larger problem that will not be solved by a 1 am lockout and 3 am closing. Airlie Beach's nightlife economy relies on visitors from neighbouring regions, within Australia and internationally.

One of Airlie Beach's appeals to visitors is our vibrant, fun loving nightlife. This appeal will be diminished if trading hours are reduced and make it harder for small business operators (majority of operators in Airlie Beach) that run our venues to remain viable.

We want to continue to work with our community and local police to promote a safe and fun night out.

Let us bring to your attention to the Safe Night strategy survey, which was undertaken before this policy was implemented. Over 12,000 Queenslanders that were surveyed 55% believe that violence is caused by a person's values, and 35% believed that current penalties do not deter people from offending. These elements are what we would like to take action on to affect significant cultural change in our community and Australia at large. This brings us to the argument that alcohol related violence is not attributed to the 1:00am to 5:00am crowd, that if someone has a tendency to throw a punch that this is a pre-disposed attitude. Other contributors to violence are drugs whether they be the illicit drug ICE, other substances or steroids, violence is a cultural attitude one that has unfortunately been engrained into some peoples upbringing, more research and effort needs to be made into altering peoples core value systems in which violence is an acceptable if not expected response from their upbringing. This is not saying that alcohol does not at times act as an accelerator to this predisposed attitude but we would like to have systems in place that will really make people think twice about throwing that first punch. As a community we want to deliver a clear message to our patrons that violence and aggression at any level will not be tolerated. Our licensees do not want to see violence in and around our venues, it just isn't good for business. As a community we want to lead our workers on stringent RSA practices, and will happily work with the government on initiatives that will help promote and support safe environments without diminishing our ability to make a living.

Currently our security guards are well trained and work well with local police reporting unduly behaviour swiftly, refusing entry to unduly intoxicated people and where possible calling a taxi to collect them from their current location. Ban notices in our precinct have shown to work and we commend and support our police for taking a strong stance in this area. We support increased RSA and licensing visits and feel that working closely with authorities we can only improve the safety of patrons enjoying our nightlife scene. We don't need to make it harder for venues to remain open to help this issue we feel there are more proactive solutions we can work on to address the issue. We think it is also unfair that Airlie Beach be brushed with the same stroke as other higher risk areas; we are a different small community that does not have the problems of Newcastle, Sydney, Gold Coast or the Valley. Our Nightlife Queensland has identified that our industry is worth approximately \$33 million to our local community and this value and jobs would be gravely at risk if these proposed new laws came into place

Airlie Beach licensees are gravely concerned of the imposition of 1am lockout and 3am closure when such a measure is not supported by hard evidence. There is great concern also that these changes will only add to the problem not help solve it. Airlie Beach is in agreement with the QHA in that if these laws come into place it will impose, significant, unnecessary and unaffordable financial penalties on affected licensees, leading to job losses, trading losses and strong disaffection amongst entertainment and tourism patrons and businesses. As a small community the below points are ones that are at the forefront of our concerns.

- It has been shown that compression of drinking hours can contribute to problematic practices such as pre-loading and binge drinking, as well as the angst factor that locked out patrons can experience. Patrons will pre-load more (we cant control what people do at home before entering our precinct); drink harder and faster in order to get it in before lockout and earlier closing. It will only shift the potential problems to an earlier timeslot. People will not be ready to go home, get locked out if they want to have a smoke for example (at venues who do not have smoking areas within their licensed areas), people will be frustrated at the doors when they are locked out early and are separated from their friends and partners putting more pressure on security and police at doors and on the street.
- A 2am cessation of drinks with no Lock Out is a just as concerning solution which will push 1000+ people out on our street at the same time with not enough transport options to get home.
- It will push people out before they are ready, creating house and after parties in residential areas and in accommodation houses which are places that are not supervised by security staff and police. As Sydney shows reports are now coming out that the problems have just moved to areas that are not hindered by the lockout laws. Here in Airlie Beach we do not have outlying areas so people will just create their own parties at home, where there are no restrictions, control or the supervision of licenced venues.
- We fear people will take more drugs when they have been forced to stop drinking, to ensure their party continues. This is a alarming thought as there is already a huge drug problem in our state. By refusing people entry to nightclubs it may allow young people to get involved with drugs which may be prevalent at house parties within the community where drug dealers can push drugs onto people without the risk of being caught out by staff and security in licensed premises. Currently Security and Venues work closely with the Police in identifying dealers and ensuring they are caught red handed with drugs if they are in and around licensed venues. The ICE epidemic that is gaining hold across the state could potentially be fuelled by the reality of 1am lockouts and earlier closing times.
- As well as other tourism business there are a number of service providers that receive a large percentage of their business from the entertainment and nightlife industry. This includes but is not limited to, graphic artists and printing companies that produce flyers and marketing material, photographers who produce social and editorial images, cleaners and maintenance people, advertising and marketing specialists, equipment hire companies, landowners who lease the premises and property managers as well as the obvious contractors such as DJ's, Musicians and Security providers just to mention a few local businesses and individuals that will be affected if even a small percentage of venues close. If venues close or reduce their hours to weekends only, hospitality workers will have at least 10-15 hours knocked off their weekly pay checks if not losing their hours altogether. Our industry workers are generally young people on limited money to begin with and this would be detrimental to their livelihoods. The employment market in Airlie Beach is very limited and this could force people to leave Airlie in search of work. This would

impact the local economy at large and diminish the vibrancy of our town. In fact, it would only exacerbate the issue for venues as it is the young people who tend to go out and thereby reducing patron numbers further.

- As it stands now Airlie Beach's bars and clubs operate 7 days a week which is unlike many other precincts and is particularly beneficial to the atmosphere of Airlie Beach as a tourist destination. Airlie's nightlife also enhances the appeal for the boating industry where the backpacker boats come back from the Whitsunday Islands and enjoy the bars and clubs. It is the general feel within the industry here that these lockout laws and reduced trading hours would mean that the tourist town appeal would be lost on many travellers who tend to be here mid week for trips to the Whitsundays as this is when most overnight boats are scheduled. They would not see any of the Airlie Beach nightlife and it would affect the positive word of mouth that Airlie Beach and the Whitsundays currently enjoy with the large backpacker and international visitors. Airlie Beach is a world-renowned backpacker destination that relies on lifestyle and entertainment afterhours as a main attraction - introduction of a 1am lockout prohibition could significantly damage our reputation as a tourist destination and place of recreation. Lockout laws have not necessarily proven successful in the past and the state government's blanket approach to this issue does not cater to the unique needs of a tropical tourist town such as Airlie Beach
- Throughout the year there are key periods such as long weekends, Christmas, Easter New Years Eve and event weeks such as Reef Festival, Airlie Beach Music Festival and Airlie Beach Race Week that are the financial lifeblood that sustains most venues and enable them to survive in the off peak times. Financially many bars and clubs would not be able to capitalise on these periods with reduced trading hours and extra costs. 1am lockout laws and 3am closure would also cause major problems within the safe night precinct in dealing with the fallout as patrons try to race to get into venues prior to lockout. People being separated from their friends and generally creating a hostile environment on the street with large numbers of people being unable to enjoy their night and also having long taxi waits home. In general lockouts only serve to increase hostility as often a simple experience like leaving a bag, phone or even a friend inside a venue or wishing to use a toilet becomes a major source of frustration for patrons and security. Often becoming even more frustrating if there is a language barrier as happens regularly with international visitors. Having a 1am lockout would without a doubt cause more problems than it intends to solve.
- When we ask people in our town whether or not they think a 1am lockout and a 3am close will help solve "alcohol fuelled violence" the answer is NO. There needs to be more onus on the offenders to deter them from even swinging that first punch. Drugs are also felt to be a larger problem in Airlie Beach so not only should offenders get harsher penalties but also be drug tested at time of offense and prosecuted accordingly. People who have offended have usually offended before, have been refused entry and are pre-disposed to having violent tendencies. More efforts should be made in ridding our precincts of these types of people. Why punish the majority and risk the livelihood of many because of the actions of a few.



- Most problems in Airlie Beach occur on the street after people leave venues, often at food vendors or on the way home. Airlie Beach SNP is concerned that a 1am lockout as a solution to solve violence on our streets will actually have the opposite effect by pushing people out on our streets earlier and largely at the same time. This is something we feel that will only add fuel to the fire and not make it smaller. With the current trading hours' people have the choice to go home when they are ready (unless unduly intoxicated and get evicted or refused entry) at staggered times throughout the night. There are many people still out at 3am (and a lot more still at 2am) and for some venues this could be when they are at capacity. During peak periods with the with 3 venues trading until 3am with combined capacities of 700 and the 2 current 5am venues with combined capacities of 350 this could force up to one thousand people onto the street at the same time. Not only does this increase the risk for violence on the street but our taxis would not be able to handle this demand with so many people waiting for taxis and lingering on the street. At the current state of play if these people are not ready to go home they settle at one of the two 5am venues and take their time going home over the next 2 hours. By 5 am there are not many people left and the numbers on the street at this closing time would be considerably less than a 3am close. Essentially giving patrons a 2-hour period to finish up their night and make their way home rather than trying to push it all into a half hour window.
- Increase competition in an already difficult market. Airlie Beach over the last few years has seen a drop in patron numbers in particular as the regional drive market has taken a hit with mine closures. In the current state of play the competition between venues is tough but generally patrons spread themselves across different venues. Trading hours do overlap with patron numbers but generally patrons will go to a restaurant then a pub then a late night venue. With reduce trading hours you will have 5 venues with a licence past 2am who will be competing across the same timeslots. At the moment there are three-3am licensees and two 5am, therefore the two 5am licensees will compete more directly with the 3am licensees. We fear there just aren't enough patrons in town most of the year to keep all of these businesses sustained. Four of these licensees are small business owners. In addition to this you will also be locking out industry workers who knock off past 1am and want to have knock off drinks with their friends at another venue. At times these workers are what keeps everyone going.

In addition to the above concerns we feel it is manifestly unfair to reward big business by exempting casinos and their attached business because they have the "safe guards in place". Surely if they can prove they have stringent 'safe guards' shouldn't other operators (small business operators) be given the same grace. There are great operators who also have security, CCTV and safety measures in place. Of course at the moment this is specifically related to Brisbane as plans are already well underway for the building of Casino Complex in Brisbane City. However, the future of other Queensland towns could also offer Casinos different laws than those being imposed on existing businesses that have operated responsibly and ethically for many years.

**Amendment Bill update:** The 3am cessation with 1 am lockout condition now will only apply to prescribed 3am safe night precinct which as a board we can decide whether to apply for this or not. Under this prescription venue in these areas can if they wish to do so apply for a

3am licence if they don't already have one and 5 am licence as they stand will automatically become 3am licences.

Our concerns are largely not changed with the contention that if venues only have a 2am like the rest of the state then the 1am lockout would still apply to them. This doesn't really make sense with only an hour left of trade. In addition to this lockout laws will hurt smaller businesses without gambling rooms and smoking areas as they will lose patrons who smoke after 1am lockout. We foresee here in Airlie beach that these punters will simply move to bigger non-locally owned venues before the lockout so they can smoke and drink at the same time. If not, they will lose punters earlier than a 2am or 3am cessation because they want to smoke and again you will see a lot more people on the street. An important thing to note here even if Security are at their doors and see an altercation across the street their insurance does not cover them to go and assist. So in this case it would be up to our police to manage this and we feel a strong force should be out on the street at all times. But as it stands the police do not have enough resources or manpower to manage this. It would be great if we could have a street beat.

Airlie Beach only has about 19 taxis, even though we are trialing a safe night bus to assist this is an expensive option as it is and we need to come up with new ways in the near future to fund this beyond the trial to ensure people can get off the streets and quickly. This could cost in excess of \$120,000 annually to operate 1 x 21 seater bus for 2 nights a week 5 hours per night. This number you could almost double or triple if we had to run multiple or bigger busses if 2am cessation came into place or the 3am with 1 am lockout. You could potentially have a minimum of 1000 people locked out of venues on a small street with not many options on how to get home. People would gather at food venues and wait around on the street in an uncontrolled environment which is where most conflicts occur.

### Ban High-alcohol-content drinks after midnight.

Banning of high alcohol content drinks after midnight could be a just solution in assisting the clear application of RSA. It would mean that people would not be able to supercharge their drinking past a certain point. This said if the 1am lockout comes in you are only giving 1 hour potentially for people to slow down pace, if they want to get food, have a cigarette (which helps slow down drinking rates) and come back inside they won't be able to get back in leaving them lingering on our streets. This is a measure however that our industry in Airlie Beach could work with if other key stakeholders consider this an important part of reforms. Most industry people at this stage would prefer to see other initiatives implemented first as again it not always relevant to some venues that offer low strength cocktails that would also be banned due to the wording of the policy.

**Amendment bill update:** The definition and conditions on this is unclear. This would need to be clearly defined. Its hard to make comment on a policy that has not been clearly defined. So as it stands at this stage we wouldn't support this measure. Using the terms of rapidly consumed drinks it not sufficient. For example: person (A) could sit there and rapidly consume 5 beers in 30 minutes while person (B) might have one shot or slowly sip on a premium shelf spirit on the rocks in that 30 minutes. There are also fears that people could more swiftly consume shots etc. before midnight and become overly intoxicated shortly after the 12am prohibition. Yes, RSA will have a role into managing this but someone could seem fine one-minute order shots off one bar tender, consume them, still seem fine and

order shots of a different bar tender etc. It might be hard to track just how many shots someone has had when they are buying and the effect of the shots may have not fully kicked in yet. So with this condition you might find people will drink harder and faster before midnight which again might add to the problem.

## Id Scanners

In Airlie Beach we are supportive of the use of ID Scanners, they are a great tool in identifying easily regular offenders and track and record ban notices from a police point of view and venue to venue. We see the value of these being networked between venues and local police station. These scanners offer other benefits such as reducing ID Pass-outs and identifying fake IDs. It would be great in the future if there could be a network of information between states so that someone who offends in one state will be flagged at doors in other states. We feel this would be a great deterrent of violence within our venues and our streets. Our precinct has applied for funding for 10 units. Which was quoted at a minimum \$3100 per unit. We would like to implement these whether or not is mandatory or not so we as a community can manage the presence of nuisance patrons. This will send a clear message we feel that anti-social behaviour is not accepted on our street. There is one concern about suppliers of these units with the exception of one company that offered a monthly precinct fee other companies want to charge in excess of \$500 per unit for monthly maintenance and subscription fees. We feel that this is exorbitant and one element of them which would not make it a sustainable option. We approached one company however based in Sydney who offered us a monthly fee for our precinct rather than per unit that was a lot easier to manage and sustainable. With the funding applied for if we used this company we could purchase 10 units for our precinct and cover the monthly fees for 1-2 years.

As a precinct whether or not the government determines these scanners to be mandatory we would like to see our funding to get approved regardless so we can implement a useful tool that would help up manage and control bad behaviour on our streets. We would also like to be given the choice of providers available nationally so we can negotiate the best price and solution for our precinct needs. If we are able to use these scanners as we see fit and not be restricted by government rules on the daily operational and use of these we could definitely use them effectively without causing great delays at our doors. For example, having hand held devices that can scan ids would reduce operational times.

**UPDATE:** The board would like to see our funding application on the scanners be considered. This application has been shelved as the government doesn't know whether or not to make them mandatory. Regardless of this we would like to get these scanners anyway and have the right of choice of supplier so we can choose the best price and fit for our town. We feel that we could use these tools effectively in managing bad behaviour and unruly characters on our street. It would allow us to clearly send a message that ANTI-SOCIAL behaviour is not acceptable here.

## Airlie Beach solutions

- Harsher penalties for offenders in addition to drug and alcohol testing offenders. Harsher penalties could include a minimum detention period and larger fines as well as community service. We need to have penalties that will gravely interrupt an offender's way of life to show them that if they offend, from that point forward life will be difficult.

Exploring new initiatives such as anger management classes and behavioural therapy for first time offenders. People need to be reminded that are responsible for their actions at all times regardless of whether they have consumed alcohol or drugs in much the same way that a person who commits a driving offence whilst under the influence will receive a harsher penalty than someone who is not affected.

- Education on the effects and consequences of drug abuse, as well as alcohol overconsumption and the consequences of aggressive behaviour. We would like to visit our local schools with people who have offended and their regret of doing so, how the victims life has been effected because of violence and industry workers to illustrate how we can have fun and what they think of people who are 'jerks on the piss'. An interesting line to take is to ask the general public who do go out on camera, of what they think of people who decide to swing a punch. We want people to feel shunned from society and looked down upon from their peers if they take aggressive action towards anyone else. This message then needs to repeatedly be expressed to people who are turning 18 and who go out frequently.
- We would like to also see our funding applications for signage approved so we can provide education and information to our public whether its local or visiting. We want everyone to know that when they enter our precinct that we as a community do not accept bad behaviour and that there is no excuse for it. Our SNP would also like to implement the proposed courtesy bus trial. Getting people off the street quicker is proven in other areas to help combat incidents in and around entertainment precincts and particular for tourists who often choose to walk to nearby accommodation houses and may be at risk of becoming involved in anti social behaviour. Once these initiatives have been evaluated we can see if it is really necessary to place the government proposed legislation that would inevitably cost jobs and businesses in our community,
- Face to face RSA training, refresher training within our venues to nail home the points to industry staff. Clearer and precise communication from expectations of OLGR and the consequences of breaching licensing terms. We as a community would be happy to come up with a continued RSA education plan for our industry workers. UPDATE: a few months ago we had this training with a good turn out the next lot of free training we wish to offer staff and managers is a Security led job on key signs of intoxication, what they see on the doors and what to look out for in behaviour that may lead to someone acting out.
- Continued support for ban notices to be issued to unduly intoxicated people who cause trouble on our streets. Better communication between Police and venues to assist the courts when sentencing offenders.
- Continue to work with council and other stakeholders in implementing a CCTV network that covers the ain entry points into the SNP area as well as key areas in and around venues. Ideally this would be a manned viewing station by the police or security providers to maintain a watch over the town and prevent trouble from escalating and allowing police and the courts to ensure perpetrators are caught and dealt with.

- Implement ID Scanners at venues trading past midnight to ensure that undesirable people are not permitted into venues and also to assist in identifying any perpetrators. If people have been evicted or refused entry this is a red flag that would come up at other venue doors giving us the ability from venue to venue to refuse entry into any venue for the rest of the night. This means they simply can't go down the street and cause trouble somewhere else.
- The Airlie Beach SNP Inc. intends to work closely with local council, police, government bodies and the SNP advisory panel to be a part of the solution not a part of the problem. We act as responsible industry owners, managers and community minded individuals and are already able to provide a duty of care to our patrons. Our members already strive to do everything within their power to ensure people's safety is the number one priority at all times. For example, a lot of our security guards will call a cab for someone in need to exactly where there are instead of them walking a fair distance to the public taxi rank. We are currently in talks with the taxi company to find an easier way to ensure taxis are ready when people need them. On a nightly basis individual staff and security providers will offer a wide variety of assistance to patrons and our SNP plans to collate a list of practices that are easily implemented across all venues and readily trained to new staff and contractors. Often just having staff on hand to talk to patrons outside the venue and assist them if they need help with directions or are trying to locate friends can prevent incidents from occurring. This is generally part of a venue's standard practices for managing the local amenity and is normally conducted by paid staff members from the late night venues. Industry representatives aim to improve on these practices by implementing a more effective means of communication with other venues, managers and security guards.
- Our members have queried the possibility of security guards having a direct radio line to the police so they can quickly inform them of problems rather than having to call through to the police link. Having a police beat on our main street would do great things to help facilitate this. The possibility of a sober centre is also currently being assessed as there is further funding set aside from the previous government strategy specifically for sober centres and we are hoping to establish a line of communication with chaplains who facilitate some activities in Mackay to help people on the street in the Mackay CBD. These are all measures aimed at improving assistance to people on the street. If the viability of late night venues is affected they will not be in any position to help fund extra staff or security who may be required to facilitate some of these endeavours. UPDATE: better and quicker communication options between police and security is something we are pushing for. Sometimes police are not on the street when problems occur and security can not leave their doors to assist or defuse a situation.
- We would like to have our venues offer free water to people either on their way out the door or if they are refused entry to a venue. Although all venues offer free water inside routinely as part of their RSA it is not readily available on the street unless patrons go to a food vendor which may often have a line up or occasionally be an area where there may be the chance for patrons to cross paths and become aggressive with each other. Food vendors offer an important part of helping people stay sober as food lowers the chance of people becoming overly intoxicated. Generally, however people won't just go to a vendor purely for a water or soft drink so we hope that this simple solution will not

only help with RSA but will also be a positive experience for our nightlife patrons and visiting tourists.

### Offenders, individuals need to take ownership of their actions.

One thing that really stands out for us about the amendment bill is there is no solution about targeting and punishing offenders. With the DAAR it seems that penalties have been lightened and not increased. We feel that if people have harsher penalties when they are violent on our street it will make them think twice about throwing a punch and take ownership on their actions. It seems all the blame is being pushed onto late night venues which is unfair. Violence happens for many reasons and even though alcohol can fuel it, it is not the cause of it. Offenders and nuisance patrons are usually re-offenders but their punishment is nothing more than a slap on the wrist. It is disappointing that this bill doesn't speak to the re-education of cultural & moral values or increasing punishment for offenders. For something that is supposed to tackle alcohol fuelled violence we do not see anything in there that directly addresses this. What if someone could likely be remanded in jail for a period of time (3-6months) if they are apart of a fight in our clubs or streets? How would their mindset change? We feel this would discourage people from even swinging a first punch and that friends would also work towards stopping a mate who would throw a punch. It is this sort of hard hitting change that would really work at changing peoples moral and values overtime. We need to make a stand and say under no circumstances is this behaviour tolerated. But closing down venues at 1am, 2am or 3am is not going to achieve this, we strongly feel it will make it harder.

### Conclusion

We thank you for taking the time to hear our concerns and for taking into consideration our local issues when making policy decisions that affect our community. At this stage our members feel that our industry could work with some of the government's policies however the main key point of 1am lockout and 3am closing would be detrimental to the operational viability of some venues and overall could have a negative affect on many other small to medium sized business in our region. The policy proposal by the labour government as it is worded suggests that venues currently holding a 5am license would still be permitted to trade until 5am without serving alcohol. This would seem to be impractical and unviable. It is on this particular key point that our we would welcome further discussion with any government body or stakeholder organisations. We would also like to push for the continuation of the Safe Night Precincts objectives and liquor licensing laws recently implemented for the full term of three years and appropriate evaluation be undertaken after that time period. This is something we feel we could add value to as a community. We would also especially like to explore the options of implementing rest and recovery centres to assist people who are affected by drugs or alcohol. This centre can act as a multifunction community centre offering valuable services related to drug and alcohol abuse. It would also be preferable if the current applications for funding submitting by our SNP be considered by the current government that is supported by other stakeholders on the Public Safety Consultative Committee which is made of OLGR, Whitsunday Police, Local Council, Transport and Main Roads and Emergency services. These initiatives have been well thought at and presented and our industry leaders believe that they will have a real impact on continuation of the current trend of decreasing assaults and violence in our SNP.

We would welcome further discussion with you in relation to the best way forward for our industry, safety of our patrons and creating a vibrant, viable, and happy late night entertainment precinct in Airlie Beach.

Please contact our Secretary Jasmin Lear if you have any questions or would like to discuss this document further.

  
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