

Three month snapshot: Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct trial

About the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct

Fortitude Valley — or the Valley as it is more commonly known — is one of Queensland’s most popular entertainment precincts. The area is renowned for its live music and band scene, fashion, markets, nightclubs and adult entertainment venues.

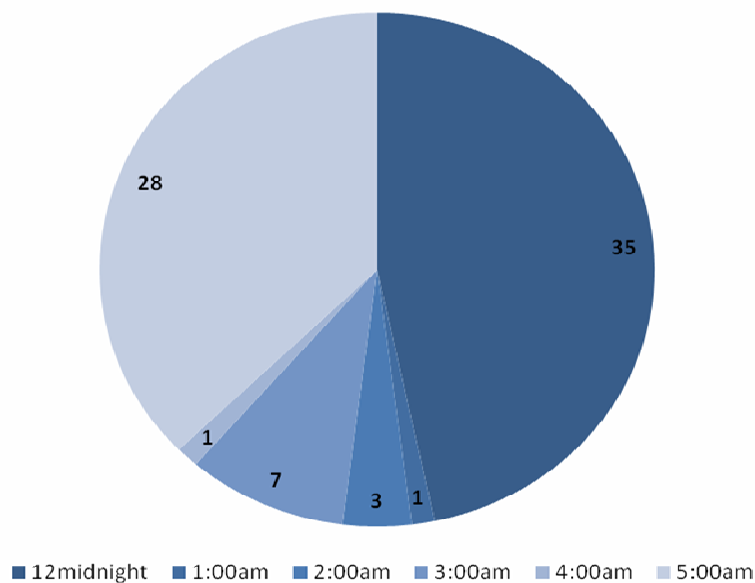
The Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct (DSP) extends from Saint Paul’s Terrace to Robertson Street and includes the Brunswick Street and China Town Malls. The DSP includes most of the late night trading in this area.

It is estimated that approximately 50,000 patrons frequent Fortitude Valley on an average Friday or Saturday night. Just over 5,000 residents live in the Fortitude Valley suburb.

There are 75 licensed venues in the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct. As shown in Figure 1:

- More than half of these venues trade after 12midnight (53%; n = 40).
- One venue trades until 1am, three venues close at 2am, seven venues close at 3am and 29 venues have licenses to trade past lock-out (i.e. 3am).

Figure 1: Trading hours of venues located in the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct



Source: OLGR 2011.

The Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct has been in operation since December 2010. Some information about what happened during the first three months of the trial is described below.

What strategies are in place in the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct?

A number of initiatives are in place in the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct, including:

- **City Safe Camera Network** — The Brisbane City Council has numerous CCTV cameras to provide information about incidents to QPS and facilitate a fast response to incidents and the apprehension of alleged offenders.
- **Inter Radio Communication Network** (venues and camera) — this radio network links the Brisbane City Council Safety Camera Network and QPS. The radio network is used to share information about incidents or persons causing concern, identify potential incidents and facilitate fast responses to incidents. There is also another radio network interlinked between the licensed venues and the Police Mall Post.
- **Taxi marshals and security guards at Secure Taxi Ranks** — Taxi marshals and security guards are located at the nominated Secure taxi ranks on Friday and Saturday nights and on public holidays to ensure that patrons are loaded into taxis in a safe and efficient way.
- **Security at bus stops** — Security officers occur on Friday and Saturday nights. If an issue on the bus arises they are the first line in trying to resolve the issue.
- **Security in the Valley Metro** — Security officers along with Railway Squad police patrol the Valley Metro (Translink) during and between hours of operations.
- **DSP Inspector and Liquor enforcement and proactive strategy (LEAPS) officers** — conduct monthly meetings with the Valley Liquor Accord, Valley Chamber of Commerce and Valley Property Owners Group to ensure staff are trained and licensed premises have individual strategies in place. Officers from the Brisbane Central District LEAPS are also heavily involved every week-end in enforcement strategies within the DSP.
- **Multi-agency operations** — QPS, OLGR, QFRS and BCC conduct regular operations within the DSP to ensure compliance across a number of areas including liquor related, fire related, workplace health and safety, and general council matters (cleanliness, patron safety, lighting). These operations are coordinated by the Brisbane Central District Liquor Investigation Unit and to date have been highly successful.

What new strategies have been introduced in the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct?

A number of initiatives have been introduced in Fortitude Valley as part of the Drink Safe Precinct trials, these include:

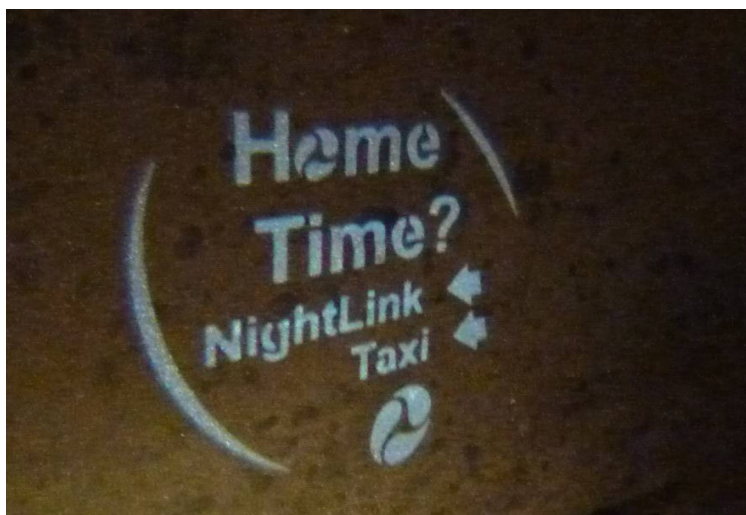
- **Establishment of a Chill Out Zone** that is located in Brunswick Street Mall opposite McDonalds. The Chill Out Zone operates every Friday and Saturday night from 11pm - 5am. The Chill Out Zone is a place where patrons can go to rest, seek advice and take time out from a busy night.

Figure 2: Photo of Chill Out Zone in Fortitude Valley



- **Introduction of GoBo projections** (light projections on to the footpath) outside the Beat Nightclub, the Fringe Bar, the Mustang Bar, X&Y nightclub and the Monastery which direct patrons to public transport and taxi services.

Figure 3: Photo of GoBo Projection located outside a licensed venue



- **Upgrade and installation of additional lighting** has been installed in the precinct.

Figure 4: Before and after photos of lighting upgrades

Ann Street Before



Ann Street After



A number of changes have also been made to public transport services in the precinct, including:

- **Extra secure taxi ranks taxi marshals and security guards** are located at the secure taxi ranks on Wickham Terrace and in Ann Street and the FlatFare taxi rank in Warner Street on Friday and Saturday nights and on public holidays to ensure that patrons are loaded into taxis in a safe and efficient way. The Department of Transport and Main Roads has also established secure taxi ranks which operate on Saturday night/Sunday morning in the northern area of Brunswick Street outside the Valley Metro Plaza, in the southern area of Brunswick Street outside the Empire Hotel and in Ann Street outside Kathmandu to cater for the bigger crowds on the Saturday night and to give taxi patrons an alternative to the already busy secure taxi ranks.
- **Relocation of secure taxi rank** previously located outside the Bank nightclub to outside the Royal George.
- **Relocation of bus stop for NightLink buses**, except for the N199, now depart from opposite the Valley Metro on Brunswick Street, not Warner Street.
- **Installation of LCD monitors** by Queensland Rail with real-time passenger information display at the entrance to Valley Metro. This is so patrons can see when the next available train home is.

What's been happening in the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct?

Queensland Police Service activity¹

Activity

During the first three months of the trial in Fortitude Valley:

- 414 people were arrested – mainly for good order type offences
- 45 Notices to Appear were issued
- 821 street checks were conducted
- 70 Random Breath Tests (RBTs) were conducted
- 47 Traffic Infringement Notices (TINs) were issued.

During this period police conducted 592 walkthroughs of licensed premises,² detected 84 breaches against licensed premises³ and exercised tip out powers 440 times.

Diversionary activity by QPS

As part of the trial, police in Fortitude Valley have started to record more information about the use of diversionary strategies and policing that resolves incidents informally, without recourse to the criminal justice system.

During the first three months of the trial, police officers patrolling the precinct used diversionary strategies nearly 1400 times.⁴ This included:

- taking 162 people to a place of safety or rest and recovery area
- using conflict intervention/tactical communication 574 times
- diffusing 310 potential incidents through using de-escalation techniques
- issuing 237 move-on directions.

Assaults

During the first three months of the trial, 15 people were arrested for assault-related offences in the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct and six Notices to Appear were issued.

Ten people were arrested for assaults against police in Fortitude Valley during the first three months of the trial.

Good Order Offences

During the first three months of the trial police arrested 196 people for good order-related offences. Seventy tickets and 17 Notices to Appear were issued for good order offences during this period.

¹ The data presented here has been obtained from QPS nightly Returns Sheets and not from QPRIME which is QPS's principal crime recording database. There may be some discrepancies between Returns Sheet data and data obtained from QPRIME and where this occurs QPRIME is to be regarded as authoritative. It should be noted that the DSP evaluation which is being conducted over the course of the two year DSP trial will principally be based on QPRIME data. The Returns Sheets, however, provide some data that is not otherwise recorded in QPRIME or elsewhere and these data will also be used to inform the evaluation.

² A walkthrough is where police conduct a foot patrol of a licensed premise and includes: maintaining a police presence; rapport building between police and patrons/venue management; and police observation of a venue's operation, for example, patron intoxication levels and behaviour, serving of alcohol to patrons, and compliance with relevant legislation.

³ QPS figures for breaches detected against licensed premises do not necessarily mean that enforcement action was taken. Most of these breaches are reported to OLGR to action.

⁴ Some interventions may have involved more than one person. For example, the use of conflict intervention/tactical communication may have been used to deescalate a possible assault occurring between two or more persons.

Liquor Offences

During the first three months of the trial police arrested 131 people for liquor-related offences. Eight-eight tickets and five Notices to Appear were issued for liquor-related offences during this period.

Drug Offences and Drink/Drug Driving

During the first three months of the trial, police arrested 27 people and issued 14 Notices to Appear for drug-related offences. One ticket was also issued during this period.

During this period, one person was arrested and two tickets were issued for drink/drug driving offences in the precinct.

Banning orders

Since the commencement of the Drink Safe Precinct trial, one person has been banned from entering the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct for a 12-month period for common assault and armed so as to cause fear or alarm offences.

One application to ban a person from the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct was rejected by the courts. A further two matters are currently before the courts.

Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation Activity

As well as being able to issue Infringement Notices, OLGR inspectors also monitor the compliance of licensed premises and routinely conduct compliance audits and investigations.⁵ During the first three months of the trial, 37 compliance operations were conducted on 26 licensed venues in the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct.⁶ A total of seven breaches against licensed premises were detected during this period.

Support services⁷

Two main patron support services operate in the Fortitude Valley precinct:

- Chill Out Zone (funded under the Drink Safe Precinct initiative)
- NightWatch Chaplains (for which the foot patrol is funded under the Drink Safe Precinct initiative).

Chill Out Zone

The Chill Out Zone includes a purpose built caravan where patrons can go to rest, recover and relax as well as a mobile foot patrol team that patrols looking for people who might be in need of assistance or referral to the Chill Out Zone.

The Chill Out Zone commenced operations in the precinct on Friday 10 December 2010 and operates every Friday and Saturday night between 11pm – 5am as well as additional days as requested (e.g. special events). The Chill Out Zone is located in the Brunswick Street Mall opposite McDonalds.

During the first three months of the trial, the Chill Out Zone offered support to patrons in the precinct on 25 nights — including regular Friday and Saturday nights as well as Sunday 26 December; Sunday 2 January and Tuesday 25 January.

⁵ No infringement notices were issued by OLGR inspectors during the first three months of the trial.

⁶ For the purposes of this snapshot, compliance operations include after hours inspections and day time inspections.

⁷ For the purposes of this snapshot, figures relating to support services include both Drink Safe Precinct funded services and services that are otherwise funded. These figures have been obtained from the weekly reports provided by support services to the Department of Communities. Some discrepancies may exist between the figures reported in this snapshot and those reported elsewhere by the Department of Communities; this may be the result of different methods of calculation in terms of what nights and what services are included in the count.

Between December 2010 and February 2011, the service assisted 323 patrons in the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct and handed out more than 10,000 plastic cups of water.⁸

NightWatch Chaplains

NightWatch Chaplains have operated a mobile foot and vehicle patrol on Friday and Saturday nights offering assistance to patrons in need in Fortitude Valley since 2004. NightWatch Chaplains will continue to offer support and first aid to patrons in Fortitude Valley during the trial and received funding

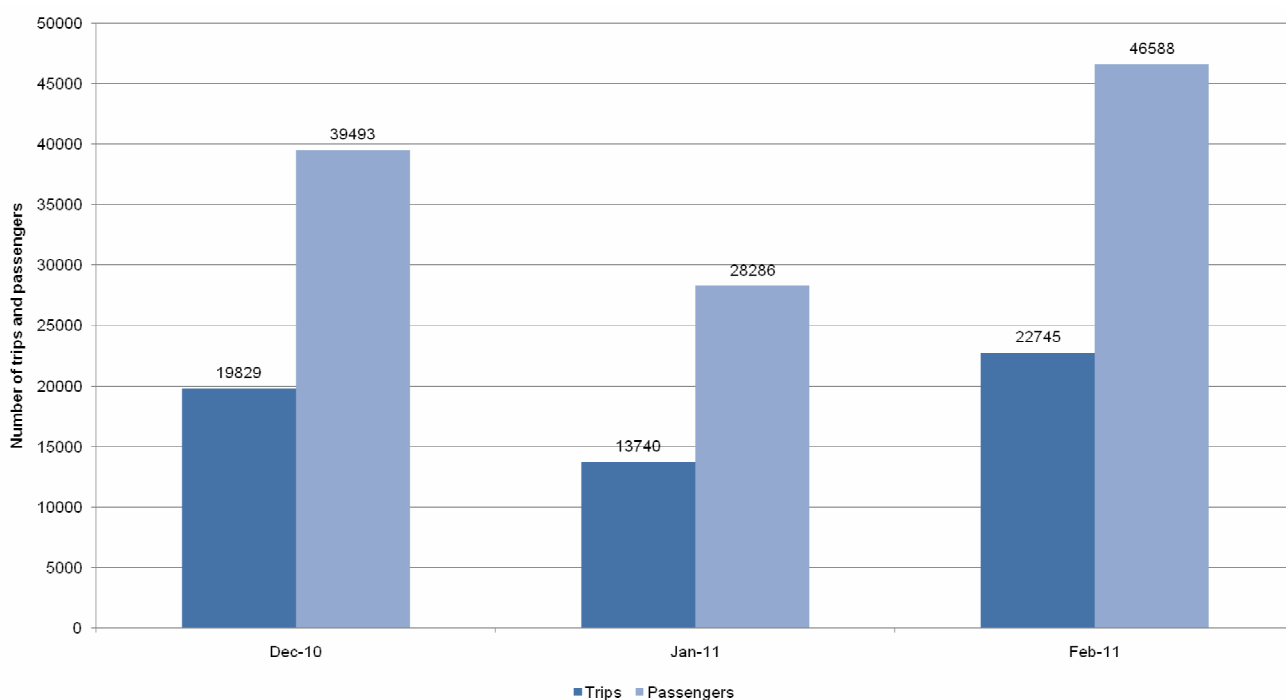
Between December 2010 and February 2011, the NightWatch Chaplain foot patrol assisted 123 patrons and the mobile patrol assisted 213 patrons in Fortitude Valley.^{9,10}

Transport

A number of transport options exist for patrons to get to and from the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct — including bus services, rail services, private transport and taxi services.

During the first three months of the trial, taxi services transported more than 114,300 people home from the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct.¹¹ More than 56,000 taxi trips departed from the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct during this period.

Figure 5: Number of trips and passengers collected from the Secure Taxi Ranks inside the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct¹²



⁸ This figure includes patrons assisted on Friday and Saturday nights as well as additional Drink Safe Precinct nights that may be allocated according to need on public holidays or for particular events.

⁹ Please note the foot patrol is funded under the Drink Safe Precinct initiative whereas the mobile patrol is funded through other means.

¹⁰ This figure includes patrons assisted on Friday and Saturday nights as well as additional Drink Safe Precinct nights that may be allocated according to need on public holidays or for particular events.

¹¹ These figures only include passengers and trips that departed from Secure Taxi Ranks in the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct and do not include trips or passengers that were collected in other parts of the Fortitude Valley Drink Safe Precinct (e.g. by hailing a taxi).

¹² Please note that comparisons between months can be misleading for a number of reasons, including the impact of the festive season and Queensland Floods on operating hours of rank and patronage. Note there were five weekends in January and four weekends in February.