

4 November, 2009

Ms B Stone, MP,
Chair
Parliamentary Justice Committee into Alcohol Related Violence
Parliament House
Brisbane 4000

Dear Ms Stone

Firstly thanks for your time last Friday.

I enjoyed very much being a part of the democratic process of this State. Unfortunately I parked at Hamilton; thinking the "Cat" services were a little more frequent than they are; and arrived at Parliament House later than I hoped to.

Whilst I appreciate and respect the work you and your Committee members are doing; I feel very frustrated by a number of issues. These include:

1. only holiday destinations and entertainment precincts were included in the Committee's information gathering;
2. Friday's "public inquiry" : I feel this term is used loosely; I am disappointed that there was no scope for questions from the floor;
3. I am disappointed that the edict you were handed from Parliament only refers to alcohol. How can this be? How can anyone say whether the violence is caused by alcohol OR drugs? Or a mix of both?
4. I was very surprised that there weren't any paramedics; emergency hospital wards' staff; journalists (sometimes the assaulted don't go to the police; particularly in small country towns in Gympie where everyone knows everyone; and the fear of reprisal is very real; and the victims take their stories to the local editor or journalists);
5. while people are still being bashed on the streets; I feel the 'wheels are turning too slowly' and that even temporary measures should be put in place; until some conclusions can be drawn.
6. according to a recent, serialised documentary on the ABC's Quantum Science programme; the human brain continues to grow until around 25 years of age; and the last part of the brain that develops is the section in which consequences of one's actions and decisions is 'operational'. It stands to reason that while we have a drinking age of 18

years; there's going to be some very unfortunate dire outcomes (and that's before anyone even takes into consideration those on the streets who are under age drinkers).

Whilst I'm not suggesting that we consider raising the drinking age; I'd just like to repeat; that whilst the Government is gathering 'evidence' about alcohol-related violence; people are still being bashed in Gympie; (and I've spoken to my relatives in Toowoomba; it's the same everywhere;) nothing is being done.

I strongly believe that whilst this Inquiry continues; some temporary measures should be put in place; no matter how ridiculous on the surface; e.g. venues remain open 'til 3am; but stop serving alcohol after midnight or 1am; but let the kids have somewhere to continue to socialise; enjoy their music; etc.

Combined resources of local Councils; the Hotels' Assoc. and the Government could provide courtesy buses (with a security 'guard' or two for the driver's safety); to ferry the teens home. Maybe hourly from 11pm til 1am; and half hourly thereafter.

Finger foods be provided and lots of free water; from midnight until closing time to reduce the numbers of drunks (or drunk/drugged patrons) falling out onto the streets: who might either be perpetrators or victims of crime.

Drink vouchers sold to patrons from the beginning of the night: e.g. 3 spirits; 2 full strengths for the blokes; and 2 spirits; 2 full strengths for the girls. Computer software so that venues can be linked to each other; and know if vouchers have already been sold to the individuals. If community clubs such as RSL's need to see identity at the door; why can't the other licensed venues?

Also, the situation in country towns is very different to the holiday destinations and entertainment precincts. As referred to in Point 4 above; a lot of the victims don't report their attackers to the Police for fear of retribution (small town; everyone knows everyone and often where they live); but instead go to their local newspaper. Therefore, I feel information should be gathered from the local media; and a profile developed of the types of perpetrators: for example, are they even patrons of the local night club(s); or just trouble makers; who were refused entry earlier in the night. Until we have a profile of the perpetrators; how can anyone really know how to deal with the situation.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Anne Vetter.
Concerned mum of 3 teenagers.