

Question on Notice
No. 1729
Asked on 11 November 2009

MR FOLEY asked the Premier and Minister for the Arts (MS BLIGH) -

QUESTION:

Given public servants, such as police paramedics, nurses and doctors, work many hours dealing with drunkenness –

Will the Premier consider implementing an ‘abuser pays’ plan, which would see drunks billed for the hours worked by public servants on such work?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is committed to reducing the impact of the misuse and abuse of alcohol on the community by ensuring people who act inappropriately are held responsible for their behaviour.

For example, under the *Summary Offences Act 2005*, being drunk in a public place is an offence punishable by a fine of up to \$200. Similarly, creating a public nuisance is an offence punishable by a fine of up to \$1000. While these fines clearly provide an important deterrent against intoxicated and anti-social behaviour, the Honourable Member should also note that these fines play a role in funding the frontline services that deal with intoxicated behaviour. The revenue generated from these fines goes into Queensland’s consolidated revenue which in turn funds our police, emergency services and health services. While these fines do not cover the full costs of dealing with intoxicated people, they go some way to ensuring those who act inappropriately contribute to the costs associated with their behaviour.

Further, as the Honourable Member would be aware, on 4 August 2009 the Parliament requested the Law, Justice and Safety Committee to conduct an inquiry and report by 18 March 2010 on alcohol related violence in Queensland, focussing on community safety and preventative measures to reduce levels of alcohol related violence.

The Terms of Reference are wide ranging and includes best practice harm minimisation measures in other Australian and international jurisdictions and any flow-on issues for emergency service workers, police and front-line health workers of alcohol related violence.

I would encourage the Honourable Member to forward his suggestion of an ‘abuser pays plan’ to the Committee for consideration.