



MEDIA RELEASE

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PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO QLD LIQUOR BILL WILL UNDERMINE EFFORTS TO TACKLE ALCOHOL-FUELLED VIOLENCE

22 February 2017: Queensland's Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee has been warned proposed amendments to current liquor legislation risk undermining efforts to tackle alcohol-fuelled violence, according to health experts and advocacy groups.

Without the abolition of all one-off late-night extended hours permits and the introduction of alcohol and other drugs (AOD) testing for all arrests in and around licensed venues, the state's *Liquor and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017* currently under consideration will undo past efforts to reduce alcohol harm.

The Queensland Coalition for Action on Alcohol (QCAA), Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE), Australian Medical Association Queensland (AMAQ), and Healthy Options Australia (HOA) each responded to a call for submissions on the proposed bill, which is subject to a public hearing later today.

FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn said while these leading health organisations support certain elements of the bill, measures including a reduction in one-off late-night extended hours permits, and extended banning order sentencing regimes to include prescribed drug offences fail to properly address alcohol harm in Queensland.

"The Queensland Government's proposals do not go far enough and fail to recognise that inadequate amendments to legislation around one-off permits and AOD testing will not lead to a reduction of alcohol-fuelled violence in Queensland. The evidence is clear, the greater the availability of alcohol the greater the risk of violence. We don't support the removal of the lockouts and the further inadequate amendments to these provisions are irresponsible and do not reflect public sentiment," said Mr Thorn.

[Polling](#) conducted last month showed strong public support (72 per cent) for the existing late-night trading measures, and revealed an overwhelming majority (81 per cent) of Queenslanders still believe more needs to be done to reduce alcohol harm.

QCAA Chair Professor Jake Najman expressed concerns many of the proposed measures were a backwards step for the sunshine state and did not go far enough to satisfy public concern on alcohol.

"While QCAA supports the amendment to extend the banning order sentencing regime to include prescribed drug offences, we believe AOD testing must be introduced for all arrests in and around licensed venues and in Safe Night Precincts to support the development of future alcohol policies that work for Queensland.

“We also need to put a stop to the excessive use of late-night extended hours permits for special occasions to reduce the potential for abuse. Since Queensland introduced sensible late-night trading restrictions in July 2016 there has still yet to be a weekend where all venues closed by 3am, with up to 23 venues receiving permits to serve alcohol until 5am in one precinct alone,” Professor Najman said.

Stakeholders also expressed frustration over the timeframe associated with the review, with public submissions closing just three days after the bill was put forward and the final report due to be tabled only a week later on Friday 24 February.

“Unfortunately this tight consultation timeframe imposed by the Queensland Government doesn’t afford the level of careful consideration that this important legislation deserves. It’s hard to believe that with such a tight timeframe of ten days that the reality of alcohol harm and the nuances associated with the measures are being taken seriously by the Queensland Government,” Mr Thorn said.

Professor Najman and Mr Thorn are available for interview.

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The QCAA, FARE, AMAQ, and HOA submissions to the *Liquor and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017* can be viewed online at <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-committees/committees/LACSC/inquiries/current-inquiries/LOLAB2017>.

The public hearing will be held in Brisbane at 1:30 pm on Wednesday 22 February 2017.

The **Queensland Coalition for Action on Alcohol (QCAA)** is a coalition of Queensland health and community organisations committed to reducing alcohol-related harm. QCAA identifies and prioritises actions needed to reduce alcohol harms and improve the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders and ensures that these actions are raised with decision makers. To find out more visit www.qcaa.org.au