

From: webmaster@parliament.qld.gov.au

Sent: Tuesday, 6 October 2009 5:21 PM

To: ~~Law, Justice and Safety Committee~~

33

Subject: ONLINE SUBMISSION - Alcohol-Related Violence in Queensland

ONLINE SUBMISSION - Inquiry into alcohol-related violence

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Best practice harm minimisation measures:

1. Most of us can handle alcohol, unfortunately some of us can't. Seems that the ones that act up are trying to compensate or overcompensate for areas that they are unhappy with or perceived self-image issue. For example, someone considers themselves 'tough'. They get intoxicated, and under the influence of alcohol, begin to 'dramatize' the idea or image in their head, at least that's how it seems to me anyway. 2. There are measures aimed to reduce alcohol harm, such as encouraging people to drink less, drink water, or say no. 3/4. These measures are ok for some, but they miss the fact that most people who drink do so to get intoxicated. Most people I know drink for the effect, so how is a message designed to encourage people to drink less going to reach them? The easiest way to avoid problems from alcohol is to not drink. Most people however, enjoy drinking and becoming at least a little intoxicated, and it is here where I must touch upon a related topic, drugs. As people basically desire to become intoxicated, a better policy would be to provide a safer substance for those that desire intoxication to imbibe upon, such as cannabis (which has been proven a lot safer than alcohol yet people in this state are still punished for being 'informed consumers' and choosing a product that is intrinsically safer than the legal equivalent). In fact, the biggest problem with alcohol and drugs seems to be the states' refusal to accept many people both like and enjoy taking drugs (legal and otherwise) and instead of trying to stop people (which has failed everywhere it has ever been tried), assisting people in making informed decisions and providing a safe market for consumers of such products. I know this is controversial, but the time has come for a science-based common sense approach to all substances instead starting with assumptions and good wishes and trying to base policy off of it. We have had many years of that, and all it has done is convince the common man that the government is steadily turning into the nanny state, and so all the safety messages are ignored as far as I can see. I think it was Einstein that said "The prestige of government has undoubtedly been lowered considerably by the Prohibition law. For nothing is more destructive of respect for the government and the law of the land than passing laws which cannot be enforced. It is an open secret that the dangerous increase of crime in this country is closely connected with this." Admittedly, he was talking about alcohol prohibition in the United States, but he makes a good point that can be applied to a great many things today, especially alcohol and drugs.

The impact of late opening hours:

The 3 am lockout makes little or no sense, unless the purpose is to antagonize patrons at 3 am. And what of shift workers? How is discriminating against them helping alcohol related violence? Give people more choice, especially in the suburbs, and maybe it won't be such a big deal.

Education campaigns and their role in cultivating effective social change in terms of community attitudes to alcohol consumption:

11. Maybe instead of changing it (just because you don't like it does not mean others don't) you could look at including individual responsibility into this circle. Also how can you encourage personal responsibility with a government initiative. That is an oxymoron. Drop the patronising 'nanny state' attitude and perhaps then you could encourage personal responsibility. 12,13,14. What campaigns? Also, instead of making people wrong for drinking (you won't change that), encourage them to be nice whilst pissed, bit like the NSW drink and don't drive campaign.

The role of parents in influencing attitudes towards alcohol consumption:

Best way is to let them get on with it. Maybe introducing children to alcohol in a responsible setting such as with dinner or restaurants would help. Telling children the truth about drugs and alcohol would be a lot more sensible than exaggerating and lying to them as they will eventually discover the truth and then the people who lied to them lose all credibility. I think the government would do well to remember this also.

Any other Comments:

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