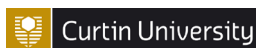


The Queensland
Alcohol-related
violence and Night
Time Economy
Monitoring project

MEDIA
RELEASE

RESEARCH TEAM



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LAST DRINKS: QLD AND COMMONWEALTH GOVT INVEST IN RIGOROUS INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

16 September 2016: The sunshine state's 2am last drinks and associated measures will be independently evaluated by a team of Australia's leading alcohol researchers in a Queensland and Commonwealth Government funded project unprecedented in both its size and scope.

The \$1.2 million *Queensland Alcohol-related violence and Night Time Economy Monitoring project* (known as QUANTEM), is funded by the Queensland Government and by the Commonwealth Government under the Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Projects scheme.

Additional funding and in-kind support is provided by project partners; the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education, Lives Lived Well, the Australian Rechabite Foundation and Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre.

The first of its kind project capitalises on a unique opportunity to evaluate the effect of the state-wide alcohol policies introduced in Queensland from 1 July 2016 – including a 2am cessation of alcohol service, or 'last drinks', for all licensed venues (or 3am last drinks for pubs, clubs, and bars located in a Safe Night Out Precinct).

The in-depth evaluation will assess the impact and effectiveness of these measures and identify any problems or areas for improvement.

Led by Deakin University's Violence Prevention Group, the project draws on researchers from James Cook University, The University of Queensland, Curtin University of Technology, The University of Newcastle, Monash University, and La Trobe University.

QUANTEM will also work closely with government agencies including Queensland Police, Queensland Health, and the Queensland Department of Justice.

Project leader Professor Peter Miller, says the project is extremely important to the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders and to all Australians.

"The Queensland Government's decision to implement a comprehensive set of policies including patron banning, ID scanning to target problem drinkers, and state-wide last drinks at 2am now provides a major opportunity to evaluate these measures and their impact on the community," said Professor Miller.

Using models incorporating outlet density, enforcement, demographic and other variables – the evaluation team will build unique datasets that include archival data on assaults, emergency department and ambulance presentations, noise complaints, pedestrian counts, a cost-benefit assessment taking account the effect on the night-time economy, and the interviews and perspectives of key stakeholders and patrons.

Pedestrian counts and patron interviews will be gathered at Fortitude Valley, Surfers Paradise, and Cairns, with additional patron interviews conducted at Brisbane's West End.

Importantly, the QUANTEM project will examine the impact of all of the alcohol policies introduced by the Queensland Government in July 2016. In addition to late night trading hours, researchers will also be evaluating the success of targeted policing initiatives, education, liquor licensing and compliance, precinct management, police and court powers, and monitoring and measuring efforts.

University of Queensland Emeritus Professor Jake Najman, QUANTEM Chief Investigator and Chair of the Queensland Coalition for Action on Alcohol (QCAA), says the project is unprecedented in terms of its size and scope.

"The Queensland Government was rightfully applauded when it introduced a package of evidence-based measures proven effective in reducing alcohol-fuelled violence. It is equally important that these policies are now exhaustively evaluated, to ensure they have been introduced as intended and to determine their effectiveness. State and Commonwealth funding will allow for an independent and unprecedented evaluation and a collaboration between Australia's leading universities and a team of highly respected researchers and subject matter experts," said Professor Najman.

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FARE Chief Executive Michael Thorn agrees and says it is crucial that the Queensland Government continues to be guided and informed by the evidence of what works.

“We have seen in New South Wales, and are now seeing in Queensland, concerted efforts by the alcohol industry to undermine measures to reduce alcohol harm and to build a false narrative, based not on fact, but on deliberately misleading and unsubstantiated claims. An independent and thorough government-backed evaluation of the measures will ensure both an accurate assessment of the reduction in alcohol harms and a sound and scientific measurement of any accompanying impact on business and communities throughout Queensland,” Mr Thorn said.

MEDIA NOTES

Professor Miller, Emeritus Professor Najman, and Mr Thorn are available for interview.

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