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Subject: ONLINE SUBMISSION - Alcohol-Related Violence in Queensland

ONLINE SUBMISSION - Inquiry into alcohol-related violence

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Best practice harm minimisation measures:

Firstly, I would like to state that this inquiry is seriously flawed by only concentrating on alcohol related violence. A lot of other serious factors will be overlooked. Maybe these other issues, such as drug use, have been put in the 'to hard basket' by the government and liquor licencing. Some individuals do become violent after consuming alcohol. Excessive consumption does increase the likelihood of disorderly and/or violent behavior. This issue can be effectively managed by responsible service of alcohol. The licenced venue has direct control over the amount of alcohol being served to it's patrons. Recent measures such as staff requirements of RSA, the introduction of approved managers to be responsible for the venue, advertising restrictions on discount drinks are all making a significant impact. The introduction of compulsory RSA training for licenced security and guidelines for security requirements for venues trading after midnight could further enhance the abovementioned measures that are already in place. However, increased responsibility of the venue and it's staff can only be pushed so far before it becomes counterproductive to the hospitality industry and unrealistic to manage. At some point the focus needs to shift to other areas. Some of these areas would include: - the role of police in relation to licenced venues. Increased police presence and a greater emphasis placed on charging and convicting offenders. Both of these areas are far from acceptable at present. - increased penalties for violent offenders and for other offences committed in and around licenced venues. - Use of Liquor Accords. These are very effective in smaller towns. I'm not sure how they would work in the city. - increased consultation between the venue, local police and the local licencing officer. Perhaps compulsory meetings and reporting between all parties with the frequency of the meetings dependant on the level of risk associated with the venue. This will force all parties to interact and hopefully work together to solve problems. At present the venue is dealing with all these problems on their own and the police and licencing just point the finger at the venue. - a greater emphasis placed on education in schools and sporting associations with regard to violence and drug use. - the introduction of a plan for police, liquor licencing and the venue to better manage the issue of drug use and drug affected patrons in and around licenced venues. The increase in violent behavior would be almost perfectly correlated to the increased accessibility and use of drugs (such as ice, speed and ecstasy) by young people today. Drug use and the violent behavior associated with it, is the single biggest problem facing licenced venues today. Licenced venues have little or no control over this problem, yet are being held responsible for all of the problems that drug use and the behavior associated with it are causing in and around their venues. This is an issue that the police, liquor licencing and the government have put very limited resources into with regard to licenced venues. This issue needs to be addressed urgently.

The impact of late opening hours:

Our venue trades to 3am and uses a voluntary 1am lockout. This is very effective as it keeps everyone inside the venue. Inside the venue is an area over which management and staff have total control and can be most effective in managing a crowd. Responsible service of alcohol and patron behavior can be monitored most effectively. Drug users and dealers will be forced to carry drugs on themselves. This would create opportunity for police to target these people. Drugs are a massive issue that needs to be addressed urgently. The areas surrounding the hotel are where most of the problems occur. Just before lockout, at closing time, patrons that are refused entry to the premises, and patrons that are removed from the premises. These are all sources of potential problems regarding violent behavior. With all of these issues occurring on the footpath adjoining the hotel, police support is required to effectively manage. Hotel Management and security have little or no rights or power when it comes to moving on problem people from the footpath or the surrounds of the hotel. The immediate surrounds of the hotel are the responsibility of the venue, however, the hotel has no power to act once the problem is no longer on the premises. This doesn't make sense. At present these issues require the assistance of and a good working relationship with police to stamp out.

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

Availability of information and education. Particular emphasis should be placed on schools and sporting associations with education regarding alcohol, drug use and violent behavior with the individual taking responsibility for their actions. Education via the media informing people of their rights and responsibilities and the licenced venues rights and responsibilities for patrons attending a licenced premises. A lot of people outside the hotel industry are probably not fully informed when it comes to regulations regarding responsible service of alcohol, disorderly behavior, the hotels right to refuse entry, the powers police have to move people on and to issue fines for failing to leave a licenced premises when instructed to by staff. The only way to create a culture of individual responsibility is to make the individual responsible for his or her actions. At present all responsibility is shifting away from the individual and towards the licenced venue. If the individuals are punished for their actions, they will rethink their behavior for in the future - some people will learn their lesson faster than others. This will cause people to think about the amount of alcohol or drugs they consume and their actions whilst under the effect of these

substances. Greater emphasis on police activity around licenced venues with a view to charging offenders combined with more severe penalties would be the basis for this. At present police are reluctant to charge people through fear of making more work for themselves. By letting offenders go unpunished, these people think they can get away with this kind of behavior and are likely to reoffend. When these people reoffend the venue once again gets the blame, not the individual or the police who neglected their duties first time round. If more emphasis was placed on individual responsibility rather than the venue always being held responsible, you might find the venues themselves would become more active in reporting disorderly and violent behavior, and become more active in assisting police with these problems. With the venues assisting and pushing police for action, the police will not be able to neglect their duties as easily. The way the system works now, licenced venues are reluctant to engage police as it is used negatively against the venue. The police know this and so do the offenders. A greater level of consultancy and cooperation between police, liquor licencing and the venue may assist in achieving this. Approximately 500 - 800 people attend our venue on a saturday. Only 5 - 20 people will cause significant problems. This is a very small proportion of the total number of people attending the venue. We need to make these people responsible for their actions so the rest of the people who do the right thing aren't penalised unfairly.