

**INQUIRY INTO STRATEGIES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL  
ABUSE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN NSW**

**Name:** Ms Teresa Heal

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~ TO: Submission to Standing Committee on Social Issues, Legislative Council N.S.W.

~ RE: **Inquiry into STRATEGIES to REDUCE ALCOHOL ABUSE among YOUNG PEOPLE in N.S.W**

Yesterday, 8-10-2013, I attended the Hearing in Byron Bay.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

I am extremely grateful that this serious & distressing issue is finally coming to the forefront, AND that attempts are being made to improve it.

**I make my contribution from the perspective of a Resident of Byron Bay and, as a Compassionate Elder who believes it is our responsibility to TAKE ACTION to protect & care for those young adults who are unable to look after themselves.**

\* I note that Superintendent Wilkins stated that the Alcohol related Violence in Byron Bay started to escalate about 10 years ago.

\* **This coincides with the increase, in Byron Bay, of "3am closing Nightclubs" from one to four.**

\* This also coincides with the beginning of a profound deterioration in my quality of life, due to the horrible affects of anti-social behavior from increasing numbers of drunken people in Byron Streets at night & in the early morning.

#### **Recent History of Liquor License numbers**

~When I moved to Byron Bay 17 years ago there was about 15 Liquor Licences.

~ Now there are 74 Liquor Licences!

~ When there was only 15 Liquor Licences, this included 3 pubs and 2 large Clubs and one night- club. More than enough for a small town of approx.4,000 population.

That OLGR has continued to allow more & more liquor licences into Byron Bay is irresponsible and without planning.

It has SATURATED Byron Bay and, Byron Bay and it's residents cannot cope.

I believe the First step toward reducing Alcohol related Violence is:

- To RESTRICT ALL ALCOHOL LICENCES to cease serving alcohol after Midnight.

As it was, 10 years ago, before the violence started.

-Also, I fully concur with the seven Measures presented to the Committee by Ms. Di Mahoney & Ms. Deb Pearse from Byron Youth Service.

#### **The CHRONIC VIOLENT ASSAULT UPON my QUALITY of LIFE**

I have lived in central Byron Bay for 17 Years.

I am a retired Director of Nursing.

The first 5 years in Byron Bay were wonderful.

However, since the opening of three nightclubs that close at 3am (one already existed), my quality of life has been severely adversely affected by Noise disturbance & other anti-social behavior from late night drunken patrons.

#### **Geography**

Please note that Byron Bay is a small narrow Town, of only 4 to 5 streets.

Three sides of the town are surrounded by residential property, people's homes.

Therefore the surrounding residents experience whatever happens in the town center.

I am regularly woken many nights a week; sometimes I am woken three times in a night.

It is worse from Spring to Easter when the tourist numbers increase and, Friday & Saturday nights.

**The Noise Disturbance is frequent & comes from loud voices & music.**

People park & 'pre-load' alcohol, & party with booming loud 'doof' music coming from their cars or vans, outside my home before they go to the late night venue, or, they are noisily walking to a venue.

This time is usually from 10 pm to 1am.

Then I am woken after 3am when the licensed facilities have made their money, and the drunken patrons are "tipped out of the nightclubs" for the COMMUNITY TO CONTEND WITH.

At this later time, voices are louder, often arguing or swearing or calling out names of lost people or whistling, squealing & hooting. The noise from car & van doors slamming is very loud.

I often hear glass being broken & regularly call the police when the noisy offenders don't move past my home, but continue to 'party'.

The police are always slow to respond; hence I can be disturbed for hours!

**Daily I pick up RUBBISH from street and my block.**

The main items of rubbish are alcohol cans & bottles & broken glass & cigarette butts.

The volume is increased on the weekends.

Often I pick up toilet paper & used condoms & regularly dig holes for faeces & vomitus.

Also, I often see people who have slept in cars or vans urinating in full view as I breakfast.

**Regularly I report damage signs to Council.**

I have been trying to bring attention to this problem for at least 10 years.

The Police are usually too busy dealing with violence to promptly attend to my Noise complaints.

Sometimes I have had to put my self at risk and, for example, confront six hooded youths playing loud booming music from two parked Vans, sharing shots from a Vodka bottle. They woke me at 12.30 midnight. Luckily, they turned the music off & headed toward Cheeky Monkeys Nightclub. After 3am, they woke me again by talking loudly and slamming their van doors.

When I complain:

- The police tell me to contact Council.
- Council tells me to contact OLGR.
- The OLGR are a toothless Tiger.

Consequently I have wasted many hours ringing & writing to "the Authorities" to no avail. My disappointment, frustration, distress and broken sleep continue to get worse.

I am definitely not alone in the experiences I have expressed.

I sincerely hope that this Committee has the COURAGE to TAKE STRONG ACTION to alleviate the:

- ACUTE SUFFERING of Alcohol Abuse & Sexual Assault among Young People;
- to alleviate the CHRONIC SUFFERING experienced by the families and residents, as a result of the co-lateral adverse effects of alcohol abuse in young people.

Sincerely,  
Teresa Heal