Alcohol in QLD: The current situation

Caterina Giorgi, Director of Policy and Research
Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education
'If you are going to deal with alcohol and drug fuelled violence. It’s not just about police and penalties. It’s actually got to be about changing the culture too.'

Premier Campbell Newman, Courier Mail, 10 March 2014
Number and density of liquor licenses

• There are 6,776 liquor licenses in Queensland in QLD (2011-12, QLD OLGR).

• Research has shown that:
  ➢ A 10% increase in on-licence premises results in a 0.6% increase in assaults.
  ➢ 10% increase in off-licence premises results in a 1% increase in assaults, a 3.3% increase in family violence and a 1.9% increase in hospitalisations due to chronic disease.
  ➢ A Single additional off-licence premise on average increases the number of young people drinking 11 or more drinks on one occasion by 6.

• Policy options to address density of liquor licenses:
  ➢ Saturation policies
  ➢ Consideration of density in assessing new applications
Trading hours for liquor licenses

- Ordinary trading hours for licensed premises in QLD are 10am until 10pm or 12am, with extended trading from 5am to 10am and 12am to 5am.
- Research has shown that:
  - Relaxation in licensing laws to allow 24 hours trading in the UK in 2005 was associated with a 25% increase in serious violent offences committed in the early hours of the morning.
  - For each one hour extension in on-premise alcohol sales in Norway, there was an additional 4.8 assaults per 100,000 residents per quarter.
  - The reduction in trading hours to a 3.30am in Newcastle has resulted in a sustained reduction after 5 years of 28 assaults per quarter.
  - Limitations on earliest time alcohol can be sold by is associated with decreases in alcohol-related assaults, ambulance call-outs and ED presentations.
- Policy options to address density of liquor licenses:
  - Reduce trading hours of licensed premises (opening and closing times)
Alcohol promotions and price

• Alcohol can be purchased in QLD for as little as 30 cents per standard drink.
• Research has shown that:
  ➢ Off-licence premises in Sydney host an average of 30.2 point of sale promotions per outlet (Jones et al, 2012).
  ➢ There is a significant relationship between exposure to alcohol advertising, and drinking intentions and behaviours among young people.
  ➢ 43% of drinkers purchase more alcohol when it is on special or its price is reduced, 59% of regular drinkers do this (FARE, 2013).
• Policy options to address density of liquor licenses:
  ➢ Regulating promotions and discounting
  ➢ Minimum pricing
Alcohol consumption - QLD vs Australia

- QLD: 86.3%
- Australia: 83.2%
- WA: 83%
- NT: 81%
- SA: 78.2%
- NSW: 79.1%
- VIC: 84.9%
- TAS: 85.6%
Exceed lifetime risk guideline - QLD vs Australia

QLD: 29.4%
2nd: 23.2%

NT: 18.6%
SA: 19.3%
WA: 22.7%
NSW: 18.4%
VIC: 19.4%
TAS: 19.5%
Exceed single occasion risk guideline - QLD vs Australia

QLD: 44.9%

SA: 38.4%

NSW: 36.6%

VIC: 38%

TAS: 40.4%

WA: 43.3%

NT: 50.8%

2nd 44.5%
Drink to get drunk - QLD vs Australia
## Alcohol-related hospitalisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Alcohol-related hospitalisations</th>
<th>Per 100,000 population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>22,460</td>
<td>589.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>23,866</td>
<td>611.8</td>
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<td>2004-05</td>
<td>23,830</td>
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<td>2005-06</td>
<td>25,158</td>
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<td>2006-07</td>
<td>27,042</td>
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<td>2007-08</td>
<td>29,885</td>
<td>699.9</td>
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<td>2008-09</td>
<td>30,629</td>
<td>701.6</td>
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<td>2009-10</td>
<td>32,152</td>
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<td>2010-11</td>
<td>32,844</td>
<td>734.1</td>
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<td>2011-12</td>
<td>35,159</td>
<td>771.0</td>
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Alcohol-related hospitalisations
Alcohol-related emergency department presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Emergency presentations</th>
<th>Per 100,000 population</th>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>70,170</td>
<td>1,686.8</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>74,211</td>
<td>1,735.7</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>81,560</td>
<td>1,867.4</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>83,285</td>
<td>1,877.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>87,843</td>
<td>1,944.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>91,783</td>
<td>1,990.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Alcohol-related emergency department presentations

![Graph showing the increase in alcohol-related emergency department presentations from 2007 to 2012.](image_url)
Other alcohol-related harms

• 9,772 treatment episodes where alcohol is the principal drug of concern (AIHW – 2010/11).

• Almost 1 million or 35% of Queenslanders are affected by alcohol-related violence (FARE, 2013).

• 20% of people are directly impacted by alcohol-related violence (FARE, 2013).

• 23% have had a family member or friend affected by alcohol-related violence (FARE 2013).
Policy options being considered

1. Tougher penalties and sentences ‘for law breakers affected by drugs and alcohol’
2. Code of conduct
3. Reduced trading hours
Policy considerations

1. What is the problem that this policy is trying to fix?
2. Will this policy/strategy do that or go part the way to doing that?
3. Will this policy address the settings that are contributing to the harmful drinking culture that we are seeing in Queensland?
Tougher penalties and sentences

• An example of these laws are one punch kill or harm laws.
• These impose mandatory minimum sentences for offences where alcohol or drugs are involved.
• Experts say that these mandatory minimum sentence laws are ineffective at deterring people from offending.
• These laws may produce unintended consequences and in some jurisdictions these consequences have led to modification or repeal of the laws.
• Finally these laws do not allow the judge to have discretion based on all factors relating to the case.
Tougher penalties and sentences

Policy Questions

1. What is the problem that this policy is trying to fix?
   Preventing alcohol-related harms.

2. Will this policy/strategy do that or go part the way to doing that?
   There is no evidence to support that it will prevent harms.

3. Will this policy address the settings that are contributing to the harmful drinking culture that we are seeing in Queensland?
   No
Code of Conduct

‘The codes will urge patrons to conduct themselves in an orderly manner while enjoying a night out by not vomiting, fighting or being a public nuisance.’

Ninemsn.com, 10 March 2014

‘The ultimate code of conduct is this: go out, have a great night out in Brisbane or any city or town. Have a whale of a time but just understand that the test is your behaviour mustn't impact on other people's enjoyment of that night-life scene as well’

Premier Campbell Newman

• There is legislation that address these behaviours in the NSW Liquor Act 1992 and other pieces of legislation.

• There is no evidence to support a Code of Conduct.
Policy Questions

1. What is the problem that this policy is trying to fix?
   Preventing alcohol-related harms.

2. Will this policy/strategy do that or go part the way to doing that?
   There is no evidence to support that it will prevent harms.

3. Will this policy address the settings that are contributing to the harmful drinking culture that we are seeing in Queensland?
   No
Reducing trading hours

- A reduction of late night trading to no later than a 3am close.
- There is strong evidence to support that reductions in trading hours result in reductions in harms.
- Following the introduction of new laws in NSW recently including a 3am last drinks and 1.30am lockout in the Sydney CBD, St Vincent’s Emergency Services Director Professor Gordian Fulde said:

  “fewer people were being admitted due to alcohol-fuelled violence, with no “coward punch” victims in the past three weeks”.

  “It is clearly evident there are fewer drunken people on the streets during weekend nights”
Reducing trading hours

Policy Questions

1. What is the problem that this policy is trying to fix?
   Preventing alcohol-related harms.

2. Will this policy/strategy do that or go part the way to doing that?
   There is strong evidence to support that it will prevent harms.

3. Will this policy address the settings that are contributing to the harmful drinking culture that we are seeing in Queensland?
   Yes
Don’t let a myth get in the way of a good policy

- If you restrict trading hours it will kill the night time economy = MYTH
  - San Francisco – No alcohol available after 2am
  - Newcastle experience – diversified economy – stats

- If you restrict trading hours it will stop tourists from travelling to those places = MYTH
  - International travel warnings for Kings Cross
  - Decrease in people visiting the area out of fear

- Its not alcohol its drugs = MYTH
  - Ambulance attendance in Victoria alcohol (11,458) are 3 times those for cannabis, ecstasy, heroin, GHB and cocaine combined (4,149).

Foundation for Alcohol Research & Education
The people of QLD want change

• 76% of Queenslanders believe that Australia has a problem with excess drinking or alcohol abuse.

• 81% of Queenslanders believe that alcohol-related problems will remain the same or get worse over the next five to ten years.

• 70% of Queenslanders believe that more needs to be done in Australia to reduce the harm caused by alcohol-related illness, injury, death and related issues.

• 51% of Queenslanders believe that Governments aren’t doing enough to address alcohol-related harms.

• 79% of Queenslanders support a closing time for pubs, clubs and bars of 3am or earlier.
If the plan is to be the best in Australia – it must include

We are determined to have a proper plan, the best plan in Australia to deal with this important issue.”

Premier Campbell Newman
Brisbane Times 24 February

1. Winding back late trading hours on pubs and clubs, with last drinks at 3am and a 1am lockout
2. Capping the number of liquor license premises allowed in alcohol saturated areas.
3. Preventing the harmful discounting and promotion of alcohol.
4. Enforcing responsible service of alcohol requirements – this includes a ban on the consumption of shots, mixed drinks and mixing alcohol with energy drinks after 10pm.
5. The collection of better data on alcohol sales, consumption and harms.