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 Law, Justice and Safety  
 Committee

30 October 2009

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The Research Director  
 Law, Justice and Safety Committee  
 Parliament House  
 BRISBANE QLD 4000  
 By e-mail: [ljsc@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:ljsc@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Sir / Madam

**RE: INQUIRY INTO ALCOHOL-RELATED VIOLENCE IN QUEENSLAND**

I refer to your letter dated, 3 September 2009, and enclosed issue paper inviting feedback from the Taxi Council of Queensland (Taxi Council) in regard to the Law Justice and Safety Committee's inquiry into Alcohol-Related Violence in Queensland.

The Taxi Council offers the following comments on behalf of the Queensland taxi industry.

1. Alcohol-related violence is a very real problem and the Government must commit itself to strategies and reforms that are congruent with "harm minimisation" as a first order priority. In our view, public safety must always take priority over commercial, recreational or privacy interests.
2. As a provider of 24/7 public passenger transport services, the taxi industry is all too aware that shortcomings remain in arrangements for Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) and Responsible Management of Licensed Venues (RMLV). It is simply not good enough when some liquor licensees continue to put other members of the community at risk in their irresponsible pursuit of profits. In particular, the practice of removing intoxicated patrons from their venues and abandoning (dumping) them on taxi ranks must be banned. Queensland taxi drivers should be able to go about their business with the reasonable expectation that their passengers will behave civilly, without violence, and without soiling the vehicle. In our view, it is also not unreasonable to expect that taxi passengers should know and be able to communicate where they want to be taken, stay awake for the journey, and pay the metered fare on arrival at their destination. Effective RSA and RMLV arrangements are essential. The Taxi Council supports initiatives such as mandatory training of licensed premises' staff, increased accountability measures, and Liquor Accords.
3. The Taxi Council would also support additional resources being provided to the Queensland Police Service. It is our observation that a greater police presence deployed "on the beat" provides the most effective deterrent to misbehaviour.
4. It has been a matter of concern to the Taxi Council that offenders who offend against taxi drivers often appear to be treated too lightly by the judicial system. Taxi drivers, like police officers, ambulance officers, and doctors and nurses working in hospital Emergency Departments need to be protected by the Law and feel that the essential services they perform are genuinely valued and appreciated by the community. We believe that a strengthening of the penalty regime applying to offences against taxi drivers would have a meaningful impact on deterring offenders from offending against taxi drivers.

**Taxi Council  
 of Queensland  
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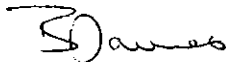
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5. In regard to trading hours, the Taxi Council supports a regulatory framework that results in staggered closing times and minimal synchronous eviction of patrons. It is far safer for both taxi drivers and their passengers where the latter have some reasonable flexibility to advance or delay their demand (and thereby spread and flatten the aggregate demand) for taxi services. While not ideal, the Government's 3am lockout policy seemingly provides a workable compromise between other extreme approaches. In any consideration of closing times, due attention must be given to not deliberately or inadvertently creating synchronous (or early) closures whereby masses of people are simultaneously evicted onto the streets; overwhelming the local taxi service's ability to meet the resulting artificial spike in demand. Such circumstances are inefficient, unsafe and unsatisfactory for both taxi drivers and passengers alike.

As a final comment, we would simply note that the establishment of secure taxi ranks in selected strategic locations in Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Mackay, Townsville and Cairns has been a very successful public safety initiative of the Taxi Council in partnership with both the Brisbane City Council (initially) and the Department of Transport and Main Road (thereafter). However, these secure taxi ranks are costly to operate and therefore (currently) restricted in their operation (mostly) to Friday and Saturday nights. It is evident to the Taxi Council that any consideration of possible solutions to alcohol-related violence problems must give proper consideration to transportation issues. Creating taxi ranks as safe havens and minimising waiting times at taxi ranks must be part of the solution. Expanding the secure rank program would certainly and materially help to minimise the risk or potential for people to become either victims or offenders of alcohol-related violence.

Should you require any further information or clarification in regard to the issues raised in this letter please do not hesitate to contact me directly on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



Blair Davies  
Chief Executive Officer



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**From:** Blair Davies [Redacted]  
**Sent:** Friday, 30 October 2009 3:44 PM  
**To:** Law, Justice and Safety Committee  
**Subject:** inquiry into Alcohol-Related Violence in Queensland  
**Attachments:** pastedGraphic.pdf; ATT00001.htm; Letter - Inquiry into Alcohol Related Violence in Qld.pdf; ATT00002.htm

Dear Sir / Madam

Please find attached the Taxi Council of Queensland's letter re the Inquiry into Alcohol-Related Violence in Queensland.

Regards

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Taxi Council of Queensland

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