

Nine month snapshot: Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct trial

Background to the establishment of Drink Safe Precincts

The Queensland Government is committed to achieving healthy and vibrant night time economies where people can relax and have fun in a safe environment.

In 2010, the Queensland Government announced an important two year trial of Drink Safe Precincts (DSPs) to reduce alcohol-related violence in the key entertainment precincts of Surfers Paradise, Townsville and Fortitude Valley.

The Drink Safe Precinct trial, operating from December 2010 to November 2012, forms part of the Queensland Government's response to the recommendations of the bipartisan Law, Justice and Safety Committee's inquiry into alcohol-related violence. Background information about the establishment of Drink Safe Precincts, including the full inquiry report and the government's response, is available online.¹

Important notes

The following information should be taken in to account when considering the information and figures reported in the following snapshot.

Significant events

A number of significant events occurred during the first nine months of the trials which may have had an impact on activity in the Drink Safe Precincts, including:

- festive season (e.g. Christmas and New Year's celebrations)
- Queensland floods and Cyclone Yasi
- major events (e.g. Cowboys National Rugby League home games, V8 supercars)
- Operation Unite (i.e. two-day national high visibility police operation between 17-19 December 2010 and 13-15 May 2011)
- Australia Day
- Easter holiday period
- seasonal variations (i.e. winter months tend to be associated with fewer patrons frequenting entertainment precincts).

These events should be taken into account when considering the information provided in this snapshot.

Comparisons between precincts and months

Comparisons between precincts and months may be misleading for a number of reasons, for example:

- there were four weekends in December, February, March, May, June and August and five weekends in January, April and July
- Drink Safe Precinct policing initiatives operate in Surfers Paradise and Townsville three nights a week, and in Fortitude Valley two nights a week

¹ Report: www.parliament.qld.gov.au/view/committees/LCARC.asp?SubArea=reports Government's response: www.parliament.qld.gov.au/view/committees/LCARC.asp?SubArea=responses.

- in all three precincts support services are provided on Friday and Saturday nights, however, in the Surfers Paradise precinct the support service also operates on Thursday nights.

Availability of data

Data from a broad range of sources is progressively becoming available from partner agencies which will form the basis of the DSP evaluation.

Additional data available for presentation in this round of snapshots includes:

- Queensland Ambulance Service - calls for service
- TransLink – Fortitude Valley and Surfers Paradise bus patronage (first 7-months)
- Department of Transport and Main Roads – Townsville bus patronage
- Brisbane City Council – CitySafe CCTV incident register (Fortitude Valley only).

Again, caution should be exercised in interpreting the various data represented. Directly comparing figures from direct data sources should be avoided as the parameters of each set of data may differ (e.g. in terms of collection methods or time periods). Following the conclusion of the two year trial, overall conclusions can be drawn on the basis of analysis of the wide range of data obtained. At this stage the data is presented only to provide an indication of activity in the precincts.

About the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct

Surfers Paradise is a major tourist destination and attracts large numbers of foreign and domestic tourists. It has the highest concentration of licensed premises in Queensland in the Cavill and Orchid Avenue precinct.

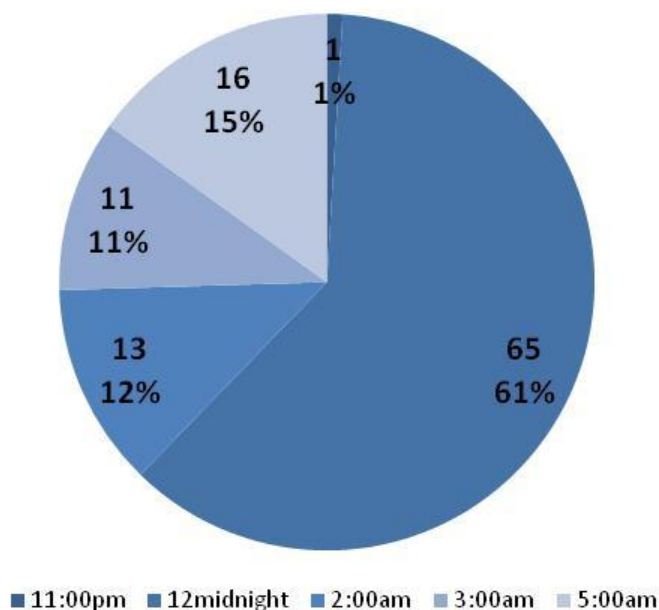
The Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct covers the area between Cypress Avenue and Hamilton Avenue and Ferny Avenue and the Surfers Paradise Esplanade. The area includes many of major licensed venues and popular nightclubs in Surfers Paradise – including those located on Cavill Avenue and Orchid Avenue.

It is estimated that more than 30,000 people visit the Surfers Paradise precinct on an average Friday and Saturday night, with these numbers increasing to at least 50,000 during major events such as Gold Coast 600 (formerly Indy), Schoolies and New Year's Eve. More than 18,000 people live in the Surfers Paradise suburb.

There are currently 106 licensed venues in the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct. As shown in Figure 1:

- 64 venues (62%) close at or before midnight
- 13 venues trade until 2am, 11 venues trade until 3am and 16 venues have licenses to trade past lockout (i.e. 3am) until 5am.

Figure 1. Trading hours of venues located in the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct



Source: Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation (OLGR) 2011.

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

What strategies are in place in the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct?

A number of strategies aimed at reducing alcohol-related violence and improving community safety exist in Surfers Paradise, including:

- **Safety Camera Network** – The Gold Coast City Council has more than 50 CCTV cameras to scan for, monitor and provide information about incidents to Queensland Police Service (QPS) and facilitate a fast response to incidents and the apprehension of alleged offenders.
- **Inter-venue Radio Communication Network** – This radio network links the Gold Coast City Council Safety Camera Network, licensed venues, QPS and the Chill Out Zone. The radio network is used to share information about incidents or persons causing concern, identify potential incidents and facilitate fast responses to incidents.
- **Taxi marshals and security guards at Secure Taxi Ranks** – Taxi marshals and security guards are located at the Secure taxi rank (Cavill and Orchid Avenues) and FlatFare rank (Cavill Ave) on Friday and Saturday nights and on public holidays to ensure that patrons are loaded into taxis in a safe and efficient way.
- **Mobile security patrol on Surfside Buslines** – Mobile security patrols on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. If an issue on the bus arises the driver can call security and a mobile patrol vehicle is sent to the bus to resolve the issue.
- **Foreshore upgrade** – The redevelopment of the Esplanade foreshore incorporates best practice Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.
- **Chill Out Zone** – Provides rest and recovery space for intoxicated and vulnerable people. The service also includes a mobile foot patrol which patrols the precinct assisting intoxicated people who are in need.
- **Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) forums** held in conjunction with licensees, the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation (OLGR) is providing Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) forums to staff and management from licensed premises within the Drink Safe Precinct areas. The forums provide an opportunity for OLGR to discuss examples of RSA practices and provide contextual material complimenting RSA course content. Forums to date have been well received with attendees indicating their appreciation for the opportunity to receive further education and to discuss RSA issues with OLGR representatives.
- **'Eyes on Surfers' campaign** – an initiative launched in June 2011 to promote community awareness and safety within the Surfers Paradise area, comprising of four key messages for the local community: eyes on your beach; eyes on your mates; eyes on your streets; and eyes on your neighbourhood.
- **'Get Home Safely' campaign** – This local campaign promotes personal safety and provides information, including a wallet card (see Figure 2) about the location of late night transport options to patrons of Surfers Paradise.
- **Additional police special operations** – In addition to the Drink Safe Precincts initiatives and in response to growing community concerns about crime in the Gold Coast area, the Queensland Police Service (QPS) established Taskforce Resolve in June 2011. Taskforce Resolve is a permanent serious and violent crime squad that supports Detectives in the south eastern region. QPS also conducted Operation Seymour in August 2011 – a month-long taskforce consisting of 50 uniformed officers blitzing criminal and anti-social activity.

Figure 2. 'Get Home Safely' Wallet Card



Source: Gold Coast City Council 2011.

What's been happening in the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct?

Queensland Police Service activity^{2, 3}

Summary

During the nine months of the trial in Surfers Paradise:

- 1512 people were arrested – mainly for liquor and good order type offences
- 109 Notices to Appear were issued
- 967 Tickets were issued
- 3040 street checks were conducted
- 1495 Random Breath Tests (RBTs) were conducted
- 378 Traffic Infringement Notices (TINs) were issued.

During this period police conducted 2129 walkthroughs of licensed premises,⁴ detected 323 breaches against licensed premises⁵ and exercised tip out powers 1457 times.

Diversions activity by QPS

As part of the trial, police in Surfers Paradise 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 nine months of the trial, police officers patrolling the precinct used diversionary strategies more than 2200 times.⁶ This included:

² The data presented here has been obtained from QPS nightly Returns Sheets and not from QPRIME which is QPS' 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 Drink Safe Precinct evaluation which is being conducted of the course of the two year Drink Safe Precinct 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. The figures presented in this snapshot are based on the total amount of activity recorded on returns sheets (i.e. returns sheets completed by overtime and rostered personnel have been aggregated to provide a better indication of the total amount of police activity occurring in the precinct).

³ Additional offences may have been detected by police, however, as they require further investigation before finalisation they will not be shown in these statistics.

⁴ 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

⁵ QPS figures for breaches detected against licensed premises do not necessarily mean that enforcement action was taken. Most of these breaches are reported to OLRG to action.

⁶ 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.

- taking 526 people to a place of safety or rest and recovery area
- using conflict intervention/tactical communication 629 times
- diffusing 350 potential incidents through using de-escalation techniques
- issuing 567 move-on directions
- 138 detentions for breaches of the peace
- 36 handovers to QAS paramedics.

Assaults

During the first nine month period of the trial, 21 people were arrested for assault-related offences in the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct (including one juvenile) and four Notices to Appear were issued.

Twenty-one adults were arrested for assaults against police in Surfers Paradise during the first nine months of the trial.

Good Order Offences

During the first nine months of the trial police arrested 536 people (including six juveniles) for good order offences.⁷ Police issued 295 tickets and twelve Notices to Appear during this period.

Liquor Offences

Police arrested 684 people (including seven juveniles) for liquor offences during the first nine months of the trial.⁸ Police issued 658 tickets and three Notices to Appear during this period.

Drug Offences

During the first nine months of the trial, police arrested 100 people and issued 23 Notices to Appear for drug related offences.

Drink or Drug Driving

During the first nine months, 48 people were arrested and 44 Notices to Appear were issued for drink or drug driving offences.

Other offences

In addition to the offences listed above, 102 people were arrested, 22 Notices to Appear and seven tickets were issued for other types of offences during the first nine months of the trial.

Banning orders

During the first nine months of the Drink Safe Precinct trial, 14 people have been banned from entering the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct for between six – 24 months⁹ for offences including:

- assault occasioning bodily harm , serious assault and common assault
- disorderly in licensed premises
- public nuisance
- obstruct police.

One person was arrested for breaching a banning order in March and charged with the offence of Contravention of Banning Order under the *Penalties and Sentences Act 1992* (section 42O). This person was convicted and fined \$750 for the breach, but a return-to-prison warrant was issued because this offence breached existing parole conditions.

⁷ Good Order offences recorded on the Drink Safe Precinct returns sheets include 'disobey move-on direction', 'resist, incite, hinder, and obstruct police', 'public nuisance' and 'public urination'.

⁸ Liquor offences recorded on the Drink Safe Precinct returns sheets include 'consume liquor in a public place', 'non-exempt minor in licensed premises', 'adult supply to a minor in public place', 'public drunkenness', 'disorderly on licensed premises', 'drunk in licensed premises', 'fail to leave licensed premises' and 'other Liquor Act offences'.

⁹ Court-issued banning orders can be for up to 12 months duration, or longer if attached to a sentence for a criminal offence.

Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation Activity

As part of the Drink Safe Precinct trials, OLGR plan, co-ordinate and participate in multi-disciplinary compliance operations of licensed premises within the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct targeting Liquor Act and Security Provider Act compliance. During the first nine months of the trial, OLGR conducted 10 joint operations targeting licensed venues located in the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct.

As well as conducting special joint operations, OLGR monitors the compliance of licensed premises and routinely conducts compliance audits and investigations. During the first nine months of the trial, 163 compliance operations were conducted on licensed venues in the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct.¹⁰ OLGR conducted an additional 75 investigations in response to complaints from members of public, police and other sources.

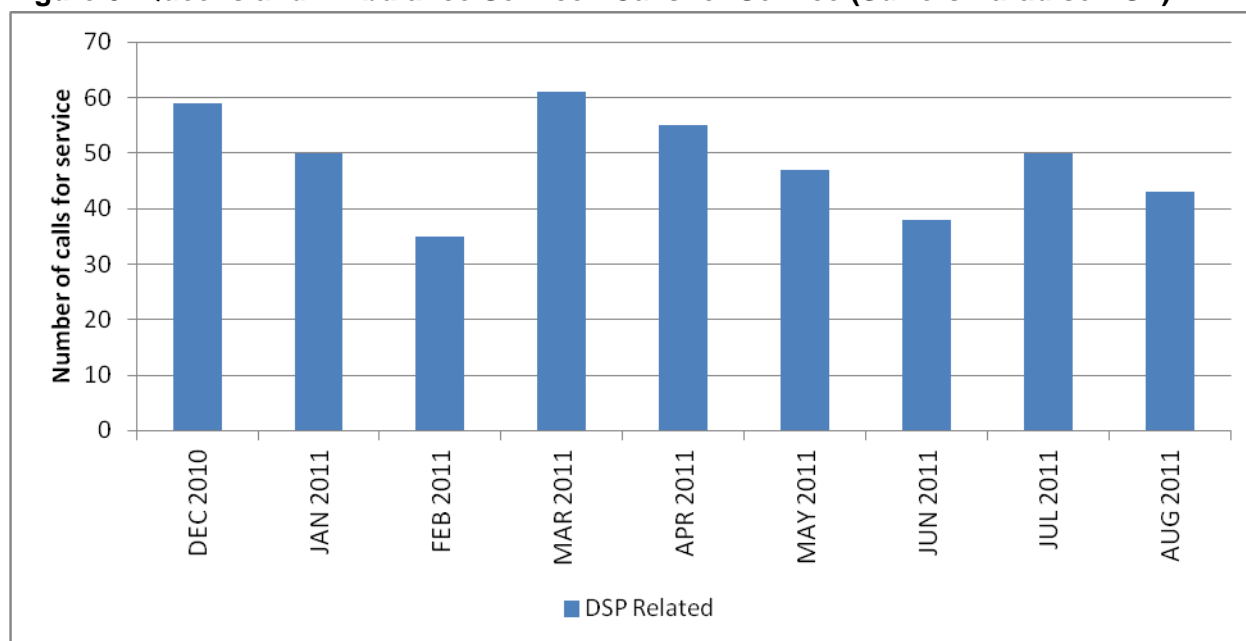
A total of 202 breaches against licensed premises were detected during this period.

In addition to this, OLGR, in conjunction with licensees in Surfers Paradise, conducted four Responsible Service of Alcohol forums during the first nine months of the trial.

Queensland Ambulance Service calls for service

During the first nine months of the trials, Queensland Ambulance Service received a total of 1235 calls for service to the area covered by the Drink Safe Precinct. Of these, 438 (35.5%) calls for service may be considered, for these purposes, as being related to the Drink Safe Precinct.¹¹ The remaining calls for service (n = 797, 64.5%) occurred outside of the Drink Safe Precinct related hours and days of the week.

Figure 3. Queensland Ambulance Service - Calls for Service (Surfers Paradise DSP)



The Drink Safe Precinct related calls for service were most commonly for¹²:

- assault/sexual assault
- overdose/poisoning (ingestion)
- falls

¹⁰ For the purposes of this snapshot, compliance operations include after hours inspections and day time inspections.

¹¹ As QAS do not record if a call for service is alcohol-related, this measure is based on calls for service to locations within the Drink Safe Precinct during 'high alcohol consumption times and days of the week' –Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights 6pm – 6am. This is a preliminary measure developed for the purposes of data collection and will be revised following further analysis during the course of the evaluation.

¹² These categories are based on the code assigned by the QAS at the time an ambulance is dispatched using the Medical Priority Dispatch System. Calls are categorised on the basis of details provided by the caller.

Support services

The Chill Out Zone has been established in Surfers Paradise for more than 10 years. The Chill Out Zone continues to operate as the main mechanism of support for patrons in Surfers Paradise during the Drink Safe Precinct trial.

Chill Out Zone

The Chill Out Zone includes a purpose built van 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 is centrally located within the precinct on Orchid Avenue and operates on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights.¹³

Figure 4. Chill Out Zone in Surfers Paradise

Chill Out Zone at night-time



Source: Chill Out Zone 2011.

Chill Out Zone



During the first nine months of the trial, the Chill Out Zone offered support to patrons in the precinct on 105 nights – including regular Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights as well as six additional nights for special events or public holidays.¹⁴

During this period, the Chill Out Zone provided support to 1847 patrons in the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct, including:

- 1222 'assisted clients' – this includes patrons who require a higher level of care, such as those who are injured or sick
- 625 'minor assistance' – this includes patrons who require a lower level of care.

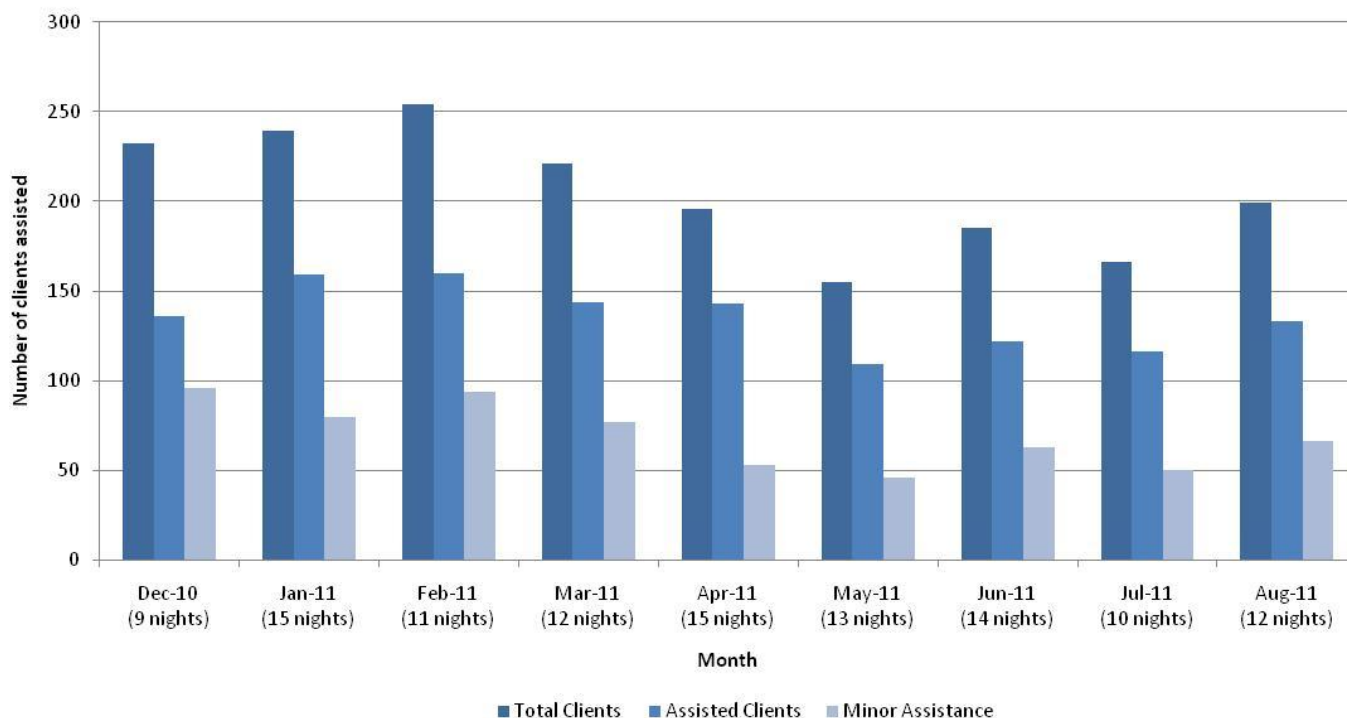
An average of 17 patrons were assisted by the Chill Out Zone each night that it operated during the first nine months of the trial.

Figure 5 shows the number of assisted clients and minor clients per month between December 2010 and August 2011. It is important to note that comparisons between months can be misleading due to variation in the number of nights that the service operated per month.

¹³ In Surfers Paradise, the support service has been funded to provide support on Thursday nights through the Drink Safe Precinct initiative.

¹⁴ Sunday 26 December 2010, Sunday 2 January 2011, Tuesday 25 January 2011, Monday 25 April 2011, Sunday 1 May 2011 and Sunday 12 June 2011.

Figure 5. Number of clients assisted and type of assistance between December 2010 and August 2011



Source: Chill Out Zone 2011.

Note: The figures in the brackets beneath the month show the number of nights that the service operated during that month.

In addition to providing support to patrons, the Chill Out Zone handed out 33 000 cups of water during the first nine months of the trial.¹⁵

Transport Activity

A number of transport options exist for patrons to get to and from the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct – including bus services, private transport and taxi services. Data is presented on taxi and bus patronage.

Taxi patronage

There are currently three secure taxi ranks in the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct. The secure ranks are located at:

- Cavill Ave North
- Cavill Ave South (FlatFare rank)
- Orchid Ave.

The secure taxi rank in the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct operates on Friday and Saturday nights between 11pm and 5.30am, and during special events (e.g. public holidays). The secure taxi rank is staffed by rank marshals and security guards to help patrons get home quickly and safely.

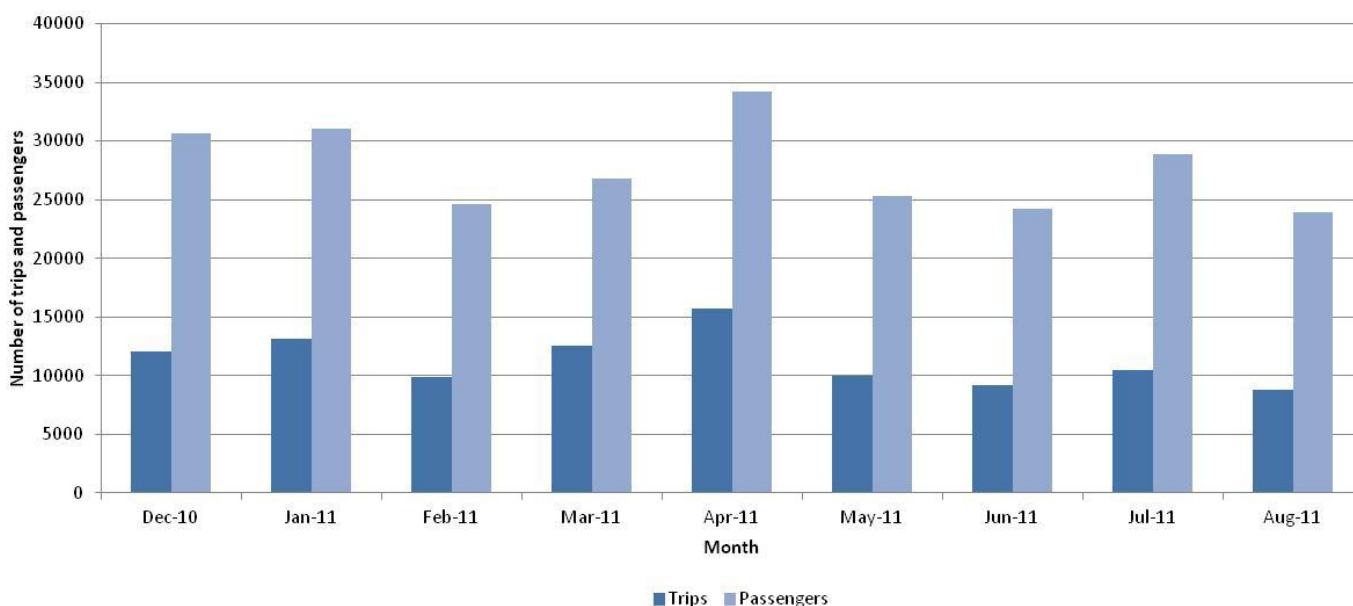
During the first nine months of the trial,¹⁶ the secure taxi ranks in Surfers Paradise operated on 85 nights – including regular Friday and Saturday nights as well as eight additional nights.¹⁷

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ Taxi patronage figures for the first weekend in December 2010 (4-5 December) have been excluded when reporting number of trips and passengers as the Drink Safe Precinct trial in Surfers Paradise did not commence until Thursday 9 December 2010.

On nights that the secure ranks operated, taxi services transported 249 726 people home from the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct.¹⁸ More than 101 000 taxi trips departed the Drink Safe Precinct during this period.

Figure 6. Number of trips and passengers collected from the Secure Taxi Ranks inside the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct



Source: DTMR 2011.

Note: Figures for the first weekend in December 2010 (3-4 December) have been excluded from the figures presented in this graph as the Surfers Paradise trial did not officially commence until Thursday 9 December 2010.

Bus patronage

Bus services in the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct are coordinated and funded through the Translink Transit Authority. In addition to regular services, 'NightLink' bus services depart the Drink Safe Precinct between 2.30am and 5.30am on Saturday and Sunday mornings. The 'NightLink' services depart from two locations in the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct, depending on the route:

- N21 picks up from Appel Park stop on Ferny Avenue (near Titanium Bar)
- N750 picks up from Surfers Paradise Boulevard near Cavill Avenue (close to Hard Rock Cafe)

During the first seven months of the trial¹⁹, 43 232 passengers travelled from the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct on regular and 'NightLink' bus services on Friday and Saturday nights between 6pm and 6am.

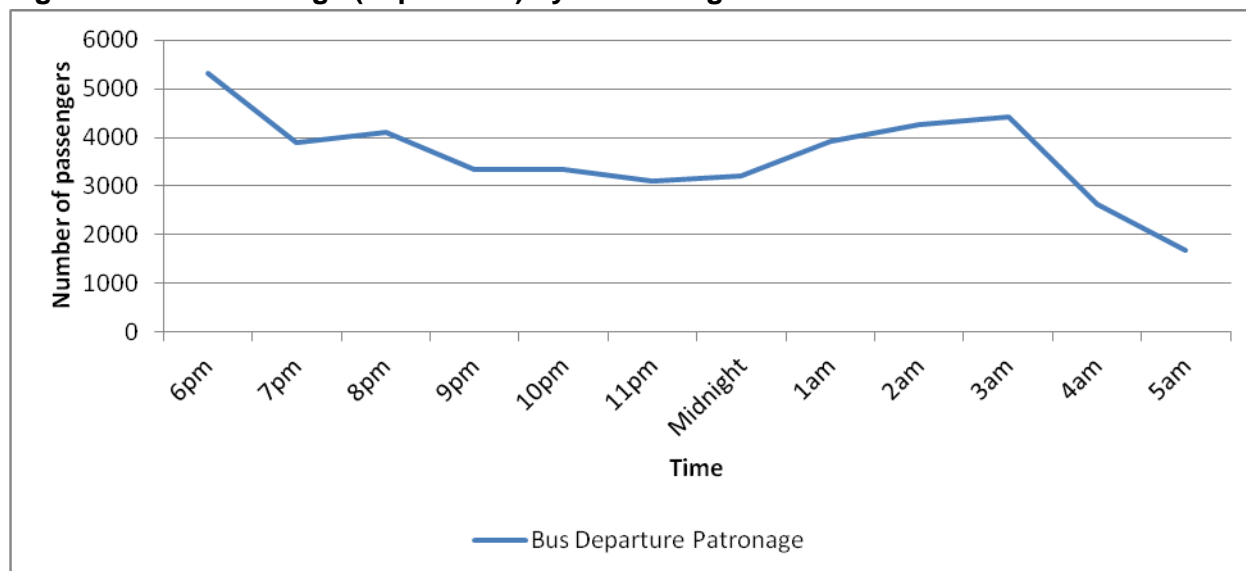
The level of bus patronage across the Friday and Saturday nights is presented in Figure 7, showing that patronage is highest between 6pm and 7pm (which indicates after business hours travel) with a second smaller peak between 3am and 4am hours (which shows the DSP travel peak).

¹⁷ Sunday 26 December 2010, Monday 27 December 2010, Tuesday 28 December 2010, Sunday 2 January 2011, Tuesday 25 January 2011, Monday 25 April 2011, Sunday 1 May 2011 and Monday 13 June 2011.

¹⁸ These figures only include passengers and trips that departed from the Secure Taxi Ranks located in the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct and do not include trips or passengers collected in other parts of Surfers Paradise or trips that were hailed by passengers.

¹⁹ TransLink Transit Authority patronage data is provided on a financial quarter basis, as such, the latest data available is up to June 2011.

Figure 7. Bus Patronage (departures) by time of night - December 2010 to June 2011



Source: Translink Transit Authority 2011.

Note: Counts passengers boarding outbound buses from stops located within the Surfers Paradise Drink Safe Precinct.

Where to from here?

The range of data available to the Drink Safe Precinct evaluation continues to grow as partner agencies provide data extracts from their systems. It is anticipated that a 12-month snapshot will be released in early 2012 which will continue to build on the data presented in this snapshot.

Have your say

A further round of surveys capturing the views, experiences and perceptions of patrons, licensees, business owners, support service workers and residents is planned for early 2012. The survey will be available on the Queensland Government's 'Get Involved' website (www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au) and promoted through a broad range of sources, including the 'Get Involved' social media sites.²⁰

²⁰ 'Follow' <http://twitter.com/#!/consultqld> or 'Like' <https://www.facebook.com/ConsultQueensland> to be informed when the survey is released.