
From: Sharyn Rundle-Thiele [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 20 October 2009 10:30 AM
To: Law, Justice and Safety Committee
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Submission to the Inquiry into Alcohol-Related Violence in Queensland
Attachments: Alcohol Submission.ppt

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Please find my submission to the Inquiry into Alcohol-Related Violence in Queensland attached. I would welcome the opportunity to meet the committee or individual members during the coming months.

Regards,

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Reducing alcohol related violence

A submission to the Inquiry into Alcohol-Related Violence in Queensland

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Introduction

- *"If you want to combat excessive alcohol consumption, you need to address the fact that people like to get drunk. It is so much fun that you can easily overlook any of the negative aspects. Bad for your health? Yep, but who cares when you're plastered?"*
 - » Drinking is a social phenomenon driven by values and norms
 - » Not drinking is perceived as an oddity.
 - » The available international evidence shows that as overall alcohol consumption increases, so does alcohol related harm.



Facts

International evidence shows:

- Men drink more than women but the incidence of binge drinking in young women is increasing and mature women are drinking more than ever before
- Children of alcoholics drink more
- Psychographic factors that have been associated with higher levels of drinking include:
 - » Anxiety.
 - » Self-esteem.
 - » Neuroticism.
 - » Thrill, adventure seeking, and impulsivity.
- Factors that lower consumption include:
 - » Higher taxes on alcohol
 - » Effective control over its price
 - » Severe penalties imposed on vendors selling alcohol to minors
 - » Religiosity
 - » Volunteering
 - » Participation in sports
 - » Social marketing campaigns

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My 2008 research observing people in bars shows:

- Men and women drink at levels higher than current Government reports suggest
- Alcohol is not always served responsibly
- People who drink in rounds drink more
- Serving water with alcohol reduces the number of standard drinks consumed
- Consumption of food with alcohol reduces the amount consumed

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Further my survey research shows

- While awareness of the legal blood alcohol limit for driving is high Australian adult alcohol knowledge is inadequate. People do not know:
 - » The number of standard drinks they can drink per hour to safely drink and drive
 - » How many standard drinks are in a bottle or glass of wine
 - » How many standard drinks are in full strength beer
 - » Much about the short and long term consequences of high alcohol consumption
 - » There is a standard drink label on alcoholic beverages
 - » What they were taught about alcohol in high school. They do remember they had lessons
- However, an alcohol knowledge test can increase knowledge for 3 out of every 5 participants



What can be done?

A Queensland response has to be about **drinking in general** if we are to reduce alcohol related violence.

This requires a comprehensive strategy (**MEL**) involving a combination of **Marketing, Education and Law** to promote individual behaviour change while mitigating unhealthy or unhelpful influences.

Much of the emphasis on reducing drinking has centred on use of force (e.g. bans, enforcement, regulation, inspection, restrictions, increased taxes, etc) and a big stick as a means to change.



What do Queenslanders think?

CARROTS

- *I really like the concept of coupling the act of drinking with eating - whether it be a full meal or some form of snack (e.g., tapas) - bring in a culture where drinking isn't the main aim of the night.*

Also, why not have ALL alcoholic drinks come in standard drink sizes? As long as you make sure the retailers don't keep the prices as they currently are (with reduced serving sizes), that would be a simple way of allowing people to be more aware of how much they are drinking.

BIG STICK

- *As for taxes, that's not necessarily a bad idea as a method of preventing people from developing problems, but it won't stop the alcoholics - it will just make things more difficult for them.*
- *We'll always want the shiny object up high. So, increase alcohol taxes and fines that'll encourage us even more to continue buying and consuming alcohol. Increase them enough and some of us would rather find an alternative madness to keep us buzzing through the nights. What's the price of ecstasy without the eccy-pop-tax?? It sure seems the cheaper option :-)*

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MEL: Reducing drinking in Queensland

Marketing

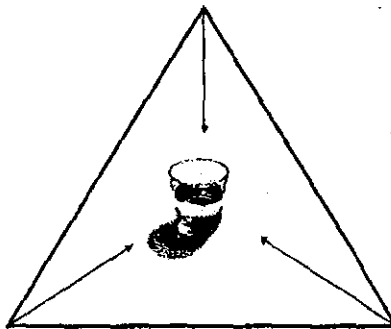
Offers services and products that provide alternatives allowing people to choose to drink less

Law

Regulates, bans, taxes or levies alcohol and the way it is served imposing penalties for non-adherence

Education

Informs, persuades, teaches and creates awareness which has long term value



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Marketing

- Independent efforts are required to identify and implement alternatives allowing people to choose to drink less. A wide range of alternatives will be needed for a range of targets. Consumer appeal is the key.
- Examples may include:
 - » Better looking skin and more energy resulting from reduced drinking
 - » Volunteering versus drinking at home alone
 - » Playing with the kids and family enjoyment versus drinking in pubs with mates
 - » Drinking in moderation and watching your daughter graduate versus high risk drinking and an earlier death
 - » Alternative venue formats for young people to meet late at night that do not centre on drinking alcohol (e.g. lounge bars)
 - » Success in attracting a partner versus loss of appeal due to being drunk
 - » Playing sport versus going out clubbing



Education

- Educate Queenslanders on alcohol. Knowledge shapes attitudes and a change in attitude leads to behaviour change in the long term (e.g. less drinking)
- Implement a range of targeted education campaigns to better inform adult Queenslanders with a stated aim to overcome current knowledge deficits. Current knowledge deficits include:
 - » Long term consequences of excessive alcohol consumption
 - » Knowledge of standard drinks in preferred beverages (e.g. beer and wine)
 - » Knowledge of current NHMRC guidelines
 - » Drinking and driving
- Tracking Queenslanders alcohol knowledge and drinking behaviour to monitor and ensure improvement in alcohol knowledge for Queensland adults



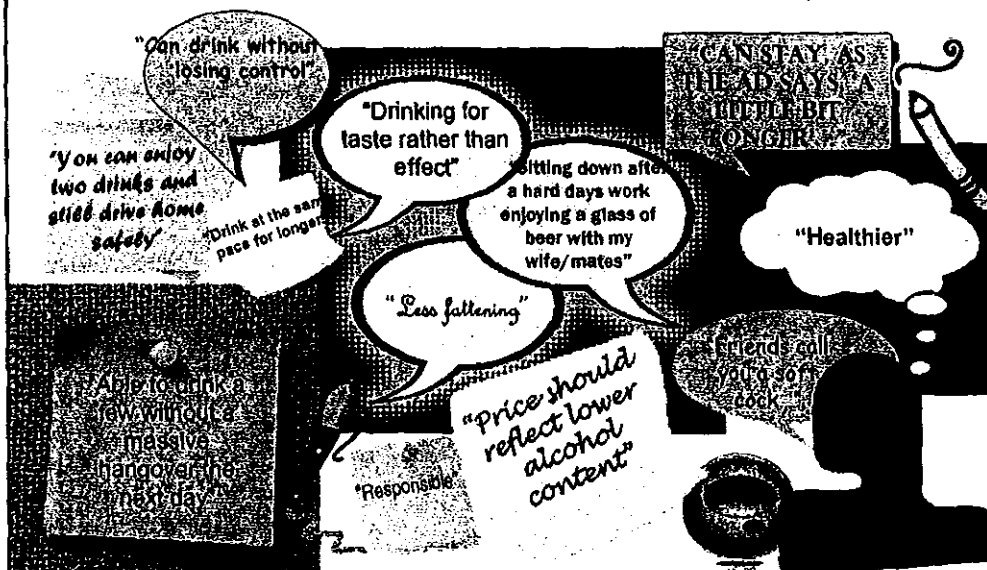
Law

- Government policy changes to reduce drinking:
 - » Require venues to serve water with alcohol
 - » Require venues to serve food with alcohol
 - » Require venues to serve beer and wine in standard drink sizes
 - » Increase prominence of standard drink labelling on packaged alcoholic products
 - » Require key industry players to reduce the alcoholic content of beverages
- More enforcement of responsible serving practices in licensed venues
- Impose a levy on industry to move away from voluntary efforts to fund genuine independent alcohol related research, social marketing, education campaigns and policy advice.



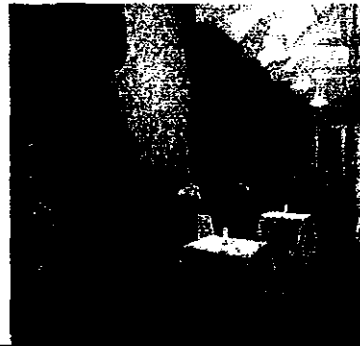
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What do Queenslanders think about low alcohol content products?



What do publicans think about serving water?

- *Water with alcohol? Good idea, except for the publican. Either you give water for free and sell less booze, or you try to sell water, but your customers won't buy it. Great :(*



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What do key industry players think about low alcohol products?

- *I note your comments around the need for the alcohol industry to develop lower alcohol beer and wine options for consumers. We agree the industry has a role to play in partnership with the community to deal with alcohol misuse. One part of that is to develop even greater choices for consumers in the lower alcohol range.*

It's an area that Lion Nathan has devoted great attention to. We led the development of the premium light category with Hahn Premium Light and the mid-strength sector with XXXX Gold.

Mid-strength beers have been growing in popularity in recent years as consumers move away from traditional full strength products. The mid strength segment now accounts for around 19% of the total beer market. XXXX Gold is now the second largest beer brand in the country.

In terms of further innovation, consumer appeal is key. Mid-strength beer has been such a significant success because it offers beer drinkers a product with great flavour at a lower alcohol strength. Without special consumer appeal, products or packaging formats will inevitably fail.

James Tait
Lion Nathan

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The big stick tends to breed resistance.

Taking people with you is a much
smarter way to go.

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