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From: webmaster@parliament.qld.gov.au
Sent: Wednesday, 21 October 2009 5:02 PM
To: Law, Justice and Safety Committee
Subject: ONLINE SUBMISSION - Alcohol-Related Violence in Queensland

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ONLINE SUBMISSION - Inquiry into alcohol-related violence

Name: John Morris

Email: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

City: Brisbane

State: QLD

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Phone Number: [REDACTED]

Best practice harm minimisation measures:

Some people change once they have consumed a certain amount of alcohol. They become somebody else and usually are in "blackout" mode. They may murder someone and never recall doing the deed. There is only one solution for this person total abstinence and a program of recover. I know violent men, very violent, who have turned their lives around once they quit drinking and joined Alcoholics Anonymous. (AA). One of the most successful programs I know was operated out of Toowoomba Base Hospital. The alcoholic was given a sound education by the head psychiatrist and had to attend AA meetings. Sadly this very successful programme was closed down some years ago.

The impact of late opening hours:

For the "problem" drinker or alcoholic I don't think it matters what the closing hours are. They will find some way to get a drink.

Flow-on issues for emergency service workers, police, and frontline health workers:

Rehabilitation through operations like the very successful one run by the Salvation Army at Red Hill. Once again people who stay there must agree to attend AA meetings.

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

Education must operate at all levels. Many doctors, and psychiatrists do not understand the problem of alcoholism suggesting crazy ideas like "controlled" drinking. Mention this at an AA meeting and the room will erupt in laughter. If you have to control your drinking then there is a problem. Parents and employers must be targeted. Some major employers in both government and private sectors have people who direct employees to rehab programs. High school students should be made aware of the dangers and the warning signs of alcoholism AA visits some Brisbane schools each year. However, more support from schools is needed in this vital area. As was done with cigarettes alcohol sponsorship of sports events and sporting teams should be phased out. This is one way of really sending the wrong message.

The role of parents in influencing attitudes towards alcohol consumption:

Alcohol is perceived to be liberating and empowering. Getting drunk is a badge of being an adult and drinking is one of the significant 'rites of passage' into adulthood. (A Study of Attitudes and Behaviours of Drinkers at Risk, National Alcohol Strategy 2001 to 2003/04, Occasional Paper, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aging, September 2002). First of all parents need to look at their own drinking habits and put that in order if necessary. Then they can talk to their children.

Any other Comments:

Most drinkers are not necessarily violent but act irresponsibly once under the influence of alcohol. Many hold down top jobs numbering politicians, lawyers, doctors, tradesmen, labourers, men women and teenagers. Women often drink alone in their own homes where they are "safe". They are masters of deception when it comes to alcohol cover-up. 50% of many AA groups are women and there are separate women's groups. The biggest hurdle for an alcoholic is to admit that he/she has a drinking problem. After all who wants to be one? It need to be recognised that there is still no cure -- only a daily reprieve gained by not having the first drink and getting into a rehabilitation program.