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RECEIVED

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Law, Justice and Safety
Committee

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15 October, 2009

LAW, JUSTICE & SAFETY COMMITTEE
"Inquiry into Alcohol-Related Violence in Queensland"

Dear Members,

Regarding your Inquiry;

Why is it so that the Lock-out has not solved the violence?;
Why is it so that the biggest review in Queensland history into the Liquor Industry has now been followed by another one within a year and a half?;
Why is it so that one of the largest surveys on Gaming in the western world revealed that 99.55% of Queenslanders do not have a problem with gambling?;

It would appear that the Government keeps getting it wrong.

We as business people are just trying to pay off our mortgages and run our businesses and are being blamed for the new Y-Generation Violence.

Let's rewind a couple of years to the on-again off-again lock-out in Cairns. I was a witness and can say that the figures supporting lock-out in Queensland in Cairns were questionable. I had a close association with many Venue Operators during this time and can say as fact that every time lock-out was imposed, Operation Amazon was in force. This involved paddy wagons in the CBD, Police in uniform walking into Venues with touches shining through the crowd, etc. When lock-out stopped, Operation Amazon stopped, which allowed anti-social behavior to escalate.

THE LOCK-OUT !

What a nightmare. We have to control people climbing over walls and roofs, trying to gain entry, and we cannot let people back in to use toilets etc.

Now we have the results of the review passed by Parliament in September '08 which extracts almost \$20,000 p.a. from Late Night Traders just to trade beyond 3 am, and still nothing has changed to stop the Violence and Anti-Social behavior.

The cracks in the Industry and now obvious in the Venues;

Filthy smelly toilets; walls that need painting; necessary repairs not being carried out.

There is no money left and the Industry is on its' knees.

I as a business person, find it hard to understand how the legislative changes which came into force on 1/1/09 were formulated or calculated. Most Restaurants, Bars and Night Clubs, with the exception of a few, are now going through hard economic times in Queensland. The Licensing Fees mean we now have to sell a greater volume of alcohol in a shorter period of time, as our trading hours have also been reduced, to raise the money for the fees. How can this ever add up?
How long will it be before tourist publications start to say "Go to Australia, but don't go to Queensland" That will bury the entire industry.

Our Café and Renovation of this 105-year-old building has now stopped, and we are trading in over-draft thanks to the fees. To date (NO CHANGE IN THE VIOLENCE).

The Government sits in an ivory tower, but we as the Venue Operators at ground level know the issues and problems. As the Y-Generation Violence gets worse, things will not improve. Can the Government now that they are reaping so many dollars from this industry please subsidize or help in some way to provide an ID SCANNING SYSTEM which is linked Statewide with every Venue to exclude problem people from Licensed Premises; i.e.: People who have been through a Court or issued with a Public Nuisance Notice or a local Venue ban for internal reasons. There is a growing list of people who should be banned from entering a Licensed Venue in Queensland. Then everyone else can go out and have a good night.

Finally, it would be good for our Government to be pro-active instead of knee-jerking to every issue regarding Liquor Licensing. It would be good to see the Government go to the source of the trouble, instead of Revenue-raising and turning the Venue Operators into Police.

Steve Jebb,
Sovereign Hotel (Townsville)

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