

**Assessing the effectiveness of the Queensland Government's
*Draft Safe Night Out Strategy – Scorecard***

April 2014



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On 23 March 2014 the Queensland Government released its *Draft Safe Night Out Strategy (Draft Strategy)*, which outlined 15 actions. These actions have been established to support Premier Newman's intention to 'make Queensland the safest place in Australia for people to go out and enjoy themselves'.

This scorecard assesses the 15 actions against the evidence on effective measures to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms. The scorecard includes information on the action, an assessment of the action against the evidence-base and information on whether this action is likely to be effective in preventing or reducing alcohol-related harms. Well respected research reports were used in the assessment of effectiveness of the actions within the Strategy, including *Alcohol No Ordinary Commodity*, which summarises the available evidence on alcohol control policies.

The assessment of effectiveness of the actions has been graded with a credit, pass or fail mark.

- A **CREDIT** is given to an action that has evidence to support its effectiveness in preventing and reducing alcohol related harms.
- A **PASS** is given to an action that may contribute to community education and safety. However, these actions have little evidence to support their effectiveness and may not be cost-effective.
- A **FAIL** is given to an action where there is no evidence to support its effectiveness in preventing or reducing alcohol-related harms. Actions may also be given a fail if the evidence suggests that the action could result in further alcohol-related harms.

The assessment on the effectiveness of actions was made with the information provided in the Draft Strategy. The actions listed throughout this scorecard have been recorded from the Draft Strategy verbatim. Where actions included a number of measures, the grade is given based on the majority of measures within the action.

Summary of Results

Of the 15 actions listed in the Draft Strategy, three received a credit, three received a pass and nine received a fail. The actions that received a credit grade related to regulating promotions, enforcement of licensee requirements and evaluation. The actions that received a pass grade related to providing education, introducing a trial of sober safe centres and mandatory drug and alcohol testing for offenders. The actions that received a fail focused largely on changing individual behaviours using measures that are ineffective such as harsher penalties and developing a code of conduct. One even allows extending late trading by removing the moratorium on late trading venues; an action that will lead to further harms.

Queensland Government's Draft Safe Night Out Strategy Scorecard

Proposed action	Assessment	Grade
<p>1. <i>Establish clear standards of behaviour for patrons, licensees and police when alcohol is consumed in public and indicate what actions licensees and police will take to stop alcohol and drug-related violence.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unnecessary duplication of measures covered by existing government regulation – the <i>Liquor Act 1992</i> already mandates requirements for patrons, licensees and police. • Proposed code of behaviour less effective due to its voluntary nature. 	FAIL
<p>2. <i>Make it compulsory for every student from year 7 to year 12 to undertake education every year about the culture, attitudes and social expectations of alcohol consumption, including the risks of binge drinking, illicit drug use and alcohol and drug-related violence.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research shows that while education may increase knowledge and change attitudes, it has no long-term effect on drinking. 	PASS
<p>3. <i>Introduce tougher penalties for those who are affected by alcohol or drugs and engage in anti-social and violent behaviour in and around licensed venues and in public.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offenders typically don't contemplate potential sentencing when intoxicated so harsher penalties are unlikely to reduce or prevent alcohol-related harms. 	FAIL
<p>4. <i>Ensure the Queensland Police Service (QPS) has the powers and resources to respond quickly and effectively to alcohol and drug-related violence and anti-social behaviour where needed.</i></p> <p><i>[Note - This action includes a number of measures such as issuing banning and leave orders, ensuring high visibility of policing and introducing mandatory drug and alcohol testing.]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mixed bag. For example, there is only limited research available on the effectiveness of banning orders, but drug and alcohol testing will be useful as an avenue to collect data and support the formation of future alcohol policy. 	PASS

Proposed action	Assessment	Grade
<p>5. <i>Develop and implement ways to effectively deal with people who are drunk and disorderly in public places.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The value of sober safe centres is still not clear, and while it potentially reduces the burden on police and health services and provides an alternative venue for drunk people to recover, it does not prevent or reduce alcohol-related harms. 	<p>PASS</p>
<p>6. <i>Ensure that licensees comply with requirements under the Liquor Act 1992 to provide a safe environment for patrons and implement improved and consistent liquor licensing compliance arrangements.</i></p> <p><i>[Note - This action includes a number of measures such as addressing alcohol promotions, increasing responsible service of alcohol obligations on licensees and introducing ID scanners.]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evidence makes clear that reducing exposure to alcohol advertising reduces per capita consumption, and more so, in the case of young people. There is also evidence to support the sustained enforcement of responsible service of alcohol in preventing and reducing alcohol-related harms. A recent study in Geelong found that ID scanners were not effective in reducing alcohol-related assaults. 	<p>CREDIT</p>
<p>7. <i>Enhance enforcement and compliance measures and ensure that police and liquor compliance officers effectively coordinate and integrate their activities to reduce the regulatory burden on businesses, without compromising compliance.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be effective responsible service of alcohol must be enforced in a sustained manner. All enforcement and compliance measures must be long-term sustained initiatives. 	<p>CREDIT</p>
<p>8. <i>Ensure we have a responsive, accountable and strengthened licensing system that takes into account community safety concerns and focuses on promoting responsible service of alcohol practices, instead of simply winding back trading hours.</i></p> <p><i>[Note - This action includes a number of measures such as providing the Commissioner of Police with greater weight in the determination of late trading venues, providing communities with a greater say in liquor licensing processes and removing the moratorium on late trading.]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowing community members, local councils and Queensland Police a greater say in the way that decisions are made about liquor licensing is a positive measure, however more detail is needed on how this will occur. There is overwhelming evidence that demonstrates that reducing trading hours of licensed premises reduces harms and increasing trading hours increases harms. Not addressing trading hours and lifting the moratorium is a glaring oversight which will result in more harms. 	<p>FAIL</p>

Proposed action	Assessment	Grade
<p>9. <i>Establish Safe Night Precincts for the safe and effective local management of these areas. Safe Night Precincts will be declared in key entertainment precincts across the state.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no evidence to support the effectiveness of the current Drink Safe Precincts, which are the basis of the Safe Night Precincts. • A damning 18 month evaluation of the Drink Safe Precincts by the Queensland Auditor General found that ‘more than two years after the Drink Safe Precincts trial commenced, after a total investment of more than \$10 million and two evaluations, its proponents are no closer to establishing its efficacy’. • Furthermore the Auditor General’s Report found ‘despite being an intended outcome of the trial, there has been no demonstrated improvement to public amenity in any of the three Drink Safe Precincts’. 	<p>FAIL</p>
<p>10. <i>To address concerns about safe and appropriate transport arrangements around late-night trading venues, better transport services will be provided.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate transport options are important in managing the movement of large crowds in late night precincts. However, better transportation options are not a prevention measure to reduce alcohol-related harm. 	<p>FAIL</p>
<p>11. <i>Police will take effective action to combat alcohol and drug-related violence, targeting places known for alcohol and drug-related violent incidents using a range of options (including de-escalation) to quickly intervene to prevent potentially violent, offensive, disruptive or offensive behaviour.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policing and enforcement of the <i>Liquor Act 1992</i> can be effective in preventing and reducing alcohol-related harms, however these efforts have to be sustained. However neither randomised nor targeted enforcement policing strategies have demonstrated large reductions in assaults. 	<p>FAIL</p>
<p>12. <i>We will develop and implement new ways to regulate the liquor industry that value those businesses that effectively manage and prevent alcohol and drug-related violence in and around their venue. We will do this by investigating the viability of ratings and rewards systems to benefit those venues with management practices, policies and designs that promote safety.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no evidence to support a ratings and rewards system for licensees. • Government shouldn’t be rewarding licensees for obeying the law. Instead, sustained enforcement of the obligations of licensees is more likely to be effective. 	<p>FAIL</p>

Proposed action	Assessment	Grade
<p>13. We will facilitate Safe Night Precinct local boards' consideration of ways to empower local governments and local communities to grow areas with diverse economies, including exploring coordinated planning processes between state and local governments, and how to better facilitate local government, police and local community input on liquor licensing decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no evidence to support the effectiveness of the current Drink Safe Precincts, which the proposed Safe Night Precincts are to be based on. • There is also no evidence to support the effectiveness of voluntary liquor accords without enforcement. • Refer to Action 9. 	<p>FAIL</p>
<p>14. We will implement a communication strategy to provide clear and targeted messages to Queenslanders about the need for everyone to support and be part of a responsible culture that does not tolerate alcohol and drug-related violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no evidence that messages to drinkers about limiting their drinking are effective. • There is some evidence to support the effectiveness of drink driving campaigns when supported by strong media coverage and engagement. 	<p>FAIL</p>
<p>15. We will rigorously assess how the measures implemented through the Action Plan after 12 months from its commencement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Queensland Government must develop and implement an evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of measures being introduced and once assessed, modify or improve accordingly. • Any framework should be established by experts in evaluation and include the routine collection of alcohol-related harms data. 	<p>CREDIT</p>