



**VICTIM
SUPPORT
SERVICE**
INCORPORATED

*Assisting
Victims of Crime
Since 1979*

Adelaide

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Victim Support Service Incorporated

How can we ensure a vibrant and safe Adelaide nightlife?

Submission to the Citizens' Jury,
South Australia

Jodie Sloan, Acting Chief Executive
(08) 8231 5626

*Member of
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16 July 2013

The New Democracy Foundation
The Australian Centre for Social Innovation
Via Email: SACitizensjury@newdemocracy.com.au

Dear Mr Walker,

Re: How can we ensure a vibrant and safe Adelaide nightlife?

Victim Support Service Incorporated (VSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide the South Australian Citizens' Jury with information and recommendations to improve the safety and vibrancy of Adelaide's nightlife.

Overview of agency

VSS is the peak non-government service provider to victims of crime in South Australia. This includes individual crime victims, their families, friends and the wider community.

We envisage an Australia united in a commitment to safer communities through crime prevention, victim awareness and addressing the impact of crime.

To achieve this vision, VSS works in partnership with our clients, communities and service providers to enhance community resilience, improve the wellbeing of people affected by crime and promote victims' rights.

VSS provides four primary services to victims of crime in South Australia: support and counselling; information about the criminal justice system and its processes; community engagement and education; and advocating for structural change to improve service provision for victims of crime. For more information about VSS, please visit our website at: <http://www.victimsa.org/>.

Key data sources: anecdotal and empirical evidence

Given that the main focus of the work of VSS is aimed at assisting and guiding victims of crime through processes of the criminal justice system, it is from this perspective we tender the evidence conveyed in our submission for the jurors' consideration.

Below is a list of issues and corresponding evidence we strongly suggest the Citizens' Jury take into account during its deliberation of the proposed question:



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1. Client case studies: Stories of an unsafe Adelaide (Attachment 1)

VSS has provided counselling and advocacy services for many victims of violent attacks which occurred in the CBD of Adelaide. Victims of violence in public places often have difficulty in recovering the sense of safety they once felt in the community. We have provided three examples of such cases and the impact of these attacks on the lives of victims (Attachment 1).

2. Empirical research evidence supporting the relationship between alcohol and crime

There is strong empirical evidence which supports the relationship between alcohol and crime. VSS is privy to an increasing amount of anecdotal evidence sourced from clients which also supports this relationship. According to the National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS), in 2007¹:

- 1 in 4 Australians were a victim of alcohol-related verbal abuse;
- 13 percent of Australians were made to feel fearful by someone under the influence of alcohol; and
- 4.5 percent of Australians aged 14 years or older had been physically abused by someone under the influence of alcohol²

We strongly recommend the jurors read and consider the recommendations made in the following articles which outline evidence for alcohol-related violence and its impact:

- Morgan, A & McAtamney, A (2009) 'Key issues in alcohol-related violence', *Research in Practice Summary Paper*, No. 4, December 2009, Australian Institute of Criminology. Available at: <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/rip/1-10/04.html>
- Australian Institute of Criminology (2008) *Responding to the problems associated with alcohol: Australian Community Perceptions*, Crime Facts Info Sheet, No. 175, 8 July 2008. Available at: <http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/D/2/E/%7BD2ED6BB6-151D-466D-B0E5-58BD9245944C%7Dcfi175.pdf>

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2008. 2007 National drug strategy household survey: first results, Australia. Canberra: AIHW. <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10579>

² National Drug Research Institute (NDRI) 2007. Restrictions on the sale and supply of alcohol: evidence and outcomes. Perth: National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University of Technology



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- Graham K et al 2006. Bad nights or bad bars? Multi-level analysis of environmental predictors of aggression in late-night large-capacity bars and clubs. *Addiction* 101: 1569–1580
- Graham K et al 1998. Alcohol and aggression: current directions in research on understanding and preventing intoxicated aggression. *Addiction* 93(5): 659–676
- Graham K & Homel R 2008. *Raising the bar: preventing aggression in and around bars, pubs and clubs*. Devon, UK: Willan Publishing
- McIlwain G & Homel R 2009. *Sustaining a reduction of alcohol-related harms in the licensed environment: a practical experiment to generate new evidence*. Brisbane: Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice & Governance, Griffith University. http://www.griffith.edu.au/professional-page/professor-ross-homel/pdf/Reducing-Violence-in-Licenses-Environments_2009.pdf

3. Community groups vulnerable to victimisation

We request the jurors consider the impact of their decision making on the more vulnerable groups within our community. Adelaide *should* be a city where everyone feels safe to actively participate in nightlife activities. Unfortunately, our experience with clients who have been victimised in the Adelaide CBD at night tells us that this is not the case. We have particular concern for the safety of the following groups regarding their vulnerability to victimisation:

- Women
- Young people
(see <http://www.adelaidewestend.com.au/node/228>)
- Indigenous people
- People with disability
- Homeless people
(see <http://www.huttstcentre.org.au/>)
- Night-time employees
- Ethnic groups
- Late-night public transport commuters

4. Information regarding existing national crime prevention strategies

Jurors may already be aware of some of the key national strategies which have been implemented in recent years across Australia to improve the safety of our community. These strategies aim to address the social and cultural attitudes which



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perpetuate victimisation of vulnerable groups within our community. Examples of these strategies include:

- The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (the National Plan)
<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children>
- Disability Care Australia
<http://www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/>
- Safer Suburbs Program
<http://www.ag.gov.au/CrimeAndCorruption/CrimePrevention/Pages/Safersuburbs.aspx>

Key contacts

- Jodie Sloan, Acting Chief Executive
- David Kerr, Manager, Professional Services

Yours sincerely
Victim Support Service Inc

Jodie Sloan
Acting Chief Executive



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Attachment 1

Client case studies: Stories of an unsafe Adelaide

26 year old Male Client of VSS

- Works as a structural engineer.
- Assaulted in Rundle St when he was protecting his girlfriend from an unknown male who pinched her.
- He was punched by the assailant and fell back and hit his head on the pavement.
- **Injuries:** 2 fractures to his skull, bleeding on the brain and a broken jaw.
- **Consequences:** Hospitalised and had 4 weeks off work. He now has difficulty with his balance, lost his sense of taste and has hearing difficulties. He enjoyed outdoor activities (e.g. bike riding) but has ceased this for fear of further injury to his head.

23 year old Male Client of VSS

- Leaving a city nightclub in Hindley St when he was head-butted from behind.
- **Injuries:** Lost consciousness and when he awoke he was being kicked by five people
- **Consequences:** Became increasingly withdrawn. Suffers memory loss. Can no longer play football due to risk of re-injuring his head and is reluctant to go out with his friends. Lost his job due to losing confidence in himself and others.

19 year old Male Client of VSS

- Studying engineering science at university but deferred due to symptoms from assault.
- Assaulted by 6 unknown men while walking down Hindley St. Was pushed to the ground and kicked while he was down.
- **Injuries:** Broken nose and bruised ribs.
- **Consequences:** Unable to continue study. He suffers panic attacks and became increasingly angry to the extent that he punched a mirror and severely damaged his hand. He required rehabilitation. He had to relinquish his apprenticeship and his place in an audio production course. His relationship with his girlfriend is now suffering due to his increased drinking and marijuana use.