

Queensland Parliament Inquiry into Alcohol-Related Violence

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Response from Logan City Council

**Best Practice in harm minimization measures**

**Why do some offenders become violent after consuming alcohol? What medical or psychological factors are involved?**

**Please note:** The opinions expressed in the following submission are based on observations of Logan City Council officers in their daily duties. These are not necessarily representative of the wider community view.

There are a number of contributing factors to the susceptibility of certain persons to become violent after consuming alcohol. These include social controls in their community, cultural considerations, risk taking behaviours and gratification.

- The prevailing social norms in a community strongly influence the behaviour of both individuals and groups living in a community. If excessive consumption and consequent alcohol-related violence, whether it be domestic or interpersonal, is commonplace and is perceived as socially acceptable behaviour in a community, then such behaviour will be replicated by people in this community throughout generations. Family plays an important role in defining social norms and it is the tolerance and perpetuation of alcohol-related violence in families that leads to certain people believing it is acceptable to become violent resultant from excessive alcohol consumption.
- Media also plays a role in defining social norms. When the media consistently reports stories relating to alcohol-related violence and its prevalence in communities it creates a perception that this issue is omnipresent and consequently desensitises the public to the damaging effects of such behaviour, not just for individuals involved but society as a whole. Reportage of catalyst events capture public attention and ignite the imagination, encouraging others to engage in the same anti-social behaviour to gain attention.
- Risk taking has long been accepted as an essential element of development for young people. In today's society there are fewer opportunities for young people to engage in legitimate risk taking activities in mainstream society. It is surmised that consequently young people are using excessive alcohol consumption as a means of abnegating control and taking risks. This can lead to violent outbursts which are inconsistent with the general character of an individual.
- In today's society people are less likely to engage in formalised avenues of competition (eg sport). This may be a contributing factor to increase in alcohol-related violence as people utilising drinking and subsequent violence as a means to overtly assert their physical dominance.
- The public gratification that alcohol-related violence brings the perpetrator is also a contributing factor to an escalation in this type of behaviour. Due to the altered state of

consciousness of the perpetrator they are in many cases unable to associate their actions with probable consequences. Perpetrators of alcohol-related violence may find they are unable to attain peer gratification by conventional methods.

### **What measures are there to reduce harm?**

Council has been and is currently involved in a number of programs aimed at minimising harm resulting from alcohol-related violence in communities. These include:

- Council's Community Services branch investigates all Liquor License Applications relating to Logan. An assessment is undertaken in order to determine the appropriateness of the location for a licensed premises, likely impacts on the surrounding community, access to public transport and like services and design considerations. By being actively involved in the Liquor Licensing process, Council can make recommendations to the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulations about the design and appropriateness and design of licensed venues in Logan. Hours of operations are also assessed by Council.
  - The Logan Liquor Industry Action Group (LIAG) is also supported by Council with staff from Community Services and Community Infrastructure being actively involved. LIAG has supported a number of initiatives aimed at reducing alcohol-related violence, the most recent being the Safer Venues program. Drawing on knowledge and experience from local agencies such as Council, Drug Arm and Queensland Health, the program assessed the workings of licensed venues in Logan and made recommendations for improvements that would lead to increased patron and staff safety.
  - Recently there have been instances of alcohol-related violence occurring in Council owned venues that are managed by community organisations. In order to minimise harm from anti-social and violent behaviour Council has investigated a number of avenues. Security has been upgraded with a number of venues requiring security personnel to be present at any event where alcohol is to be consumed. The presence of security personnel creates a 'capable guardian' who is in control of the situation. Some venues have opted to reduce the operating hours thus ensuring patrons are off premises before midnight, which is when alcohol-related violence escalates dramatically.
  - Council has also forged a strong working partnership with Queensland Police Service. This partnership allows for a coordinated response to groups that repeatedly hire venues without due consideration to patron safety. The Safe City Advisory Committee is a strategic partnership between Council and Police that identifies areas that require additional resources in order to address community safety concerns.
  - A strong relationship with ethnic leaders in Logan, through Council's LAMP officer, has provided an avenue to discuss alcohol-related concerns with different cultural groups in an attempt to minimise any incidents of alcohol-related violence in communities.
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- Mechanical surveillance, such as CCTV, is not widely utilised inside of Council owned facilities at present, however, if alcohol-related violence continues to escalate this may be a consideration at exit points, car parking and public spaces in near vicinity to licenses premises. The Safety Camera Program is instrumental in reducing the incidence of alcohol related issues in public spaces such as parks.
- One of the most effective methods of harm minimisation would be to encourage strong family and community role models who do not condone irresponsible consumption of alcohol. By having a strong role model in the family and community, irresponsible alcohol consumption may be seen as unacceptable and thus instances of such behaviour leading to violence may be reduced.

### **How effective have those measures been?**

Council's input into the Liquor Licensing process has been effective in highlighting potential issues that a licensed premises may bring to a community. By highlighting potential issues, they can be addressed proactively by adding conditions to liquor licenses. Conditions may relate to opening hours, security measures (mechanical and personnel), lighting and transport provision including placing more obligations on operators to ensure patrons return home safely, thus minimising drunken offences.

Industry partnerships, such as LIAG, have been effective in allowing Council to understand licensing issues as they relate to licensees, allowing Council to provide educated recommendations for liquor license applications to the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulations. LIAG has itself been proactive in determining informal best practice guidelines for licensed venues in Logan.

Utilising security personnel at community venues has proven effective in deterring alcohol-related violence but also poses challenges for community organisations. The cost of hiring security personnel is prohibitive to some hirers. Long term this may cause a decrease in the number of community events being held in Logan. It has also been highlighted that security personnel need specific training in order to be effective in a community setting. Ethno-specific security guards are essential for cultural events as they are better equipped to address any issues in a culturally sensitive way, resulting in a more positive outcome for all involved. When security personnel face a language or cultural barrier it decreases the overall effectiveness of their presence and ability to effectively resolve any issues.

The family unit is an essential element in the development of attitudes towards responsible drinking behaviours in many cultures and domestic structures. Due to increasing disenfranchisement of the traditional family unit this method of harm minimisation is losing value.

**What works? What doesn't?**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Effective</b>	<b>Not Effective</b>
Security personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Security personnel are an effective method of reducing alcohol-related violence in community venues</li> <li>* Utilising security personnel who have an understanding of the nuances of specific cultures enables them to better address any issues, such as language barriers, that may arise at ethno-specific events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Utilising security personnel is costly and thus prohibitive for many community organisations</li> </ul>
Competitive activities (eg sports)	Activities that generate healthy competition and provide an avenue for positive gratification, such as sports and theatre, are effective in reducing alcohol-related violence.	
Lock-ins		Encourage long trading hours leading to prolonged periods of drinking
Mechanical surveillance	Mechanical surveillance such as CCTV, if monitored effectively is of use in deterring alcohol-related violence and having fast response rates for police in addressing crimes.	The success of such methods are reliant on police response to calls for service and a visible police presence in the wake of an incident. Cameras only record offences they do not stop or deter acts of alcohol related violence.
Office of Liquor & Gaming Regulations Application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Positive that Council can raise objections relating to community safety and amenity issues</li> <li>* Ability of Council to make recommendations of licensing conditions increases effectiveness of licensing process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Aspects of process for residents to raise objections is prohibitive as details of objector is provided to applicant</li> <li>*OLGR undertake very little investigation into impact of a liquor license on the surrounding community. This is left to Local Government</li> <li>* Ultimately this decision is made by State Government not the local Council.</li> </ul>

\* Please see Table 1 for Liquor Licensing Applications relevant to Logan City and the outcomes, this demonstrates how effective this process in influencing licensing decisions.

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

**How do we change the drinking culture and create a culture of individual responsibility?**

Changing the drinking culture in Australia is the first necessary step in addressing the underlying social issues that lead to irresponsible consumption of alcohol. Recently it has been highlighted that many young people involved in alcohol-related violence obtained

alcohol from within the family unit. By supplying underage people with alcohol, parents and other in a position of responsibility are giving the message that alcohol consumption is acceptable. The wanton supply of alcohol to minors undermines health and well being messages from social service agencies.

Research into the areas most affected by alcohol-related violence would allow a more targeted approach for educational campaigns. Council, in partnership with Queensland Police Service, intends to carry out asset mapping on selected areas in order to assess the demographic profile and how this may affect community attitudes to a range of community safety issues. By understanding the make up of a community and its social drivers Council will be better placed to provide programs and services that address community attitudes towards anti-social behaviours such as alcohol-related violence.

Creating a culture of individual responsibility for an existing social issue is challenging as the myriad of media attention has laid blame for alcohol-related violence on numerous parties, including parents, schools and the licensees, both rarely have individuals been held publicly accountable for their actions.

### **What education campaigns are currently in place?**

Council currently has a number of education campaigns aimed at youth. Early intervention education programs have been successful changing attitudes to social issues such as youth binge drinking. By educating today's youth on the consequences of irresponsible consumption of alcohol it is hoped that a reduction in alcohol-related violence will follow.

The School Captain's Network is a partnership between Council and the School Captains/Leaders of 24 Logan high schools. A topic recently addressed by the Logan School Captain's Network is binge drinking and the negative consequences of associated behaviours. School leaders designed and distributed stickers with the message "Get wasted - what are you really throwing away?" in order to remind their peers of the consequences of binge drinking. Production of stickers for this initiative were funded by five local Coles Group Hotels who identified the need to support this initiative that addresses the issue of binge drinking with young people and encourages a responsible drinking culture. It is intended that this campaign will be broadened in the future with support from the Logan Liquor Industry Action Group, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Health and Drug Arm.

An initiative of the Logan Healthy School Alliance and funded by Department of Communities, under the Youth Engagement Grants, Logan City Council supports the facilitation of four Youth Engagement Forums across 2008 -2010 to engage young people from the 11 ENABLE schools in the Logan-Albert-Beaudesert District. Topics pertinent to youth development are discussed at Youth Engagement Forums. Recently the issue of alcohol-related violence, namely 'one punch can kill' was addressed when Paul Stanley from the Matthew Stanley Foundation made a presentation to students highlighting the lifelong consequences that one act of alcohol-related violence can cause.

### **How effective have they been?**

The "Get wasted" campaign was designed and rolled out primarily by youth for youth which has lead to it being very well accepted in the Logan community. Messages that come from youth aimed at peers can be more effective than other educational campaigns as the target

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audience is engaged from the first instance and feels some ownership over the success of the outcomes. Open communication between youth and community services agencies have resulted and consequently all parties involved have a greater understanding of the reasons for and consequences of irresponsible consumption of alcohol.

Having the father of a young person who died as a result of alcohol-related violence talk to youth about how this affected not only his family, but the perpetrator and the community, is invaluable in assisting young people to realise that if they drink irresponsibly they may be the victim or perpetrator of an act that could have lifelong consequences for them, their family, friends and community. A presentation such as this may be more effective than television advertising campaigns as young people are encouraged to discuss aspects of the presentation afterwards, generating meaningful conversations while the message is still fresh in their minds.

### **How could they be improved?**

In order to generate the most effective outcomes it would be beneficial if there was a standardised education program available throughout Queensland. This would ensure that the message being delivered to 'at risk' groups is consistent. Any educational campaigns should take into account the cultural diversity of Queensland communities and how language and cultural barriers may hinder the effectiveness of education campaigns. In order to address a specific issue, such as 'glassing' it is imperative to ensure that there is an education campaign that targets this issues specifically. Advertising campaigns for other specific safety issues such as drink driving, have been effective as they target the exact issues, not other associated behaviours.

The effectiveness of educational campaigns may be increased if they better addressed the fundamental causes of why certain people feel that alcohol-related violence is acceptable in their community and worked at changing these attitudes. Changing ingrained behaviours requires a long term commitment to educational campaigns in order to reiterate the message throughout different developmental stages of target audiences.

Educational campaigns for staff in licensed premises, over and above the Responsible Service of Alcohol, would be beneficial. The focus of licensed venues should be patron welfare and safety focused. As such, education could include ways in which licensed premises could actively engage in identifying intoxicated patrons anywhere in venues, not just at alcohol service points. By undertaking continual monitoring of patrons throughout a venue, any patron exhibiting intoxicated or violence behaviour can be pre-emptively removed from the venue.

## **The economic cost of alcohol-related violence**

### **What is the economic cost of alcohol-related violence to the Logan community?**

The negative impacts of alcohol-related violence in the Logan community are far reaching. Instances of irresponsible consumption of alcohol and resultant anti-social behaviours negatively reflect on public perceptions of safety in certain areas. Consequently commercial enterprises are hesitant to set up business in areas with negative perceptions of safety, fearing

negative impacts on their business such as robbery and vandalism. Media reporting often influences commercial interests by the way in which they portray an area and its susceptibility to crime and anti-social activity.

Community Centres are also faced with two-fold economic costs resulting from alcohol-related violence. They must reach a balance between the risk associated with instances of alcohol-related violence and the loss of revenue if they refuse hire of venues to certain groups. If community centres were to refuse hire, or even limit hire by means of additional requirements such as private security, they risk losing hire fees that are vital to their survival. Conversely, if they accept hirers that do not enforce responsible behaviour of patrons they chance large repair costs and increased insurance fees.

The cost of maintaining and monitoring the Safety Camera Program is also an economic cost that can, in part, be attributed to alcohol related issues. The Safety Camera Program is focused on maintaining community safety by actively monitoring locations throughout the city that are affected by anti-social and alcohol related issues, such as violence. Selected parks and railway stations are monitored to increase public safety. The financial costs of running the Safety Camera Program are absorbed by rate-payers.

Investigating complaints from residents regarding noise and safety considerations are also an economic consideration for Council as Council resources are utilised in such investigations, issuing show cause notices, measuring noise complaints and recording customer / community complaints against noises generated from drunken patrons or licensed venues .

Police resources utilised in proactively monitoring venues for alcohol-related issues, as well as those used in responding to incidents of alcohol-related violence is an economic consideration that must be investigated. The diversion of police resources from other essential services due to alcohol-related incidents impacts on the safety of communities as a whole.

Alcohol and drug related social services, such as counselling and rehabilitation programs, have a profound economic impact on communities. Many such programs are funded by the State or Federal government, at a significant cost to the wider community. Logan City has many social services or community organisations that deliver welfare services aimed at assisting families and individuals cope with and manage the effect of problem drinking, anti-social behaviour or alcohol related violence. As the prevalence and incidence of alcohol-related violence increase so too will the demand for social services such as victim support services.

### **How could this be reduced?**

There are a number of ways to reduce the economic impacts of alcohol-related violence in Logan communities. Firstly, community centres can increase their diligence in advising hirers of their legal responsibilities when they hire a community centre. By ensuring that hirers understand that they are responsible for all damages to the venue it is anticipated that they will become more diligent with responsible consumption of alcohol.

Community centres and venues may also benefit from installing standardised signage regulating patron behaviour. Regulations may include dress codes, code of conduct for patrons and information on right and responsibility of the community centre management and security responsibilities to evict patrons found in breach of the code of conduct. By providing

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a standard code of conduct for all community centres acceptable patron behaviour is established throughout the city.

The provision of appropriate and easily accessible transport to/from and between licensed venues may contribute to a reduction in alcohol-related violence. Courtesy bus services and suitably located taxi ranks facilitate the free movement of patrons, reducing the opportunity for patrons to become frustrated and violent while waiting for transport.

Police are instrumental in minimising the harm resultant from alcohol-related violence. As such, to reduce the incidence and therefore opportunity for negative economic impacts it is essential for community centres to have a strong working relationship with police. By fostering a positive working partnership with police community centres can work towards addressing any recurrent issues related to irresponsible consumption of alcohol. Once recurrent patterns of irresponsible alcohol consumption are dismantled a new culture of responsible alcohol consumption can be created. By proactively flagging any events that may be cause for concern with police the opportunity for events to end in violence may be reduced thus reducing the negative economic impact on the surrounding community.



**TABLE 1 - Logan City Council Responses to Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulations**

<b>DATE RECEIVED</b>	<b>APPLICANT</b>	<b>LICENCE DETAILS</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>OUTCOME WITH OLGR</b>
Feb-08	Gold Coast Wholesalers Cairns St., Loganholme	Variation of licence to Producer/Wholesaler Licence	No public/retail sale allowed according to Planning Scheme	Licence not granted by OLGR
May-08	Jimboomba Tavern Cnr Mt Lindesay Hwy and Cusack Ln, Jimboomba	Application for Extended Hours Trading - Midnight to 2.00am trading Monday to Sunday	Objection due to lack of public transport in the early hours of the morning. Doc Id: 4503074	Extended trading hours not approved by OLGR
Jun-08	Springwood Hotel- AHL Group 43-51 Springwood Rd, Springwood	Application for Extended Hours Trading - Midnight to 3.00am on Sunday and 2.00am to 3.00am Monday to Saturday.	Objection due to concerns late trading hours would negatively impact on surrounding residents. Doc Id: 4558075	Extended trading hours not approved by OLGR
Jul-08	Café Bojangles Pty Ltd 44 Bryants Rd., Shailer Park	Application for variation and extended trading hours Request Midnight to 2.00am trading Thurs- Sat	Requested further information. Doc Id: 4843200	Withdrawal of application by applicant
Aug-08	MGW Hotels Pty Ltd Kensington Junction 19-25 Julie St., Crestmead	Application for Extended Hours Trading Request Midnight to 2.00am trading Thurs-Sat	Objection due to conflict with character of surrounding neighbourhood and proximity of local residents. Doc Id: 4856823	Extended trading hours not approved by OLGR
Sep-08	Craftbrewer- Scrapmetal Trading Pty Ltd 3285 Logan Rd., Underwood	Application for limited license 8.00am to 8.00pm Mon to Sun Request sell liquor and on site tastings	Objection due to Planning Scheme - business is code assessable and no DA has been made. Doc Id: 4845743	Licence not approved based on Development Assessment Advice
Sep-08	Daiwa Food Corporation 75 Parramatta Rd., Underwood	Application for Wholesalers Licence	Conditions. Doc Id: 4851148	Council's recommended conditions incorporated in the Liquor Licence conditions.
Nov-08	Pub Lane Tavern (ALH) Cnr Pub Lane and Teviot Rd., Greenbank	Application for a liquor licence (consumption on and off premises) 10-12 mon-Sunday	Conditions for transport to be provided. Doc Id: 5166982	License decision pending
Nov-08	Greenbank RSL services club 54 Anzac Ave,	Application for a variation of licence - Entertainment on roof	Requested further information. Doc Id: 5933860	Council's conditions upheld by

DATE RECEIVED	APPLICANT	LICENCE DETAILS	RESPONSE	OUTCOME WITH OLGR
	Hillcrest	top		OLGR
Feb-09	Fruitful Marketing PTY LTD 23 Fairmount Crst, Underwood	Application for New Licence Subsidiary Off-Premise License Gift Basket Business	No objections or conditions. Doc Id: 5977383	License approved upon Council's Development Assessment advice
Feb-09	Moss St International Woodridge Cnr Douglas and Smith Rd., Woodridge	Application for Extended Hours Detached Bottleshop - 10am to 9pm Sunday to Wednesday and 10am to 12pm Thursday to Saturday	Objection due to concerns over proposed hours and conflict with character of local community. Doc Id: 5964335	Upheld by OLGR
Feb-09	Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE 50-68 Armstrong Rd., Meadowbrook	Application for a new liquor licence (commercial other subsidiary on premise) Training for educational programs	No objections or conditions. Doc Id: 5980850	License approved
Mar-09	The Stockyard Hotel 106 City Rd., Beenleigh	Application for a Detached Bottleshop - Trading from 10am to midnight Monday to Sunday	Conditions for trading hours to not exceed 10pm. Doc Id: 6028591	Decision pending response by applicant and negotiations with Council and other objecting parties
Apr-09	Chatswood Hills Tavern Cnr Chatswood Rd and Magellan St., Springwood	Application for Extended Hours Trading - 10am to 3am Monday to Sunday	Objection due to potential negative impact late trading hours would have on surrounding residents. Doc Id: 6020530	Application suspended due to Moratorium
Apr-09	Jimboomba Country Tavern Cnr Mt. Lindesay Hwy and Cusack Ln, Jimboomba	Application for Extended Hours Trading - 10am to 3am Monday to Sunday	Objection due to lack of public transport in the early hours of the morning. Doc Id: 6043516	Application suspended due to Moratorium
Apr-09	Greenbank / Park Ridge Tavern Cnr Mt Lindesay Hwy and St Aldwyn Rd., North Maclean	Application for a detached bottleshop - Trading from 10am to 9pm Monday to Sunday	Conditions recommended in consultation with Queensland Police Service. Doc Id: 6131108	Decision pending response by applicant and negotiations with Council and other objecting parties

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May-09	Springwood Hotel- ALH Group 43-51 Springwood Rd, Springwood	Application for Extended Hours Trading - 10am to 5am Monday to Sunday	Objection due to concerns that late trading hours would negatively impact on surrounding residents. Doc Id: 6063973	Application suspended due to Moratorium
May-09	Royal Hotel - ALH Group 85-89 George St., Beenleigh	Application for Extended Hours Trading - 10am to 3am Monday to Sunday	Objection due to high rate of violence licensed premises in this area are currently experiencing. Doc Id: 6064032	Application suspended due to Moratorium
May-09	Imperial Hotel - ALH Group 66 George St., Beenleigh	Application for Extended Hours Trading - 10am to 3am Monday to Sunday	Objection due to the high rate of violence licensed premises in this area are currently experiencing. Doc Id: 6069548	Application suspended due to Moratorium
Jun-09	Kensington Junction Hotel, ALH Group 19-25 Julie St., Crestmead	Application for Extended Hours Trading - 10am to 3am Monday to Sunday	Objection due to potential conflict with character of surrounding neighbourhood and proximity of local residents. Doc Id: 6140109	Application suspended due to Moratorium
Jun-09	Montezumas - Browns Plains	Application for a new liquor licence (commercial other subsidiary on premise) Liquor to be sold with meal	No objections Doc Id 6208320	Too soon for details
Jun-09	The Warehouse Tavern - 124 distillery Rd, Beenleigh	Application for a detached bottleshop - Trading from 10am to Midnight Monday to Sunday	Conditions that trading hours don't extend past 10pm Doc Id 6208470	Too soon for details
Jun-09	Brisbane Lions Australian Football Club - Pannikin St, Rosedale South	Application for a Community Club licence. Trading hours 10am to 2am Mon to Sat, 10am to 12am Sun	Conditions on trading hours - not to exceed 12am Mon to Sun	Moratorium on extended trading past 12am so conditions will be accepted.
Jul-09	Windaroo Tavern - 120 Riverhills Rd, Eagleby	Application for a detached bottleshop - Trading from 10am to Midnight Monday to Sunday	No objections Doc Id 6208424	Too soon for details
Jul-09	Eagle Tavern - 166 Fryer Rd, Eagleby	Application for a detached bottleshop - Trading from 10am to Midnight Monday to Sunday	Objection to change - social Impact issues Doc Id 6229304	Too soon for details

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Sep-09	Moss Street International - 2 Yalumba St, Kingston	Application for a detached bottleshop - Trading from 10am to Midnight Monday to Sunday	No response as yet	
Oct-09	Big Gun Chinese Restaurant	Application for a new liquor licence (commercial other subsidiary on premise) Liquor to be sold with meal	No Response as yet	