

---

**From:** Les Pullos \_\_\_\_\_  
**Sent:** Saturday, 24 October 2009 11:19 AM  
**To:** Law, Justice and Safety Committee  
**Subject:** Submission to Enquiry into Alcohol Related Violence  
**Attachments:** Survey Response Les Pullos.doc

100

Dear Ms Stone.

Thank you for the invitation to submit my thoughts to the Inquiry into alcohol related violence.

My wife Diana and I have spent over 30 years in the hotel industry. It is what we do and what we are passionate about! We have owned and operated hotels as far west as the Royal Carrangarra Hotel in Tambo in Western Queensland, north to the Masterson Hotel in Mareeba and the last 25 years in the hotel business in Brisbane. During the late eighties and early nineties we owned and operated the Normanby, Hamilton and Alliance Hotels along with The 29 Murray Street Reception Centre at Wilston. The Pullos Group now owns the Samford Hotel, the Woodford Hotel /Motel and The Royal George Hotel along with the Bank Vault Lounge in Fortitude Valley.

Prior to stepping down at the recent AGM, I have been the Chairman of the Valley Liquor Accord for the last 5 years. In every hotel, we have been innovative and successful and at all times have conducted our businesses ethically and well. Long before the term was even invented we adhered to the principals of The Responsible Service of Alcohol and caring for your customers was simply expected. The vast majority of the older hotel families operated along similar lines.

Without wanting to appear immodest, I believe that along the way we have gained considerable experience and understand clearly what is needed to assist the Inquiry in its efforts. Prior to me stepping down as Chairman, a survey was sent to the members of the VLA and members of the Valley Chamber of Commerce and the general public to gather information for a submission on behalf of the area. I have attached a copy of my reply to the survey as the main body of my private submission.

In addition, I have added below my comments and suggestions which in many ways is a summary of my responses to the survey. Please forgive my occasional outbursts of passion but that is just the way I am!

As a long time member of the QHA, I support the submission made by our industry body and much of the detail within that document will support my far more simple, although mostly similar suggestions.

These suggestions apply specifically to The Valley Entertainment Precinct although most can be applied across the board.....

1. First of all, everyone must accept that there is now, an increased world wide propensity to violence in society, either associated with the consumption of alcohol or not. From this indisputable fact we can start.

---

Federal social engineering programmes across all sections of society are needed to address this problem, however this will be a gradual process and in reality will take a generation to bite. Some

26/10/2009

programmes are already in train, however a coordinated approach with this is essential. Patience, persistence and a long term strategy is needed.

2. With the acceptance of the premise that increased violence is a societal ill and not one isolated to Licensed premises, but none the less a very real problem, a "Short Term" ie 20 year, set of measures must be put into place to prevent acts of violence within the Precinct, until the social engineering programmes change the attitudes in society.

To my mind, the reason most violent acts occur, both in society generally and in our precinct in particular, stems from a lack of clearly defined social rules and of an understanding of the consequences of actions by the perpetrators of the violence.

Irrespective of whatever rules may apply elsewhere in the world however, within our precinct a zero tolerance to violence must apply. Those who commit these acts must face serious consequences and not be excused by some pseudo intellectual drivel.

3. The Centre Piece to addressing the issue of violence in the precinct must be a comprehensive Management Plan to coordinate all areas of governance and services within the Precinct. This Management Plan would be similar to that for a major football game or event at Suncorp stadium. Crowds of the same size frequent The Valley every Friday and Saturday night so a detailed plan is required for the orderly conduct of the area along the these same lines. This Plan must be drawn up by the same experienced people who develop the sporting ground plans or other major event plans and not be thrown as a token to well meaning "amateurs" such as the Chamber of Commerce then ignored!

4. I have no doubt a professionally compiled Management Plan will throw up the need for extra police presence within the precinct, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights.

The Police Service is the Primary care provider in society. It is indisputable that a proactive, highly visible police presence dramatically reduces the incidence of acts of public misbehaviour of any type, in any setting. The Police Service are aware of this, the government are aware of this, every thinking person in the world is aware of this, and yet, week after week, year after year, the numbers of police within the Valley Entertainment Precinct are found wanting. On the occasions that sufficient numbers are deployed ie, New Years Eve, Valley Fiesta ect, the level of problems decrease as a direct result.

I therefore give you this guarantee..... As an immediate "fix" that will A. Save lives B, improve the amenity of the precinct immeasurably and C be politically a godsend to the members of the Inquiry and the government, please put in place the following simple measure!

Four (4) squads of four (4) well trained police officers (Training not only in the physical sense but in verbal skills also) to be deployed to patrol the precinct, proactively policing the area from 10.00 pm until 6.00am every Friday and Saturday night. In addition to the current police roster.

These squads would not be called away from the area or the normal roster reduced because of their presence! This one simple move will change the perception and the realty of the Precinct overnight!!.

Yes it will cost, perhaps \$500,000.00 per year but it is a fraction of the approximately \$25million per year collected in extra fees from the licensed venues.

If nothing else whatsoever comes out of this Inquiry but this single measure, it will have been a worthwhile exercise.

If the State government is not prepared to adopt this measure, or one very similar that involves highly visible Police in the precinct, then It will simply confirm what many are thinking, that this is just yet another cynical exercise in politics!

This measure will be necessary for the next 20 years but the cost is minimal and the move will prove revenue positive in the overall sense almost immediately.

5. The overwhelming majority of licensees in the precinct are understanding of the need to maintain high standards of compliance. They know that it is in their interest to have the area attractive and safe for the people to come. There is very little more that can be achieved by continually fining licensees and having the various authorities adopt a confrontational intimidatory attitude towards the operators. Far better to employ a "we're here to help" approach provided that it is seen that the spirit of the law is being followed.

The new membership structure of the VLA automatically includes all members in the Safer Venues programme. This programme is overseen by the Dept of Health and rewards venues who are seen to be doing the right thing in terms of compliance and actively promoting safe practices. This type of programme must be supported by the compliance departments to encourage positive efforts.

Having said that, I believe a high level of compliance must be maintained to discourage any fall off in standards.

6. ID Scanners are in my opinion a very useful tool in creating the PERCEPTION of safety in the precinct, and must be promoted as such. Currently however, the opinion within government ranks appears to be to use the introduction of scanners as a form of punishment for venues with a poor history of violent incidents. The absolute opposite should apply!

Scanners remove the anonymity from potential trouble makers and provide an avenue to refuse entry to anyone the next time they present their id at the door. Scanners will create a perception of safety and order in the precinct and in this industry perception is everything. In theory, provided the equipment is compatible, linking between venues is possible, but in reality I don't see that will happen given the various types of equipment available. Banned lists however, could be shared with a minimum of fuss via a central point ie the police, and manually added to the various systems in the individual hotels and clubs.

7. The worth of the "Lockout" is very difficult to judge as it was introduced along with the rest of the 17 Point Plan. Collectively though, the 17 point plan has been relatively successful with the Secure Cab Ranks reducing trouble at ranks and encouraging more cabs to work the later shifts. The late night Train and Bus services have been a success although changes need to be made to timetables and routes. These operational issues will be improved by the Management Plan. The use of the Brawler van and new arrest procedures have proved invaluable.

8. A large scale patron education and information programme requires implementation within the precinct, via Electronic screens in the Malls and within the venues. This would cover standards of behaviour required / directions/ timetables of transport and entertainment options throughout the area. The more contentious issues of behaviour ect can be addressed in a lighter manner so as to not appear overly authoritarian.

9. The effect of cheap retail liquor from bottle shops is a huge issue affecting the precinct. Because of the expensive nature of on premise drinks, up to 85% of the people who come to the precinct have as many as 10 drinks before presenting themselves at the door of a hotel or club. Ideally they should not be allowed in but some gain entry, have a couple of drinks inside and create a disturbance. The venue of course is blamed for irresponsibly supplying the trouble maker with alcohol and the rest is history!

One of the major anomalies the on premise operators face is that while no advertising of price is allowed to be visible from the street at venues, the major chains advertise the prices of below cost retail alcohol available at bottle shops all across the country. Between 70% and 80% of all alcohol in this state is purchased off premise, but when ever an alcohol related incident occurs, either on premise or at a backyard BBQ, the on premise venues are invariably penalised in some way! All advertising of retail liquor prices must be immediately outlawed to help curtail this problem.

10. I believe trading hours across the city could be structured such that the suburbs close at 1am, the city at 3am and the Valley Entertainment Precinct at 5am, provided venues meet requirements such as ID scanners in place, correct security numbers and maintain a reasonable record of disturbances.

Perhaps it may even be that a 3 am close across the city and Valley might be entertained. Closing at 3am would certainly assist all the service providers with staffing issues and ultimately might encourage people to come out earlier and drink less at home beforehand.

11. The issue of Glassing is a real concern to everyone. To many venues the use of polycarbonate glasses is not a problem. Our venues in the Valley both voluntarily opted to use polycarbonate glasses for both safety and convenience. Although initially more expensive, they do not break, are lighter to carry and reduce the possibility of having a "glassing" in our venues. Unfortunately glassing incidents are impossible to predict and it is grossly unfair that any venue should be tainted as unsafe by the actions of someone deciding to do such a disgusting thing as to hit someone in the face with a glass. No venue can predict when such a thing will occur. Unfortunately, this phenomenon has recently become an option when once it was simply unheard of. The term "glassing" is highly emotive and perhaps media outlets should be discouraged from its use, much like the word "drought" which I notice has been removed from use within government circles by order from on high!

A blanket ban on glass however, is out of the question, as many venues serve expensive champagne and cocktails which do not lend themselves to being presented in polycarbonate glasses. The only real deterrent is very strong penalties and the "stigmatizing" of the act of glassing in the media rather than sensationalizing it!

Publishing "lists" of supposedly irresponsibly conducted establishments, so named because they have unfortunately had a "glassing" on the premises, is just a disgrace!

So to are statements by the Minister that "a small number of licensed premises spoil it for the rest!" Let me repeat... "Glassings" are in no way the fault of individual venues, and venues should not be blamed or shamed because of them.

Again, as with the Scanner issue, venues who choose to use Polycarbonates should be applauded and not stigmatized as dangerous places, by imposing the use of these safety glasses as a penalty on those places unlucky enough to have had a glassing in their venue.

12. CCTV systems across the precinct need to be upgraded and ultimately linked along with all of the other public systems throughout the city to assist police to do their job well. London is a magnificent example of this integration.

13. The one major failing of the inquiry is the exclusion of any discussion on the influence of Drugs on the issue of violence. Slightly built young fellows under the influence of Speed or other cocktails of drugs are almost impossible to control. It is impossible to reason with people under the influence of drugs and the situation is such that the use of these illegal substances is increasing always. Any decisions reached will automatically need to have the effects of drugs somehow factored in.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my thoughts and suggestions. I would be very happy to address the Inquiry or to elaborate further, but this is not rocket science.

All that is needed is a plan, the genuine desire on the part of the government to actually want to help vs playing politics, and a common sense approach to the issue.

Yes, it will cost some money, but my clear understanding was that at least some of the additional fees and charges imposed on the industry were to be spent on issues of exactly this type.

Regards,

Les Pullos

DIRECTOR

Royal George Hotel

Bank Vault Lounge

Woodford Village Hotel/Motel

Samford Valley Hotel - Winner - Best Redeveloped Hotel up to \$1 Million Dollars - QHA Awards for Excellence 2004

Postal: 327 Brunswick Street,  
Fortitude Valley Q 4006

[www.royalgeorgehotel.com.au](http://www.royalgeorgehotel.com.au)

[www.bankbar.com.au](http://www.bankbar.com.au)

[www.samfordhotel.com.au](http://www.samfordhotel.com.au)

[www.woodfordhotel.com.au](http://www.woodfordhotel.com.au)

**1. This is not a public survey. It is intended for licensees and managers in the Fortitude Valley precinct and members of the Valley Liquor Accord and other members of the Fortitude Valley Chamber of Commerce only. Please enter a valid email address below to allow us to authenticate your response.**

rghotel@bigpond.com

**2. In identifiable precincts like the Valley, an overarching management plan must be developed which will pull in all areas of governance and service provision, so that the elements which go into the management of activity within the precinct are delivered in a co-ordinated, timely, efficient, structured, and appropriate way. The management plan will give a small group of appointees control over the management of things like transport, security, lighting, policing, cleaning, promotions, state and local government liaison, patron management etc etc etc.**

Yes I agree. More though, the plan needs to be developed by the same authorities that have developed the Lang Park Plan & Woolloongabba as opposed to asking the Valley Chamber of Commerce or the VLA to do it and then ignoring their recommendations. I would expect the plan to throw up deficiencies in Public Transport, Police numbers, ect ect

**3. The safer venues program should be provided with a large increase in resources in order to take in as many licensed premises as possible, as a way of helping promote and recognise good management practices.**

Absolutely. Be sure to push the notion that the VLA membership automatically puts everyone into the awards.

**4. We need to increase Police presence in public spaces around entertainment precincts. Visible Police presence is arguably the most effective deterrent to misbehaviours of all kinds, including in particular violent behaviour.**

Yes of course. Further, as an immediate "fix" 4 extra patrols of 4 police officers of the right calibre and ability to be added to the precinct between the hours of 10.00pm and 6.00am on Friday and Saturday nights . This might cost upwards of \$500,000 per year but is a guaranteed fix to 90% of the issues in the precinct. In real terms, a very small price to pay if the governments both state and local are fair dinkum about an immediate fix. The Societal problems ie the root causes of this propensity to violence need to be addressed at a Federal level and cover the full spectrum of society, but within the Entertainment Precinct there must be some immediate solutions put in place to create the perception of order.

**5. Thinking about the use of glass in licensed premises, and the proposed ban, discussion has centred around the ineffectiveness of such a ban, and the negative message which could be sent to patrons through the use of plastics and polycarbonate products in some venues. A blanket policy banning glass should not be introduced.**

See the VLA press release, it covers the subject well.

**6. There has been criticism of the widespread use of the term "glassing" as it is now being picked up in the vernacular of young people, leading to a greater likelihood of such an incident occurring. There should be a media ban on the use of the term, in the same way as the media do not report things like suicide, and the amounts of money stolen in robberies.**

Yes I agree. The word is very emotive, but generally speaking, if the press started this very moment to be responsible with their reporting, it would take them 20 years to get their credibility back!

**7. Price-based advertising of takeaway liquor should be banned, in the same way as prohibitions currently apply to advertising the price of liquor which is consumed on-premises. This will contribute to a reduction in "loss leader" pricing practices which feature prominently in this market segment. Some research has identified price as the major incentive/disincentive to drinking behaviours, and as such the advertising ban proposed would be one way of affecting pricing.**

Yes of course. The larger operators eg Woolworths & Coles are blatantly encouraging binge drinking by the pricing policies they employ on retail/take away liquor. I don't hold a lot of hope that the ACCC would agree to a standard price for alcohol but for a very long time there was just that! I believe there is room to regulate the price given the type of product we are dealing with and its effect on so many areas of society, as opposed to corn flakes or cardboard boxes ect ect. Second best is the ban on advertising prices in any way. As a trade off to the industry, sport and the arts ect advertising of any alcoholic product within guidelines should be allowed.

**8. The underlying problem is not liquor, but a predisposition to engage in violent behaviour. In other words, we have a violence problem, not a liquor problem, and strategies which focus solely on liquor control measures are therefore unlikely to have any effect.**

Yes I agree however alcohol increases the likelihood of that behaviour emerging. Extensive Social engineering measures across the board at a national level must be introduced to encourage the proper use of alcohol and the discouraging of violent behaviour, whether it be associated with alcohol or not, beginning in the home /schools ect. Unfortunately, these social engineering measures will take a generation to kick in even if we started now. There must be an acceptance there is this increased propensity to violence in society, either associated with alcohol or not. Violent acts must attract heavy penalties and not be excused on some weak pseudo-intellectual premise.

**9. ID Scanners – there are mixed views about the appropriateness of scanners. However, the consensus appears to be that their use, as well as the use of other technology and strategies needs to be incentivised, meaning that there should be some obvious and marketable incentive for venues to adopt the new strategies. This could be, for example, in the form of reduced licence fees, or increased trading privileges.**

I agree. The issue at the moment is that the authorities appear to be leaning towards using scanners as a "penalty" ie if a venue has, say 3 fights in a month then that venue must install a scanner. I believe using scanners can be a positive thing, in as much as it removes the anonymity of trouble makers and the use of the banning option will very quickly reduce the number of problem patrons coming to the area. My suggestion is to promote the use of these devices as a positive move rather than as a penalty. Measures such as the introduction of Scanners and Polycarbonate glasses must be sold as positive steps. PERCEPTION IS EVERYTHING. If the perception of the general public is such that if a venue has Scanners and or Polycarbonate glasses they are somehow a third rate place, no venues will voluntarily introduce these measures even they feel it would be advantageous in the long term.

**10. Do you have any other comments?**

Yes. I believe the CCTV system requires a major upgrade ie more cameras / more coverage/ better technology and all public systems eg Traffic, Malls, throughout the city should be linked to provide police with the best opportunity to do their jobs well. In addition Police need the capacity to ban particular persons from the Entertainment Precinct if necessary similar to South Bank.

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

I am not a qualified Doctor or a Psychologist however there is no doubt that society in general is more violent, with or without alcohol. The evidence is everywhere in schools, homes, workplaces, on the roads, the list goes on. The same people who are violent at school will be violent after consuming alcohol either in a hotel or at a party in the back yard. Reasons are many and some will apply to some individuals and some to others. A lack of behavioural standards and parameters in the home from a very early age and a lack of effective parenting and broken homes with no role models in the home as a result. The use of drugs is a major contributing factor to the problem, either taken in addition to alcohol or without and it is a major failing of this enquiry that Drugs are not addressed at all

**12. What measures are there to reduce harm?**

All of the current Compliance measures eg RSA Approved Managers certificates /Liquor Accord initiatives /17 point plan items eg secure cab ranks, late night public transport, brawler vans, altered arrest procedures, increased police numbers and operation procedures ect.

**13. How effective have those measures been?**

Collectively, despite newspaper reports to the contrary the measures in place are working quite well. The overwhelming majority of problems were occurring at the unsupervised cab ranks. With the introduction of supervision at the ranks the incidence of problems at these ranks has decreased markedly. With more order at the ranks has come a greater number of cabs prepared to work later in the night. Late night transport has been very effective although problems exist with both the number of services of buses and trains and the timing of both, particularly the trains. The issue of access to the train station continues to be a problem and the area outside the train station on Brunswick St is a real problem area for Police when the station is closed between services. The single most important police initiative has been the change to arrest procedures and the use of the brawler van which now allows for an arrest to be made and the processing of the person charged to be done at the station by another officer. Increased Police presence has helped markedly and I believe the Police are to be commended on their renewed recognition of the importance of high visibility policing

**14. What works? What doesn't work?**

The burden of Compliance on Licensees has been huge, however I am sure it has helped make everyone aware of all of the issues, particularly those in relation to RSA procedures. I believe however, the point has come where Licensees are drowning in paper and some officers are becoming pedantic about the detail despite the spirit of the compliance issues being adhered to by the majority of operators. Not a lot more can be gained by continually pressing licensees with compliance. My comments on the previous question on the importance of high visibility policing apply here. In my opinion a structured Management Plan for the precinct, providing a coordinated use of existing services, with additional public transport services, supplemented by an additional 16 /20 police officers in the precinct working in teams of 3 or 4 between the hours of 10pm and 6am on both Friday and Saturday nights and other special nights ie nights before Public holidays, would provide an immediate "fix" to the vast majority of problems of violence. This suggestion may sound very simplistic but it is no secret at all that at any event involving large numbers of people eg. football games, New Years Eve ect adequate police, highly visible and working proactively, restrict trouble substantially in almost every instance. Unfortunately the increased propensity towards violence will remain in society in general, until at least a generation of measures are implemented to change



the culture. I am certain that a professionally compiled Management plan will highlight the need for the additional police numbers along with improvements in transport and other services. This management plan is at the heart of the matter, the challenge will come when the plan throws up the additional services required and the subsequent additional costs.

**15. How have late opening hours impacted on the incidence of alcohol-related violence?**

The late hours have encouraged people to come out later and to drink at home or at unsupervised private parties early in the night, taking advantage of the cheap retail alcohol from the bottle shops in the suburbs. This in turn has led to some people arriving in the entertainment precinct intoxicated or under the influence of drugs and causing problems. The issue of a lack of police numbers and the difficulties police face with rosters to cover the hours then impacts on their ability to adequately service the precinct. The same applies to Public Transport services and all the other services in the area.

**16. What has been the impact of the 3am lockout on the incidence of alcohol-related violence?**

It is difficult to measure whether the lockout has helped given it was introduced along with the 17 point plan. Certainly it has created a situation where persons refused entry are upset and in many instances resort to violence. I am not convinced any positive effects have been seen by its introduction. Comments in the following section expand more.

**17. What other impacts has the 3am lockout had on patrons, venues, and other stakeholders?**

The lockout puts a very negative light on a night out and changes the 'Vibe' about the precinct at 3am. People who were previously enjoying themselves suddenly find themselves being refused entry for no real reason and often become irritated by this circumstance. Venues find either a mass exodus at approx 2.30 as patrons rush to get inside another place or they face a rush at the door and often arguments when they refuse patrons attempting to gain entry. This places a strain on Police and other services. Inside the venues the "vibe" in the rooms often falls flat as people leave to go home and are not replaced by new patrons.

**18. What changes, if any, should be made to opening hours, and alcohol service strategies within those hours, to reduce alcohol-related violence?**

I believe hours should be staggered across the city with a 1am close in the suburbs, 3am in the city, and a 5am close in the Valley Entertainment Precinct. This would enable police and other services to be directed to the areas as they close down. I don't believe measures such as those trialling in NSW re "water service periods of 15 minutes every hour will help at all, in fact it will simply encourage "stockpiling" and increased consumption. Perhaps we might even reconsider a 3am close across the Valley in general. It might very well be that this move encourages patrons to come out earlier in the night [after a period of adjustment with less of an emphasis on drinking at home earlier in the night. Ultimately it might just be easier and more profitable for us all.

**19. What is the impact of alcohol-related violence on police and other emergency service workers and health workers?**

I would think because of the obvious lack of numbers of both police and emergency service workers at the present moment, that it is very stressful.

**20. How can negative impacts on these workers be reduced?**

By accepting that their numbers are desperately low and increasing these numbers of

both police and emergency workers and adopting the suggestions I have made earlier. Either we act PROACTIVELY and put measures in place to prevent or minimize the incidence of problems. Or continue to face an uphill battle.

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

Via federally driven programmes across all sections of society, including schools, in the home, in work places, sporting events and by installing strict consequences of actions for violent acts, whether performed under the influence of alcohol or not. This zero tolerance style policy towards violent acts must be supported by the courts.

**22. What education campaigns are currently in place?**

Many and varied but importantly none of the programmes are coordinated in any way. Again a plan must be developed and maintained.

**23. How effective have they been?**

Limited.

**24. How could they be improved?**

Planning and coordination is paramount and with the use of both hard hitting messages and roll model style messages

**25. How are parents influencing the attitudes of young Queenslanders?**

Many parents are excellent roll models and their influences are ideal but many are not. Public Education aimed at adults the likes of which is currently being run in the press is needed.

**26. How can parents be assisted in instilling responsible attitudes to drinking?**

As above.

**27. What is the economic cost of alcohol-related violence to the Queensland community?**

Unknown, I would imagine the costs are huge. For this reason it makes perfect sense to adopt the measures suggested.

**28. How could this cost be reduced?**

As above. Proactive efforts on all fronts and by a genuine desire to solve the problems and not just reacting to newspaper articles for political purposes. Money outlayed upfront on improved services and personal will save a fortune.