

Six month snapshot: Townsville Drink Safe Precinct trial

About the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct

The Townsville Drink Safe Precinct covers a widespread area of the central business district and adjoining commercial, recreational and residential areas. The precinct has several distinct areas of activity, including:

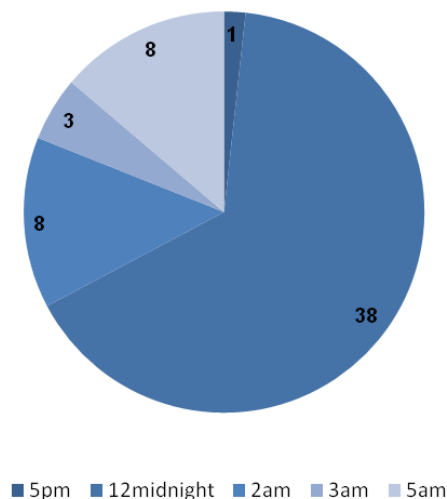
- **Flinders St East** – which is Townsville’s main entertainment and nightclub hub.
- **Flinders St West** – which has two hotels, a nightclub and a number of high rise residential units.
- **Palmer St** – which is principally a restaurant precinct interspersed with numerous high rise residential units.
- **The Strand**¹ – which borders the seaside foreshore in the suburb of North Ward. The Strand has a number of high rise residential and holiday units, restaurants, cafes and bars.

Townsville regularly hosts special events such as Townsville V8 Supercars, Townsville Cup races, National Rugby League team the Cowboys home games and National Basketball team the Croc’s home games. The Townsville Drink Safe Precinct attracts large numbers of patrons every weekend and especially after events. Just fewer than 2000 people reside in the Townsville City suburb.²

There are 58 licensed venues in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct. As shown in Figure 1:

- more than half of these venues close at or before midnight (67%, n = 39)
- eight venues close at 2am; three venues trade until 3am and eight venues have licenses to trade past lockout (i.e. 3am).

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



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

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

¹ The Townsville Drink Safe Precinct boundary includes The Strand up to the corner of Gregory St.

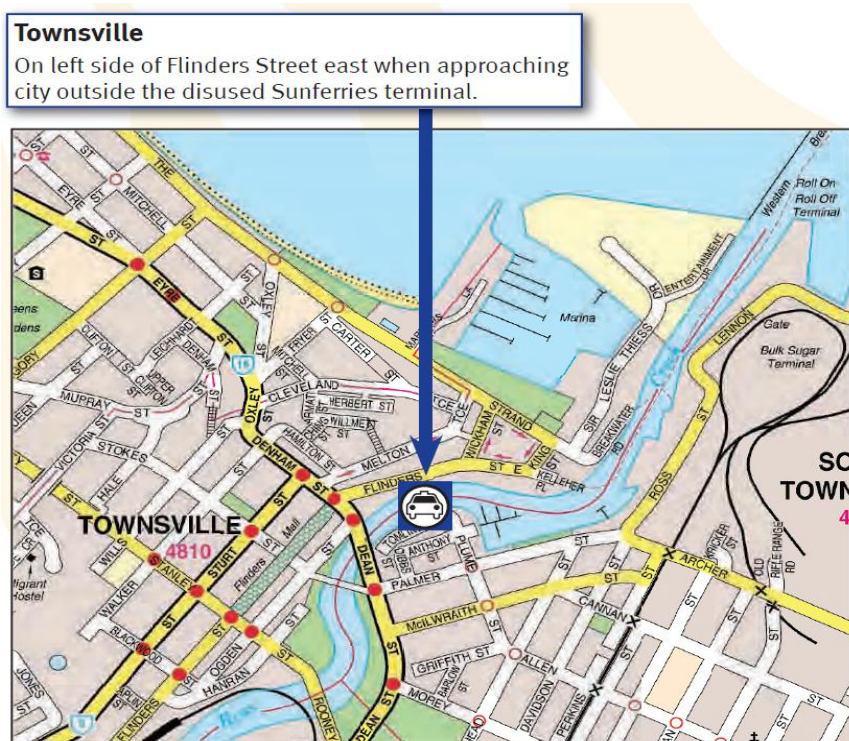
² The Townsville City Australian Bureau of Statistics State suburb area is slightly larger in geographical area than the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct and does not include Palmer Street.

What strategies are in place in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct?

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

- **Presence of military police** to deter offences and assist in Queensland Police divisionary strategies. Provision of appropriate vehicles to assist in the removal of defence patrons to alleviate the public transport burden.
- **Security guard (funded by Late Night Traders)** liaising between venues on main strip and the Queensland Police Service (QPS) – maintains radio communication with all licensed premises to ensure efficient police response to incidents at establishments.
- **Liquor enforcement and proactive strategy (LEAPS) officers** conduct monthly meetings with Late Night Traders accord to ensure staffs are trained and licensed premises have individual strategies in place.
- **Marshals and security guard at the secure taxi rank** to govern the rank and ensure that patrons are loaded into taxis in a safe and efficient way.

Figure 2: Secure taxi rank in Flinders Street East



Source: Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) 2011.

- **Work underway towards the establishment of the 'CBD Liquor Accord Townsville'** a draft accord is out for consultation between licensees which aims to manage alcohol-related violence and improve the safety of people visiting licensed venues in the Townsville CBD.
- **CCTV network** with cameras located in Flinders St, Flinders St East, The Strand, Victoria Bridge, Palmer St, and at the Secure Taxi Rank. Cameras are passively monitored at Council's Garbutt Operations Centre and Stanley St Police Operations Centre.
- **Security guard** on late night bus services to ensure the safety of the driver and passengers.
- **Flinders St East redevelopment** including upgraded lighting and street furniture.

- **Establishment of a Rest and Recovery area** which operates out of a van in the Flinders St East carpark. The rest and recovery van is a place where patrons can go to rest, get some minor first aid and take time out from a busy night.
- **Promotion of the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct** through billboards and television screens inside licensed premises
- **Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) forums** in conjunction with licensees, 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 impart examples of RSA practices and provide contextual material complimenting RSA course content. The forums are well received with attendees indicating their appreciation for the opportunity to receive further education and to discuss RSA issues with OLGR representatives.

What's been happening in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct?

Queensland Police Service activity³

Activity

During the first six months of the trial in Townsville:

- 245 people were arrested – mainly for good order and liquor offences
- 40 Notices to Appear were issued
- 476 Tickets were issued
- 463 street checks were conducted
- 91 Random Breath Tests (RBTs) were conducted
- 198 Traffic Infringement Notices (TINs) were issued.

During this period police conducted 1191 walkthroughs of licensed premises,⁴ detected seven breaches against licensed premises⁵ and exercised tip out powers eight times.

Diversionary activity by QPS

As part of the trial, police in Townsville 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 six months of the trial, police officers patrolling the precinct used diversionary strategies nearly 600 times.⁶ This included:

- taking 18 people to a place of safety or rest and recovery area
- using conflict intervention/tactical communication seven times

³ 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 Drink Safe Precinct evaluation which is being conducted over the course of the two year Townsville 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).

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 OLGR 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.

- diffusing 67 potential incidents through using de-escalation techniques
- issuing 462 move-on directions
- 13 handovers of defence force personnel to military police
- 18 handovers to Queensland Ambulance Service paramedics
- six detentions for breaches of the peace.

Assaults

During the first six months of the trial, six people were arrested for an assault-related offence in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct. Four people were arrested for assaulting a police officer during the first six months of the trial.

Good Order Offences

Police arrested 109 people and issued seven Notices to Appear and 336 tickets for good order-related offences⁷ during the first six months of the trial in Townsville.

Liquor Offences

During this period, 92 people (including one juvenile) were arrested for liquor-related offences.⁸ Sixty-seven tickets and eight Notices to Appear were issued by police during this period.

Drink or Drug Driving Offences

During this period, one person was arrested for a drink or drug driving offence in the precinct.

Other Offences

In addition to the offence categories listed above, police arrested a further 33 people, issued 73 tickets and 25 Notices to Appear for 'other' types of offences in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct – including offences against property and weapons offences.

Banning orders

During the first six months of the trial, 12 people have been banned from entering the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct for between one and 12 months for the following offences:

- assault occasioning bodily harm
- assault police
- public nuisance
- common assault
- obstruct police.

During the first six months of the trial, no one was found in breach of a banning order from the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct.

Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation Activity

As part of the Drink Safe Precinct trials, the OLGR plan, co-ordinate and participate in multi-disciplinary compliance operations of licensed premises within the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct targeting Liquor and

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'.

Security Provider Act compliance. During the first six months of the trial, OLGR conducted six joint operations targeting licensed venues located in the Townsville 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 six months of the trial, 52 compliance operations were conducted on licensed venues in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct.⁹ OLGR conducted an additional 22 investigations in response to complaints from members of public, police and other sources.

A total of 98 breaches against licensed premises were detected during this period.

In addition to this, OLGR, in conjunction with licensees in Townsville, conducted a Responsible Service of Alcohol forum during the first six months of the trial.

Support services

As part of the Drink Safe Precinct initiative, a static rest and recovery service (under the auspice of AngliCare North Queensland and in partnership with Townsville Street Chaplains Inc) has been established in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct.

The static rest and recovery service commenced in February 2011 and operates out of a van in the Flinders Street East car park on Friday and Saturday nights. In April 2011, the van was expanded to include an outside tented area with a table and 30 litre water container.

A volunteer mobile foot patrol (operated by Townsville Street Chaplains Inc) also operates in the precinct, providing support and assistance to intoxicated persons. The volunteer service has been operational in the precinct since December 2010 and will continue to operate for the two year duration of the trial.

During the first six months of the trial, the support service operated on 46 nights and spent more than 500 hours offering support to patrons in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct.

During this period, 1664 patrons in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct were assisted.¹⁰ On average, 36 patrons were assisted per night that the service operated during the first six months of the trial.

Figure 3 shows the number of clients that the support service assisted per month during the first six months of the service.¹¹

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. The increase in the number of patrons assisted from April 2011 onwards can, in part, be explained by the addition of the tent, table and large 30 litre water container.

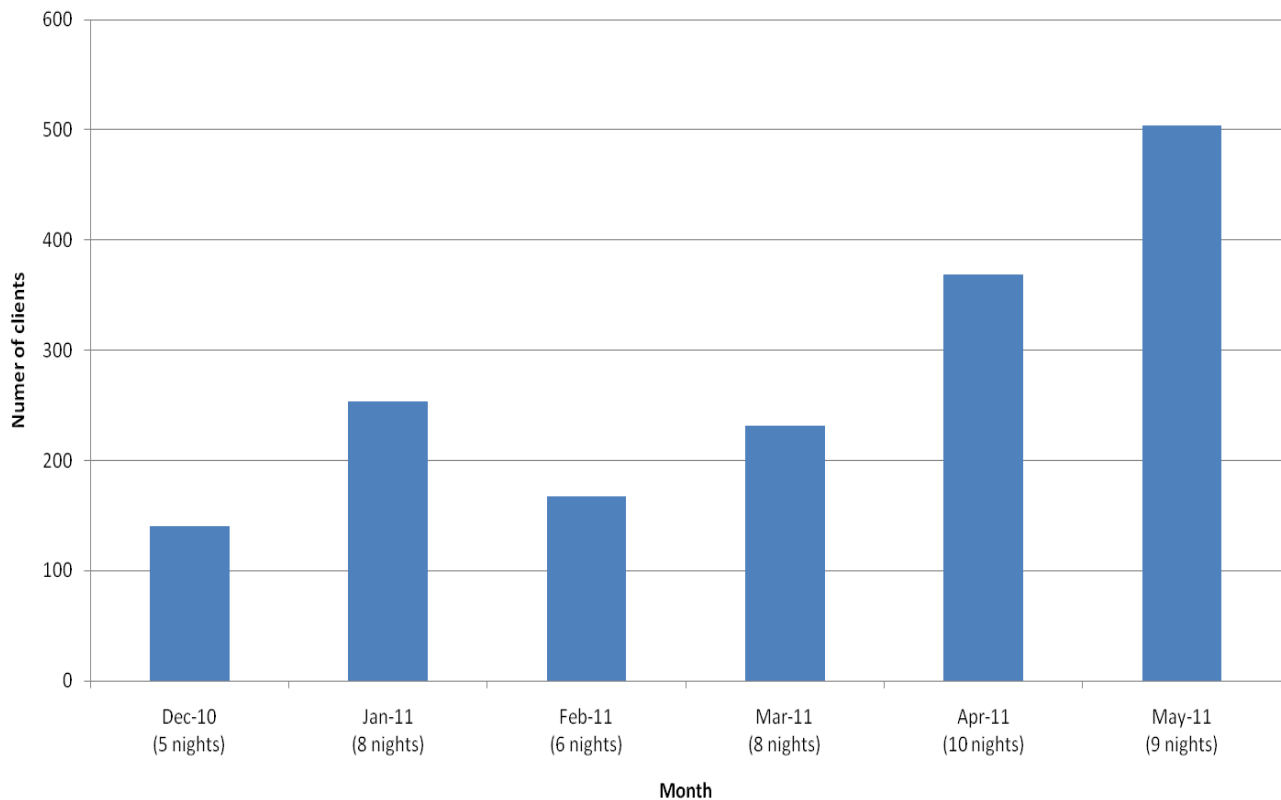
Since the addition of the tent, the service distributes 150 cups of water on an average night. People who receive water only from the support service are counted as a client.

⁹ For the purposes of this snapshot, compliance operations include after hours inspections and day time inspections.

¹⁰ This figure includes patrons assisted on Friday and Saturday nights as well as additional Drink Safe Precinct nights which may be allocated according to need on public holidays or for special events. This figure also includes patrons assisted by the Drink Safe Precinct funded rest and recovery service as well as patrons assisted by the volunteer foot patrol. The number of patrons assisted includes patrons who received first aid, rest and recovery services, as well as those who were given cups of water.

¹¹ Note, figures for April 2011 onwards include both patrons that required medical assistance as well as those who were provided with water only.

Figure 3: Number of clients assisted by support service between December 2010 and May 2011



Source: Drink Safe Precinct Program (AngliCare North Queensland) 2011. Note: The figure in the brackets beneath the month shows the number of nights that the service operated that month.

Transport

Patrons can get to and from the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct in a number of ways – including bus services, private transport and taxi services. One of the most common ways is by taxi.

There is currently one secure taxi rank in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct. The secure rank is centrally located in Flinders Street East.

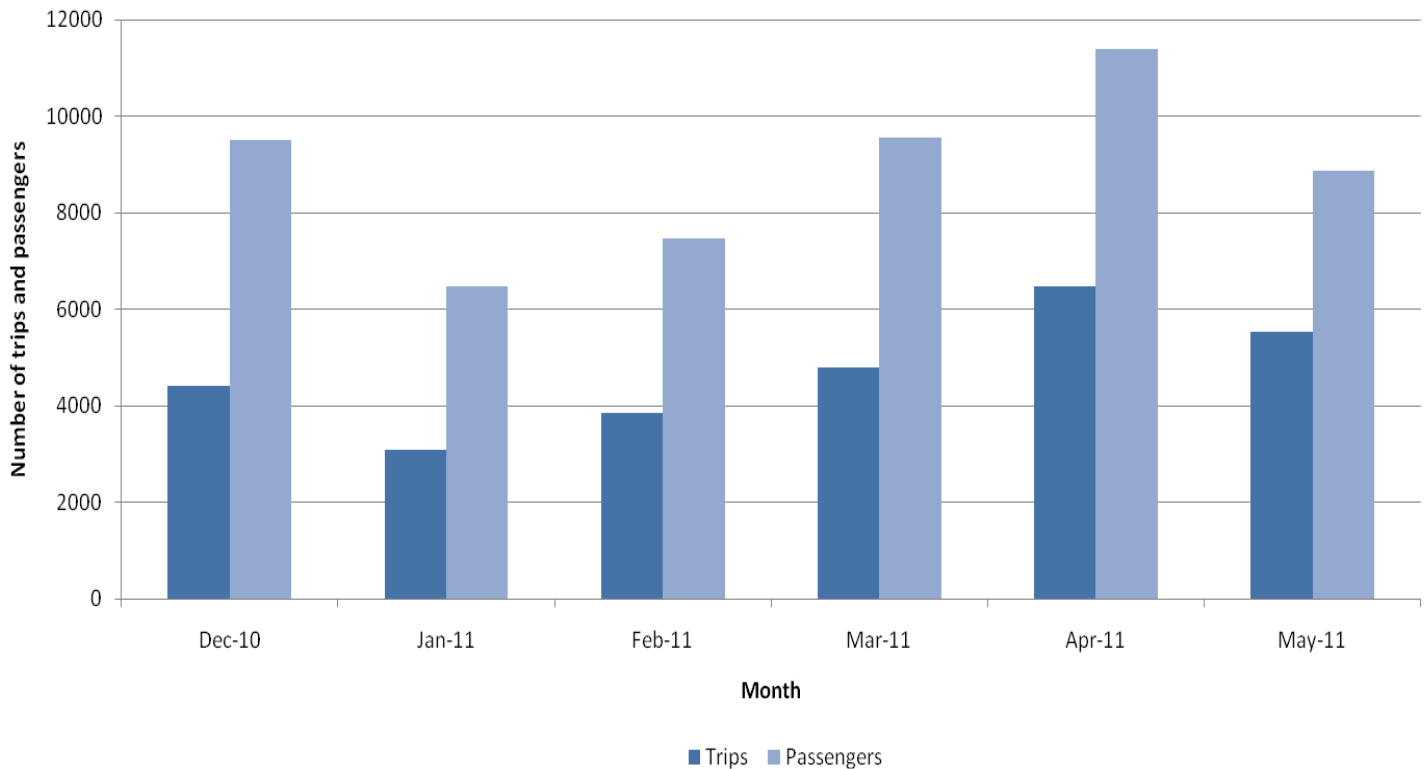
The secure taxi rank in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct typically operates on Friday and Saturday nights between midnight and 6.00am, and during special events (e.g. public holidays). The secure taxi rank is staffed by rank marshals and security guards to help nightclub patrons get home quickly and safely.

During the first six months of the trial, the secure taxi rank in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct operated on 52 nights – including regular Friday and Saturday nights as well as Monday 27 December 2010, Tuesday 25 January 2011, Monday 25 April 2011 and Sunday 1 May 2011.

Taxi services transported 53,322 people home from the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct during the first six months of the trial.¹² More than 28,100 taxi trips departed the Drink Safe Precinct during this period.

¹² These figures only include passengers and trips that departed from the Secure Taxi Rank located on Flinders Street East and do not include trips or passengers collected in other parts of the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct or trips that were hailed by passengers.

Figure 4: Number of trips and passengers collected from the Flinders Street East Secure Taxi Rank¹³



Source: DTMR 2011.

Drink Safe Precinct Surveys

About the surveys

Online surveys were developed in close consultation with each of the local Drink Safe Precinct committees as one way to let people who use these areas have their say about alcohol-related violence, the Drink Safe Precinct initiatives and what more they think should be done to improve community safety in these areas.

Surveys will help to measure whether the Drink Safe Precinct is successful in achieving its aims. Some of the target outcomes that Local Drink Safe Precinct committees hope will be achieved during the Drink Safe Precinct trial cannot be easily or comprehensively measured through other data sources (e.g. perceptions of safety, public amenity issues, awareness of initiatives, and perceptions of effectiveness of Drink Safe Precinct initiatives).

Surveys will also help to inform local-level decision making throughout the trial. It is proposed the surveys will be conducted at regular intervals during the trial in order to measure change over the period of the trial.¹⁴

Surveys were developed targeting five key groups of stakeholders in the Drink Safe Precincts:

1. Patron Survey
2. Resident Survey

¹³ Please note that comparisons between months can be misleading for a number of reasons, including the impact of the festive season and Cyclone Yasi on operating hours of rank and patronage and the variation in the number of nights that the rank operated each month,

¹⁴ It is anticipated that the surveys will be conducted on a six-monthly basis to measure any change over time (e.g. changes in awareness about Drink Safe Precinct initiatives). The next round of surveys is scheduled for November 2011.

3. Business Survey
4. Licensee/Approved Manager Survey
5. Service Provider Survey (e.g. police officers, ambulance paramedics, transport drivers and bar staff).

The survey went 'live' on the 'Get Involved' website on 22 March 2011 and closed for consultation at midnight Friday 29 April 2011.

What did patrons tell us about the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct?

Local Drink Safe Precinct committees wanted people who know and use Drink Safe Precincts to have their say about alcohol-related violence and what they think should be done to improve community safety in these areas. The patron survey was an opportunity for patrons to have their say about the issues that affect them as a patron in these precincts.

In total, 1398 people responded to the Patron Survey. Of those respondents, approximately 15 per cent reported that they usually visit the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct (n = 200).

This section provides a brief overview of some of the responses to the Patron Survey from respondents who identified that they usually visit the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct.

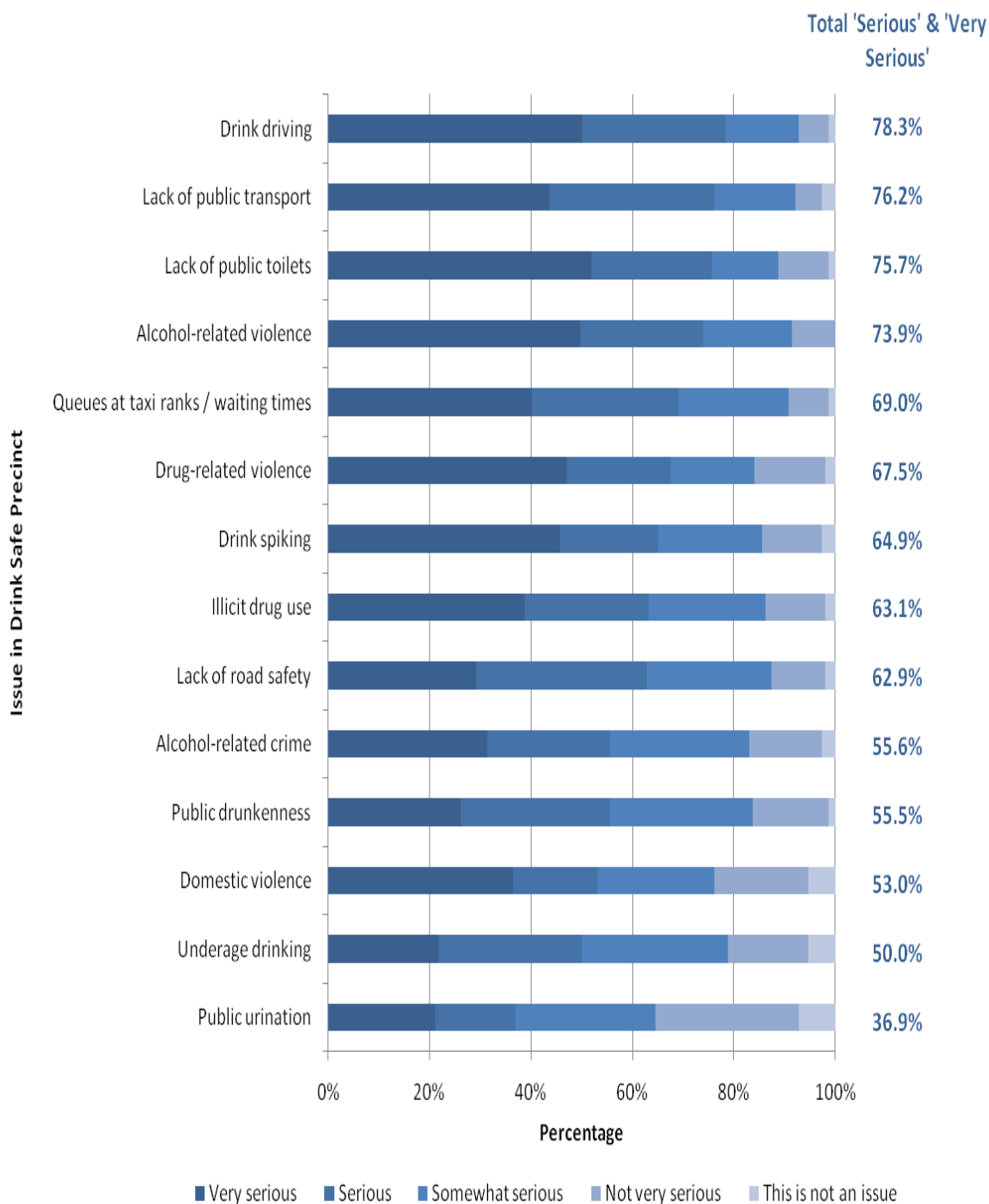
Issues in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct

Patrons were asked about issues in the Drink Safe Precinct that they usually visit and whether these issues have increased during the past two year.

As shown in Figure 5, patrons who usually visit the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct considered most of the issues listed in the survey to be either 'serious' or 'very serious' in the Drink Safe Precinct:

- Drink driving (78.3%, n = 118) was identified as the most serious issue by patrons who visit the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct, followed by lack of public transport (76.2%, n = 115) and lack of public toilets (75.7%, n = 115). Alcohol-related violence was rated as the fourth most serious issue (73.9%, n = 113).
- Public urination was rated as the least serious issue by patrons who visit the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct; just over one-third of respondents identified that this issue is 'serious' or 'very serious' (36.9%, n = 56).

Figure 5: Seriousness of issues in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct



Source: Drink Safe Precinct Patron Survey 2011.

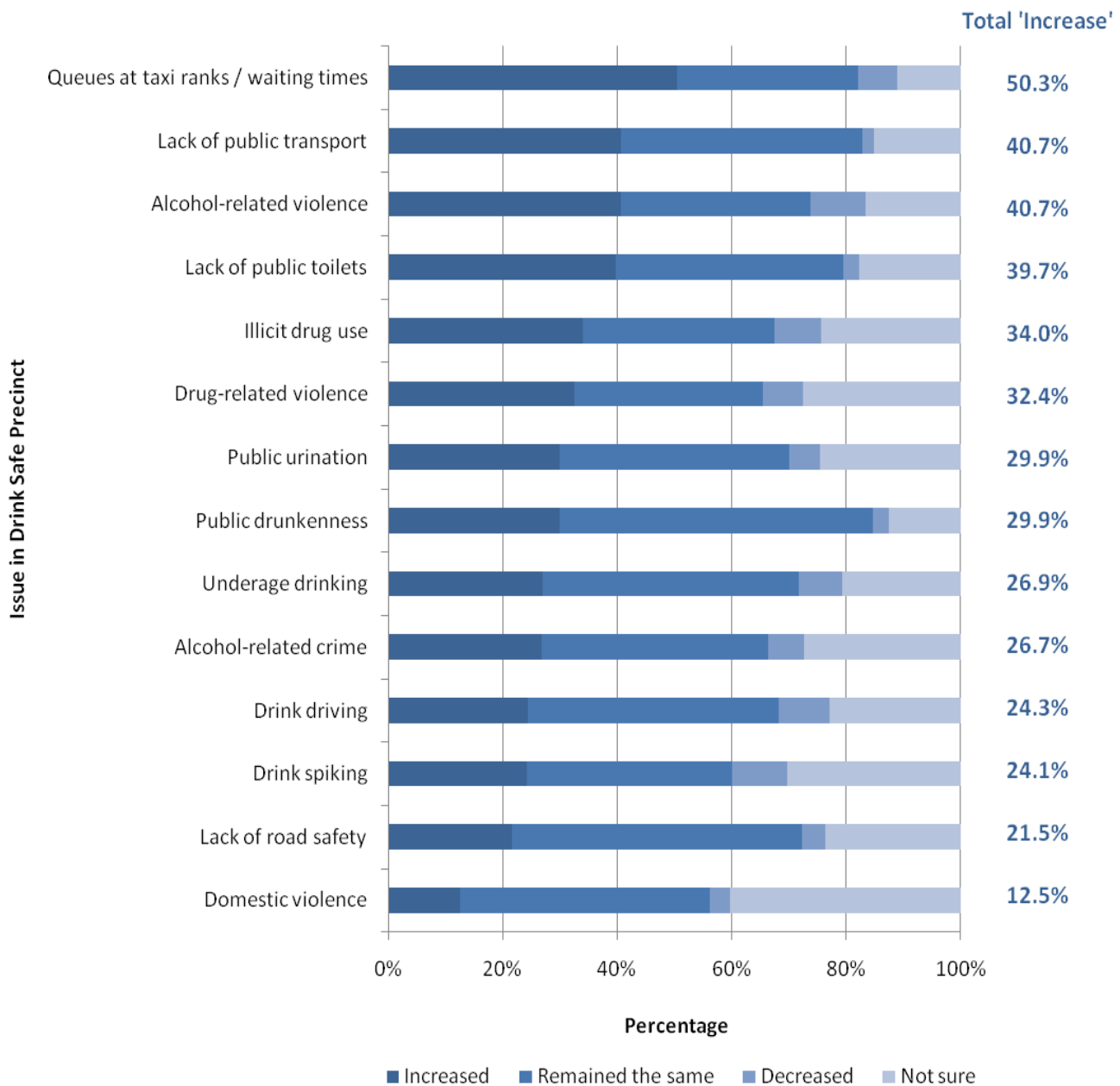
Respondents were also asked questions about whether the issues associated with the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct have changed during the past two years. As shown in Figure 6, most respondents identified that the issues associated with the Townsville Drink Safe precinct have remained the same during the past two years.

A number of respondents did, however, identify that some of these issues have increased during the past two years and in particular:

- queues at taxi ranks/waiting times for taxis (50.3%, n = 73)

- lack of public transport (40.7%, n = 59)
- alcohol-related violence (40.7%, n = 59).

Figure 6: Change in issues associated with the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct



Source: Drink Safe Precinct Patron Survey 2011.

During consultation with the local Drink Safe Precinct committee, the lack of public toilets in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct was highlighted as a serious issue. For this reason, patrons were specifically asked questions about public toilets.

A large number of respondents highlighted the issues associated with the public toilets in the precinct, and in particular, the availability of these facilities (51.5%, n = 103). As well as responding to this question, a number of respondents made comments about the scarcity of these facilities in the Townsville precinct, for example:

“No public toilets on night club strip (Flinders Street).”

“There is none it’s ridiculous.”

Some respondents commented on what they think could be done to improve these issues in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct. Most of these comments related to increased public transport, installation of public toilets and harsher penalties for offenders, for example:

“Public transport is a big thing that could be improved in Townsville.”

“Increased public transport to and from the area.”

“Need better transportation and accessible toilets - if you are refused entry to a venue there is nowhere to urinate!”

“I believe that the problems related to queues for public transport have increased as a result of more people going out due to the increased presence of police within the drink safe precinct, this has decreased violence within the precinct”.

“More public toilets after lock out as the taxi lines are too big you either wait an [sic] try an [sic] hold it or go in a public place and risk getting into trouble.”

“Enforcing current laws, having more police patrolling the area and ensuring the courts support the enforcing effort.”

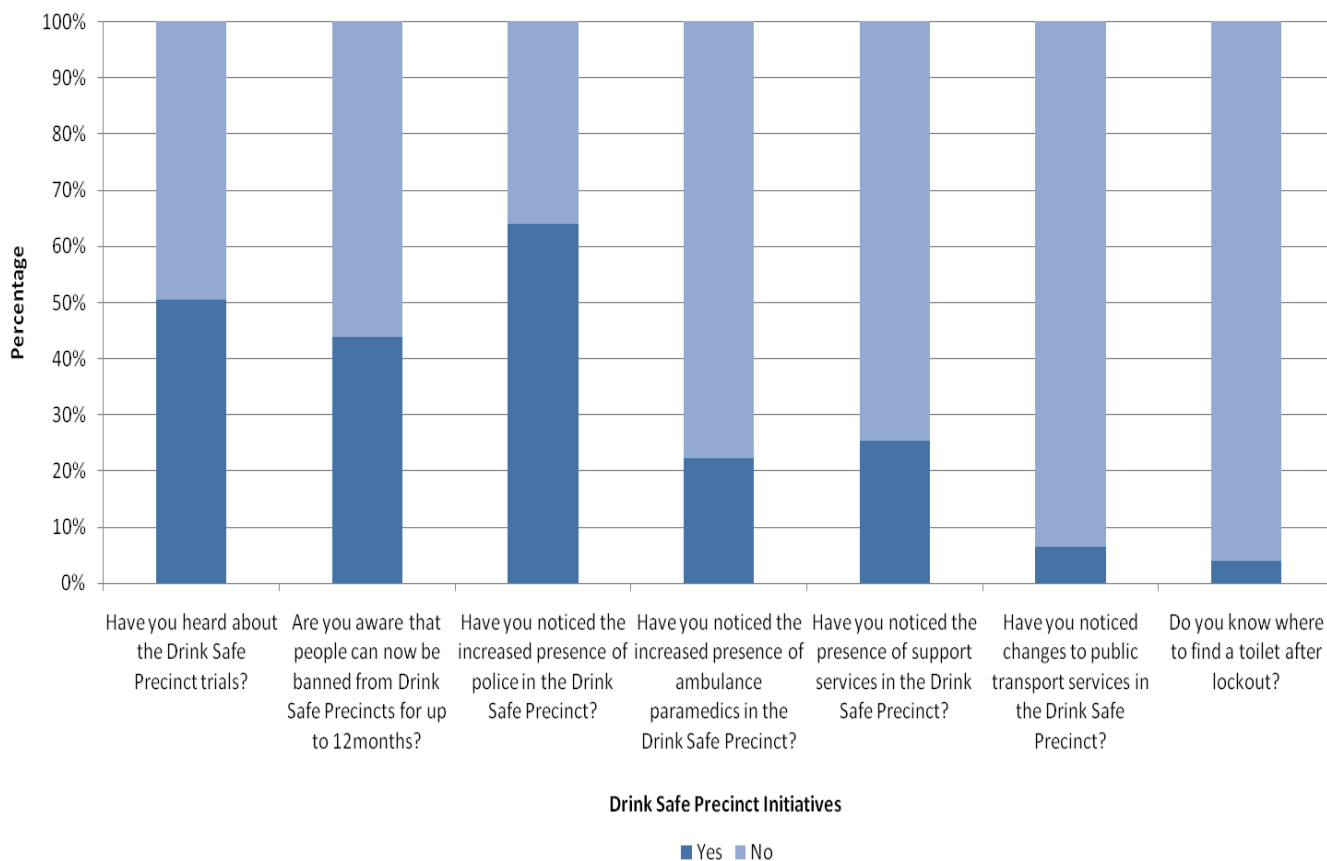
“Much harsher punishment give police more arresting powers and more police.”

Awareness of Drink Safe Precinct initiatives and effectiveness of strategies aimed at reducing alcohol-related violence

Respondents were asked about their awareness of Drink Safe Precinct initiatives in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct. As shown in Figure 7:

- about half had heard about the Drink Safe Precinct trials before completing the survey (50.4%, n = 61) and almost two-thirds indicated that they have noticed the increased presence of police in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct (63.9%, n = 78).

Figure 7: Awareness of Drink Safe Precinct Initiatives



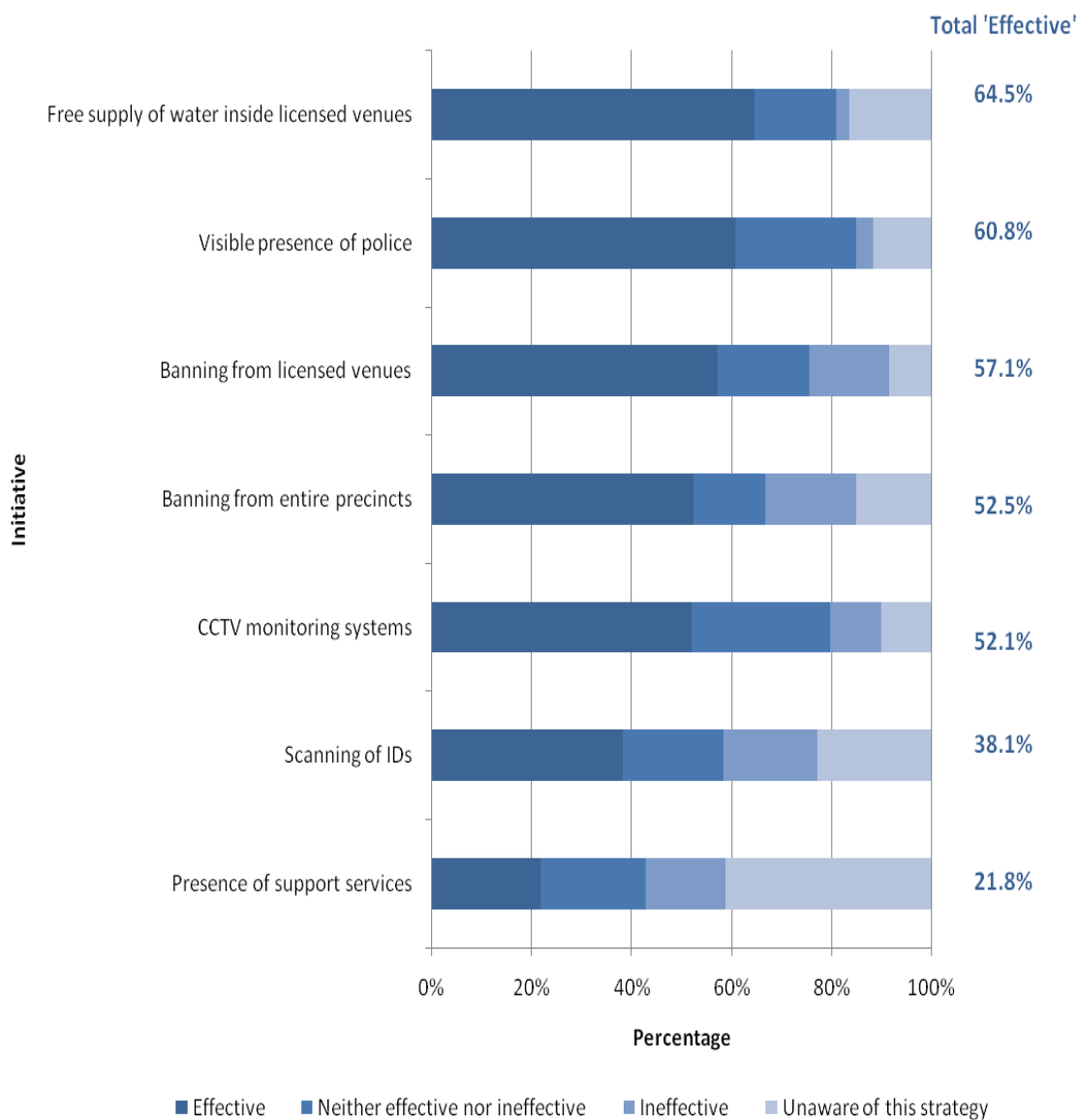
Source: Drink Safe Precinct Patron Survey 2011.

As well as awareness of these initiatives, patrons were also asked to identify how effective they think these initiatives are at reducing alcohol-related violence and improving community safety in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct.

As shown in Figure 8, overall, most patrons agreed that the initiatives listed in the survey are effective at reducing alcohol-related violence:

- just under two-thirds of respondents indicated that the free supply of water inside licensed venues is an effective strategy to reduce alcohol-related violence and improve community safety (64.5%, n = 78).
- more than 60 per cent of respondents indicated that the visible presence of police is an effective strategy to reduce alcohol-related violence and improve community safety (60.8%, n = 73).

Figure 8: Effectiveness of initiatives aimed at reducing alcohol-related violence



Source: Drink Safe Precinct Patron Survey 2011.

What else did patrons tell us about the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct trial?

The last two questions of the survey allowed respondents to make comments about what they think should be done to improve safety in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct and to make any other comment about violence or safety issues in the precincts.

Patrons made a number of suggestions to further improve safety in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct, including improved responsible service of alcohol, greater awareness of Drink Safe Precinct initiatives and increased presence of police and education of patrons:

“More security and police patrolling the streets, free water outside clubs, more access to taxis and public transport (particularly after lock out), chill out areas (Townsville has none).”

“Make the supply of free water more visible - I had no idea this was happening as the venues I go to still charge for water.”

Some patrons also made comments about the progress of the trial, for example:

“The whole initiative is working, but it will still take more time for people for bad behaviour to be brought back to a minimum.”

“The Drink safe precinct initiatives are very welcome I believe they are overall a success, there require improvements to the one in Townsville particularly for public toilets, however the police work hard and are usually very reasonable.”

What did people who work or live in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct tell us about alcohol-related violence and the Drink Safe Precinct trial?

In addition to conducting a survey of venue patrons, the local Drink Safe Precinct committees wanted other people who use Drink Safe Precincts to have their say about alcohol-related violence and what they think should be done to improve community safety in these areas.

To let other people who work and live in the Drink Safe Precinct have their say, the following four surveys were developed in close consultation with the local Drink Safe Precinct committees:

1. Service Provider Survey: for people who work in a Drink Safe Precinct (e.g. police officers, ambulance paramedics, security, transport drivers and support service workers).
2. Resident Survey: for people who live in a Drink Safe Precinct area.
3. Business Survey: for people who own or run a business located in a Drink Safe Precinct area.
4. Licensee/Approved Managers Survey: for licensees and approved managers who own or manage a licensed venue in a Drink Safe Precinct.

These surveys provide one way to measure whether people who work and live in the Drink Safe Precincts believe the trial to be successful in achieving its aims (e.g. improving perceptions of safety) and they provide a way for the local committees to get better understanding of the experiences of people who work or live in a Drink Safe Precinct and the issues that affect them in these areas.

In total 225 people responded to Service Provider, Resident, Business and Licensee/Approved Managers Surveys. Of those respondents, 51 responses (or 23% of all respondents to these surveys) were from people who work or live in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct. For the purposes of this summary, responses from the Service Provider, Resident, Business and Licensee/Approved Managers Surveys have been aggregated.

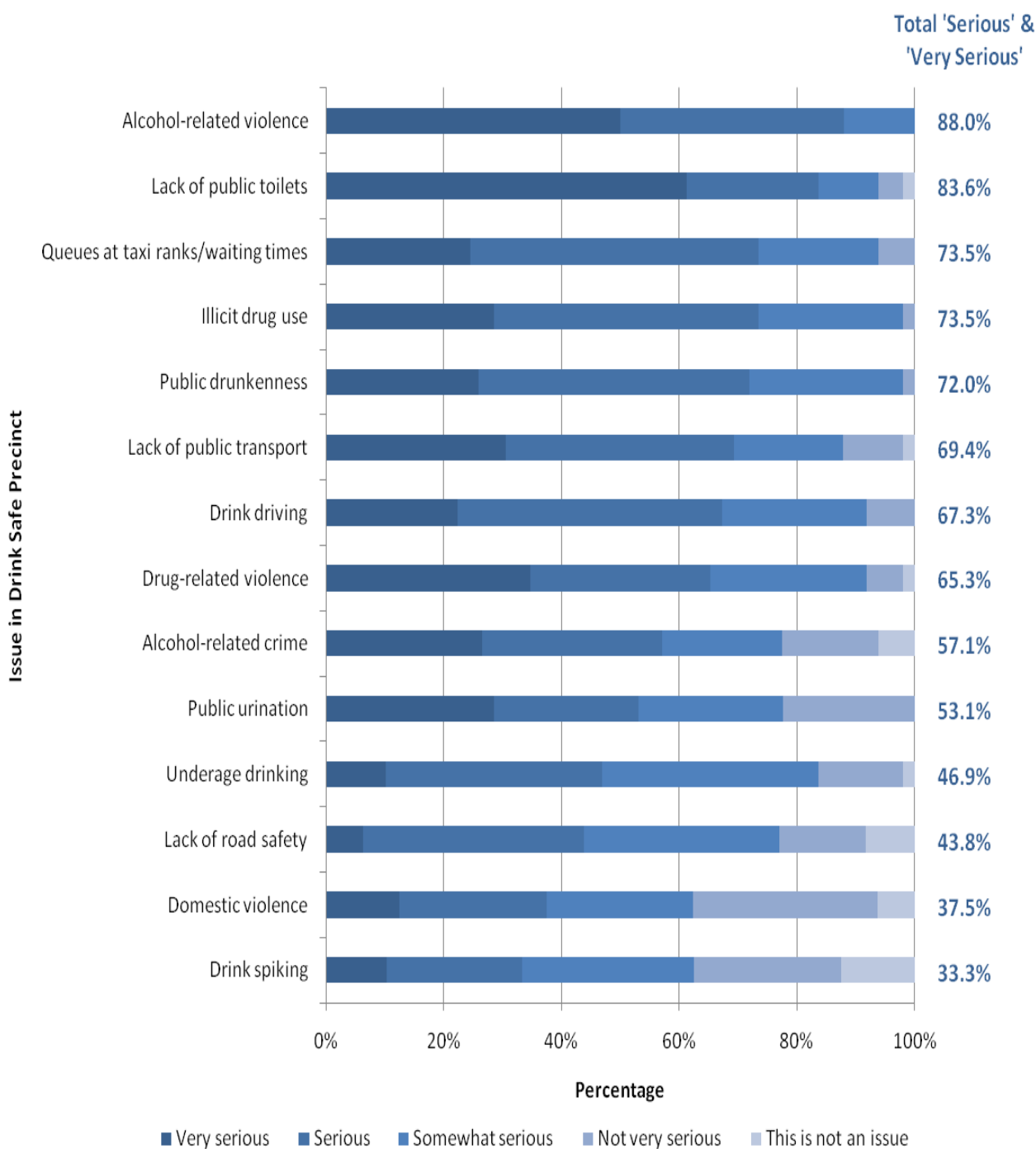
This section provides a brief overview of some of the responses from respondents who identified that they live or work in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct.

Issues in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct

Respondents were asked about issues in the Drink Safe Precinct where they work or live. As shown in Figure 9, respondents who work or live in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct considered most of the issues listed in the survey to be either ‘serious’ or ‘very serious’ in the Drink Safe Precinct:

- Alcohol-related violence was considered to be the most serious issue by people who work or live in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct (88.0%, n = 44), followed by lack of public toilets (83.6%, n = 41), queues at taxi ranks/waiting times (73.5%, n = 36) and illicit drug use (73.5%, n = 36).

Figure 9: Issues in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct



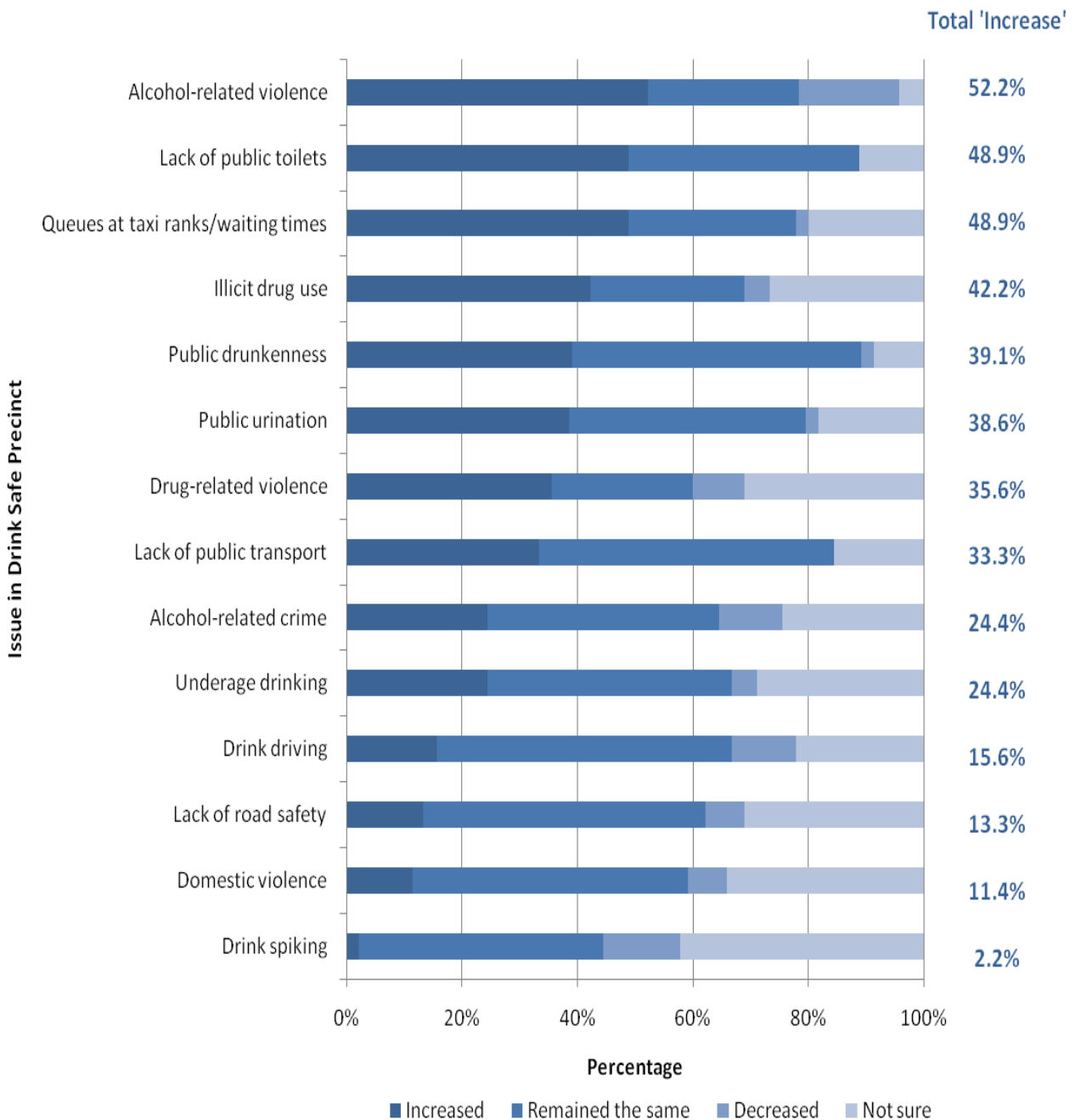
Source: Resident, Business, Service Provider and Licensee/Approved Managers Surveys 2011.

People who work or live in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct were also asked questions about whether the issues associated with the Drink Safe Precinct have changed during the past two years.

As shown in Figure 10, most respondents identified that the issues associated with the Townsville Drink Safe precinct have remained the same during the past two years:

- A number of respondents did, however, identify that some issues associated with the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct have increased, and in particular alcohol-related violence (52.2%, n = 24), lack of public toilets (48.9%, n = 22) and queues at taxi ranks/waiting times (48.9%, n = 22).
- Some respondents identified that issues associated with the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct have decreased during the past two years – approximately 17 per cent of respondents reported that alcohol-related violence has decreased in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct during the past two years (n = 8) and 13 per cent reported that drink spiking has decreased (n = 6).

Figure 10: Change in issues associated with the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct



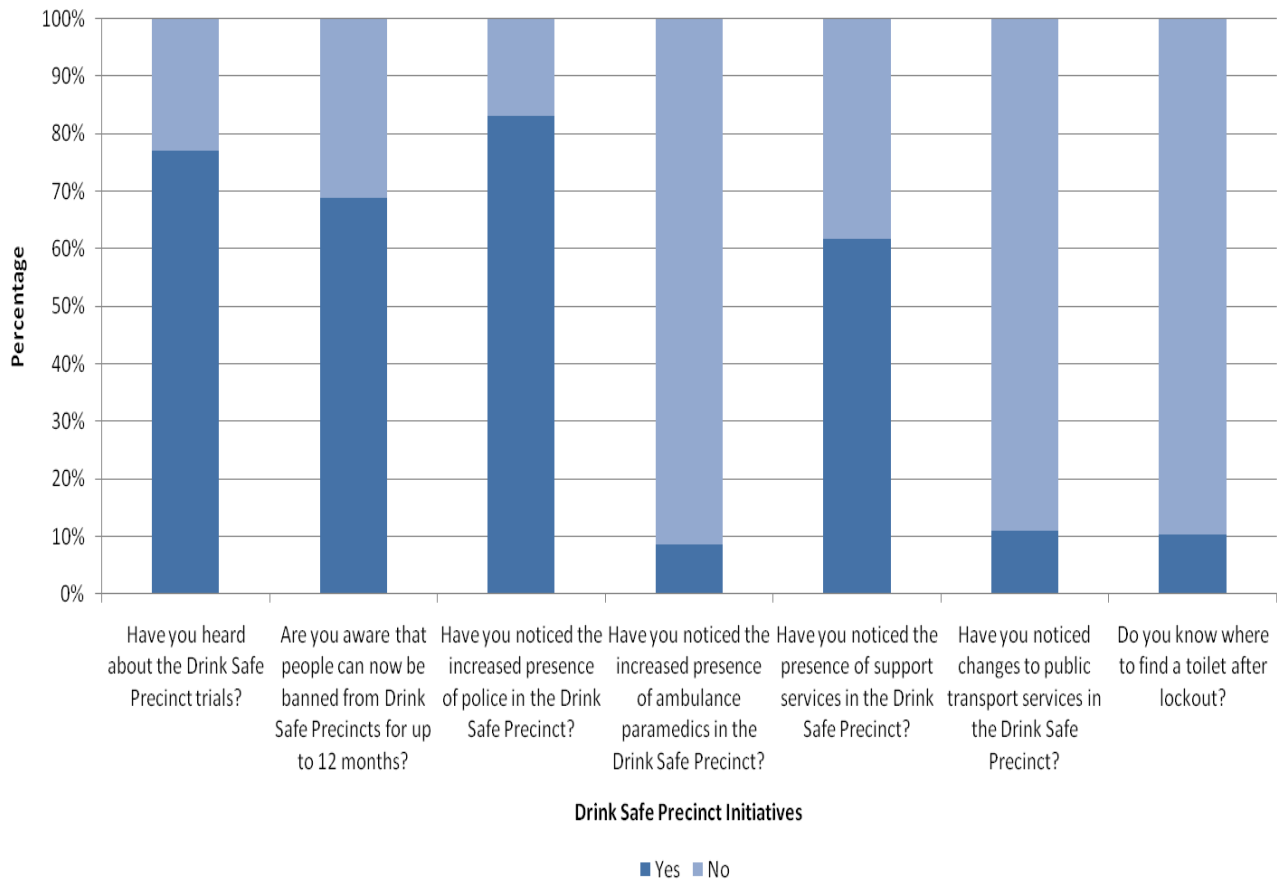
Source: Resident, Business, Service Provider and Licensee/Approved Managers Surveys 2011.

Awareness of Drink Safe Precinct initiatives and effectiveness of strategies aimed at reducing alcohol-related violence

Respondents were asked about their awareness of Drink Safe Precinct initiatives in Townsville. As shown in Figure 11:

- more than three-quarters of respondents had heard about the Drink Safe Precinct trials (77.0%, n = 37) and 83 per cent have noticed the increased presence of police in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct (n = 39).

Figure 11: Awareness of Drink Safe Precinct Initiatives



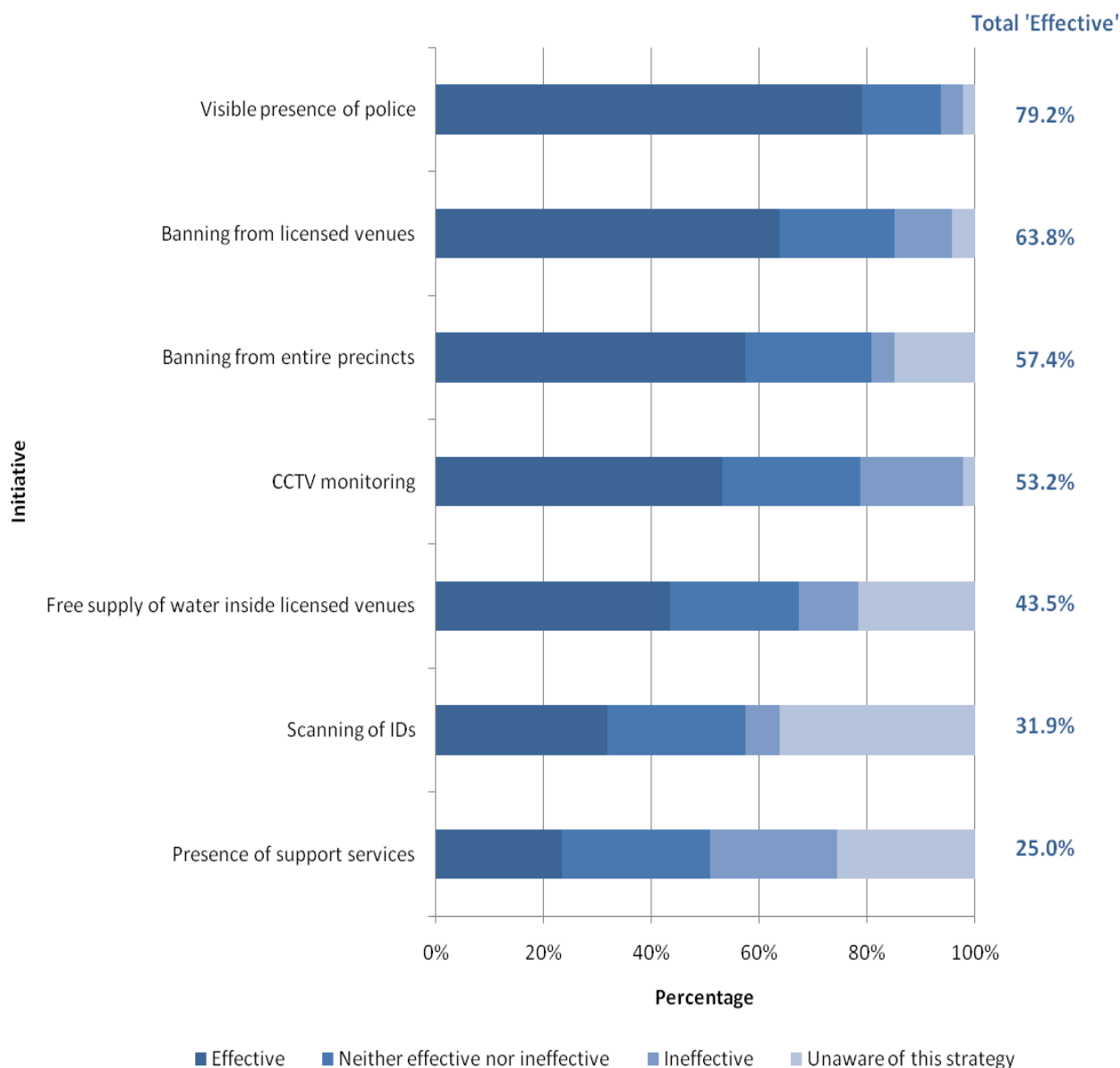
Source: Resident, Business, Service Provider and Licensee/Approved Managers Surveys 2011.

As well as awareness of these initiatives, people who work or live in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct were also asked to identify how effective they think these initiatives are at reducing alcohol-related violence and improving community safety in this area.

As shown in Figure 12, overall, most respondents agreed that the initiatives listed in the survey are effective at reducing alcohol-related violence:

- approximately 80 per cent of respondents reported that the visible presence of police is an effective strategy for reducing alcohol-related violence and improving community safety (79.2%, n = 38).
- more than 60 per cent of respondents indicated that banning people from licensed venues is an effective strategy for reducing alcohol-related violence and improving community safety (63.8%, n = 30).

Figure 12: Effectiveness of initiatives aimed at reducing alcohol-related violence



Source: Resident, Business, Service Provider and Licensee/Approved Managers Surveys 2011.

What else did people who work or live in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct tell us about alcohol-related violence and Drink Safe Precinct initiatives?

Similar to the Patron Survey, the last two questions of the Resident, Business, Service Provider and Licensee/Approved Managers Surveys allowed respondents to make comments about what they think should be done to improve safety in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct and to make any other comment about violence or safety issues in the precinct.

People who work or live in the Townsville Drink Safe Precinct made a number of suggestions to further improve safety in this area; these suggestions included improvements to public transport, education and a continuation of Drink Safe Precinct initiatives. For example:

“Flinders Street are in need of public toilets, there are none to my knowledge along the club strip. That is the number one question at night time 'do you have toilets' I don't, so when I answer this they get aggravated [sic].” {Respondent to Business Survey}

“More Police, extra CCTV cameras, all clubs having ID scanners, premises closing at 2am and permanent [sic] Police Beat.” {Respondent to Service Provider Survey}

“Education of young drinkers. A lot drink before we go out, tanked before we get into clubs. I see the pressure it places on venues as I see it. Drugs is [sic] a big concern.” {Respondent to Service Provider Survey}

“Increase of Taxi’s and busses at times of lockout and closure. Introdution [sic] of public toilets and water bubblers.” {Respondent to Service Provider Survey}.

Some respondents also made positive comments about the trial, for example:

“As a paramedic when I started in Townsville area over 12 months ago, it was a common occurrence to go to Flinders St for assaults and drink spiking on the weekend. In the past 6 month I have noticed a significant decrease in the amount of times QAS attends Flinders St on the weekend.” {Respondent to Service Provider Survey}

Where to from here?

Results from the first round of the online surveys are currently being discussed with the local Drink Safe Precinct committees in each area to help inform local level decision making and action. The issues which have been highlighted for each of the three Drink Safe Precincts as requiring further attention include:

1. The need for information campaigns in Drink Safe Precincts focusing on the issue of alcohol-related violence and public drunkenness in order to communicate, inform and change behaviour.
2. The need for there to be further work done to respond to the amenity issues identified, in particular through the provision of toilet facilities to reduce public urination.

It is anticipated that the Drink Safe Precinct surveys will be conducted on a six-monthly basis for the two-year duration of the trial to measure any change over time (e.g. changes in awareness about Drink Safe Precinct initiatives). The next round of surveys will be conducted in November 2011 through the ‘Get Involved’ website.