



LAW, JUSTICE AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Issues Paper

August 2009

INQUIRY INTO ALCOHOL-RELATED VIOLENCE IN QUEENSLAND

This paper

This paper provides background information regarding a Parliamentary inquiry into alcohol-related violence in Queensland to assist people wishing to make submissions to the inquiry. The Committee seeks submissions on any aspect that falls within the terms of reference, not only the issues in this paper.

Submissions close on Friday 23 October 2009.

The Committee

The Law, Justice and Safety Committee is a statutory committee established by the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*. The Committee has a number of responsibilities, including administrative review reform, constitutional reform, electoral reform, and legal reform. It also examines issues regarding law, justice or safety that are referred to it by the Legislative Assembly.

The inquiry

The Committee is conducting an inquiry into alcohol-related violence, pursuant to a referral from the Legislative Assembly dated 4 August 2009. The referral reads:

That the Law, Justice and Safety Committee conduct an inquiry and report on alcohol related violence in Queensland, with a focus on community safety and preventative measures to reduce levels of alcohol related violence, including its ramifications.

In undertaking this inquiry, the Committee should consider –

- *Best practice harm minimisation measures in other Australian and international jurisdictions, including specific measures such as restrictions on use of glass;*
- *the impact of late opening hours on incidences of alcohol related violence;*
- *the flow-on issues for emergency service workers, police, and front-line health workers of alcohol related violence;*

- *education campaigns and their role in cultivating effective social change in terms of community attitudes to alcohol consumption;*
- *the role of parents in influencing the attitudes of young Queenslanders towards alcohol consumption; and*
- *the economic cost of alcohol related violence.*

Further, the Committee should take public submissions and consult with community leaders, educators, law enforcement, medical professionals and the liquor industry.

The Committee is to report to the Legislative Assembly by 18 March 2010 and will provide an interim report to the Assembly by 26 November 2009.

Best practice harm minimisation measures

Excessive consumption of alcohol is a widespread problem throughout Australia and overseas. A wide range of measures have been used with a view to reducing the harmful effects of such consumption, including violence. Some of these include:

- serving alcohol in plastic receptacles rather than glass
- security measures – both inside venues and in nearby public places, including at transport nodes (train and bus stations and cab ranks) (This includes for example such elements as crowd controllers and marshalls, police presence, ID scanning, and closed circuit television.)
- limiting promotions that encourage irresponsible consumption (such as happy hours, free or cheap alcoholic drinks, and drinking contests)
- enhanced liquor licensing, enforcement, regulation and inspection regimes
- community involvement in the licensing application process

- built design initiatives, affecting the size, layout and variety of venues
- ensuring the availability of safe and adequate transport options
- reducing the availability of full-strength alcohol at certain venues and events
- better planning of entertainment districts
- the establishment of liquor industry accords and similar partnerships to address alcohol-related safety and security issues
- better venue management practices
- creation of an effective offence and penalty framework
- restrictions on advertising
- pricing and taxation measures
- reducing the alcoholic content of beverages.

Areas for comment

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

What measures are there to reduce harm?

How effective have those measures been?

What works? What doesn't work?

The impact of late opening hours

Regulation and restriction of late opening hours is one way in which jurisdictions have addressed the incidence of alcohol-related violence. A number of states have introduced a lockout at a certain time. In Queensland, a 3am lockout is in place, whereby patrons cannot enter licensed premises after 3am.

Areas for comment

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

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

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

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

Flow-on issues for emergency service workers, police, and front-line health workers

Areas for comment

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

How can negative impacts on these workers be reduced?

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

Education campaigns aimed at reducing the harmful impacts of alcohol consumption have a range of targets - patrons and drinkers, parents, police and security providers, as well as venue operators, managers and other staff (e.g. responsible service of alcohol training).

Areas for comment

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

What education campaigns are currently in place?

How effective have they been?

How could they be improved?

The role of parents in influencing attitudes towards alcohol consumption

Areas for comment

How are parents influencing the attitudes of young Queenslanders?

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

The economic cost of alcohol-related violence

Areas for comment

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

How could this cost be reduced?

Making a submission

Written submissions should be sent to:

The Research Director
Law, Justice and Safety Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

OR by **facsimile** to 07 3406 7070

OR by **email** to: ljsc@parliament.qld.gov.au (attach document)

Submissions may also be lodged online at the Committee's website at www.parliament.qld.gov.au/ljsc

Please contact the Committee secretariat if you require assistance.

All submissions must include the name and contact details of the person, and the capacity in which that person is making the submission (e.g. individual or organisation).

Submissions close on Friday 23 October 2009.

Confidentiality

The Committee aims to conduct inquiries in an open manner, and its usual procedure is to publicly release and table submissions in the Legislative Assembly. If you want your submission (or part of it) to remain confidential, clearly write '**confidential**' on each page or part you wish to be treated confidentially and, in a covering letter, explain why you are seeking confidentiality. The Committee will then consider your request for confidentiality.

Unauthorised release

Once the Committee receives a submission, it becomes Committee property and should not be published without the Committee's authorisation. Publication of a submission without the Committee's authorisation means that that publication is not protected by parliamentary privilege and might amount to contempt of Parliament.

Email updates

If you would like to receive email updates about the inquiry please advise the secretariat.

Committee members

Ms BARBARA STONE MP Member for Springwood
Chair
Mr ANDREW CRIPPS MP Member for Hinchinbrook
Deputy Chair
Mr JARROD BLEIJIE MP Member for Kawana
Mr STEVEN KILBURN MP Member for Chatsworth

Mr AIDAN MCLINDON MP Member for Beaudesert
Mr MURRAY WATT MP Member for Everton
HON DEAN WELLS MP Member for Murrumba

Further information

If you require further information or assistance contact the Committee secretariat on:

Telephone: (07) 3406 7307
Fax: (07) 3406 7070
Email: ljsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

More information about making a submission and copies of this paper (as well as other Committee publications) are available at: www.parliament.qld.gov.au/ljsc