

SPORTS ARTS COMMUNITY & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**19 JUNE 2008****14****CAIRNS CBD CITY SAFE PROGRAM**

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RECOMMENDATION:

That Council note the successes of the Cairns City Safe program as outlined in this report and the ongoing commitment to this program in 2008-09.

INTRODUCTION:

A key outcome of the Council Corporate and Operational Plans is the provision of a well-presented, safe and secure Inner City for the community and visitors to Cairns. The City Safe program is a vital operational strategy to improve safety in the Cairns CBD and Esplanade areas.

Recently there has been a strong media focus upon negative aspects within the Cairns CBD. The general public perception is that the Cairns CBD is an unsafe environment, and this is reinforced by the media. Council has for some time been working actively to make the Cairns CBD a safe environment. Through the City Safe program and multiple partnerships formed in relationship to the City Safe program, Council has seen the number of incidents within the Cairns CBD dramatically decline.

Whilst it had been expected that the public perception of safety in Cairns CBD would increase in relation to the drop in incidents, the reverse has been true.

This report serves to outline for Council the details of the City Safe program, a range of current initiatives and partnerships within that program, along with details of outcomes from the program to date.

It is hoped that the dissemination of the positive outcomes into the public domain may in some degree assist in changing public perceptions.

BACKGROUND:

The Cairns City Safe CCTV program operates within the Cultural Services and Facilities Branch, under the supervision of the Inner City Facilities Manager.

The City Safe CCTV surveillance system has been in operation since November 1997. The system has expanded at around five cameras per year since installation and now totals 59 cameras, with a further 15 cameras to be installed over the next six months. Camera locations throughout the CBD have been determined in response to known "hot spots" for incidents and a broad coverage of high use public areas upon the Esplanade was factored into the redevelopment.

Council contracted security patrols have also been in operation over this time, with a foot patrol presence around the clock. The timing of these foot patrols is regularly reviewed in relation to known incident times and the resources allocated accordingly.

A strategic review of the City Safe CCTV operating system was conducted in 2007. This review was aimed at identifying the most appropriate options for maximising both the quality of images recorded and the flexibility of the system so as to allow for future expansion and take up of new technology. Key recommendations from this review are currently being rolled out.

COMMENT:

The various aspects of the City Safe program are summarised below and detailed in Attachment A:

- CCTV Monitoring
- City Safe Foot Patrols
- City Safe Mobile Patrols
- Partnerships
- Communications
- Data Capture and Analysis

Positive Outcomes

The City Safe program has identified positive changes in the pattern of unacceptable incidents over the last two years. Of particular note is the reduction in incidents of public drunkenness, and assaults over the last two years. These two areas have been specifically targeted for improvement by all stakeholders, and the pattern of incidents is shown in the following Table 5 and Table 6.

It must be noted that the number of CCTV cameras has increased over this two year period, and foot patrols have been intensified at peak incident times. It would be expected that an increase in the number of incidents identified would have occurred with the extra resources, however this has not been the case. The deterrent effect from cameras and foot patrols appears to have been successful

Table 1: Incidents of Public Drunkenness

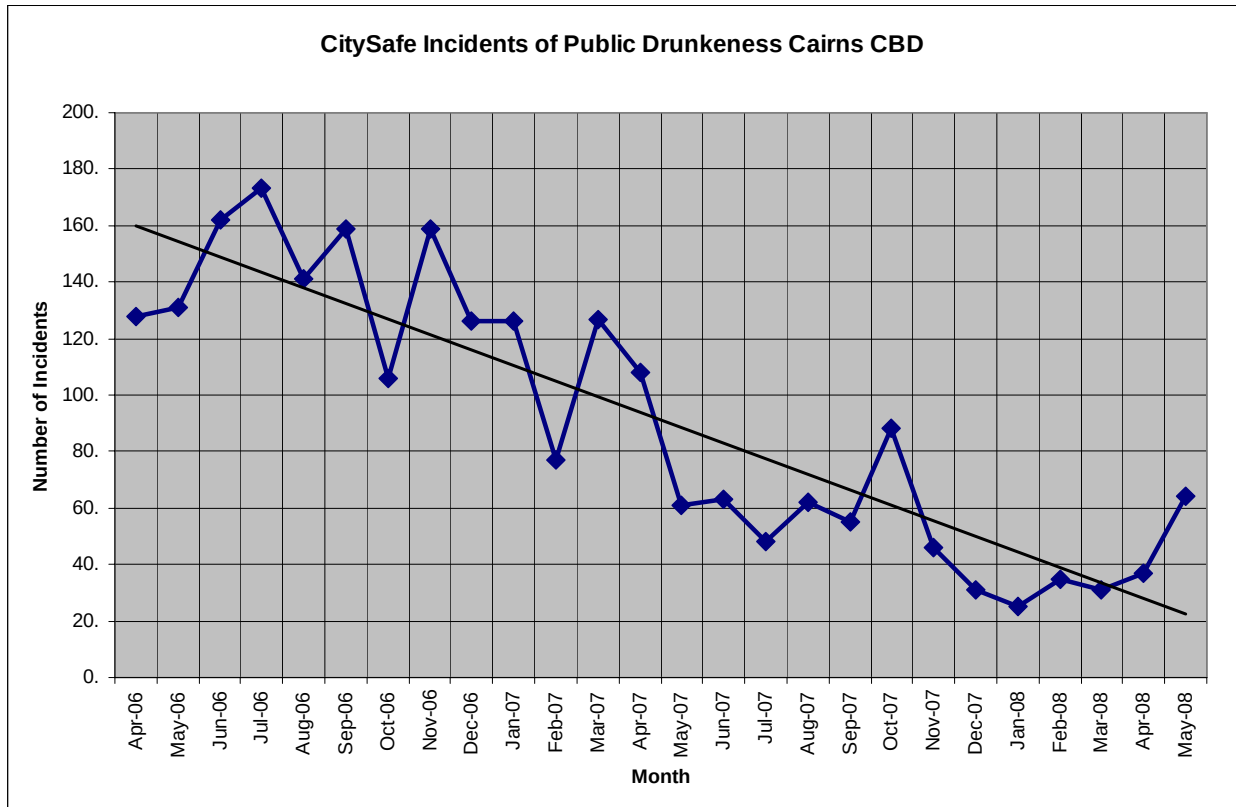
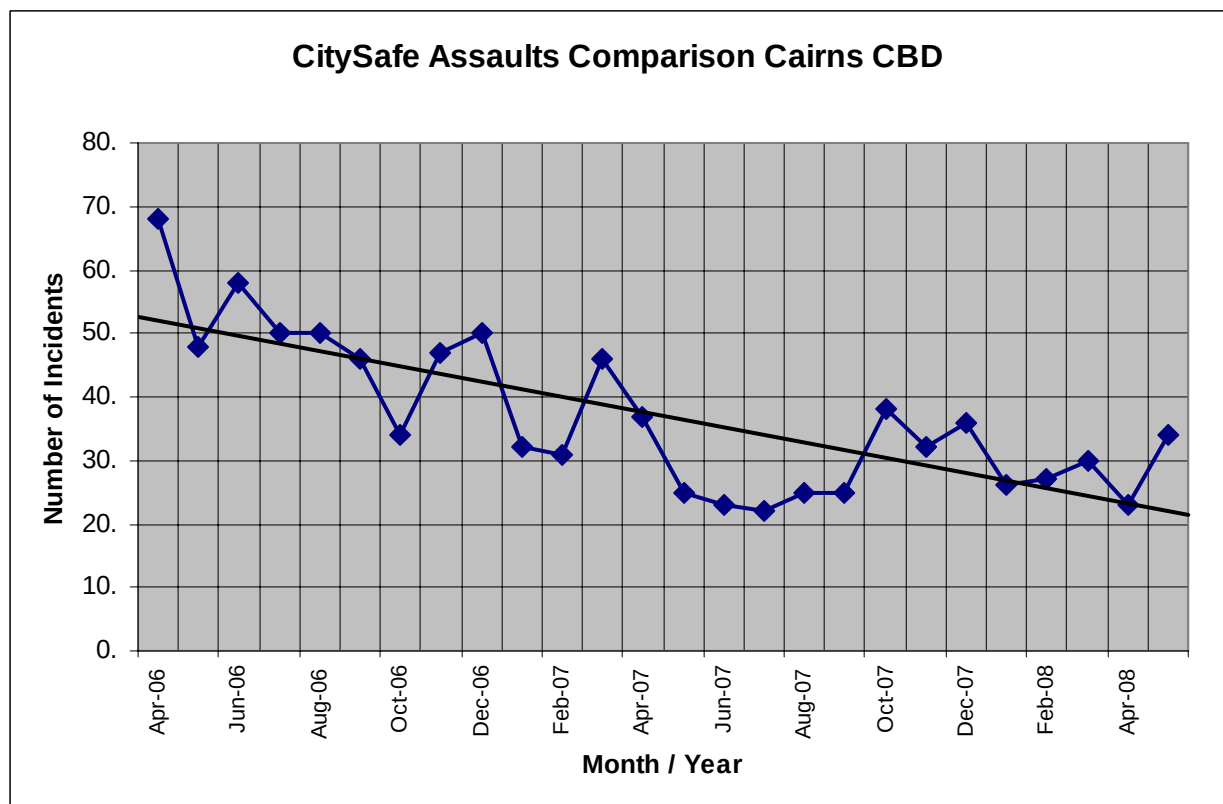


Table 2: Incidents of Assault

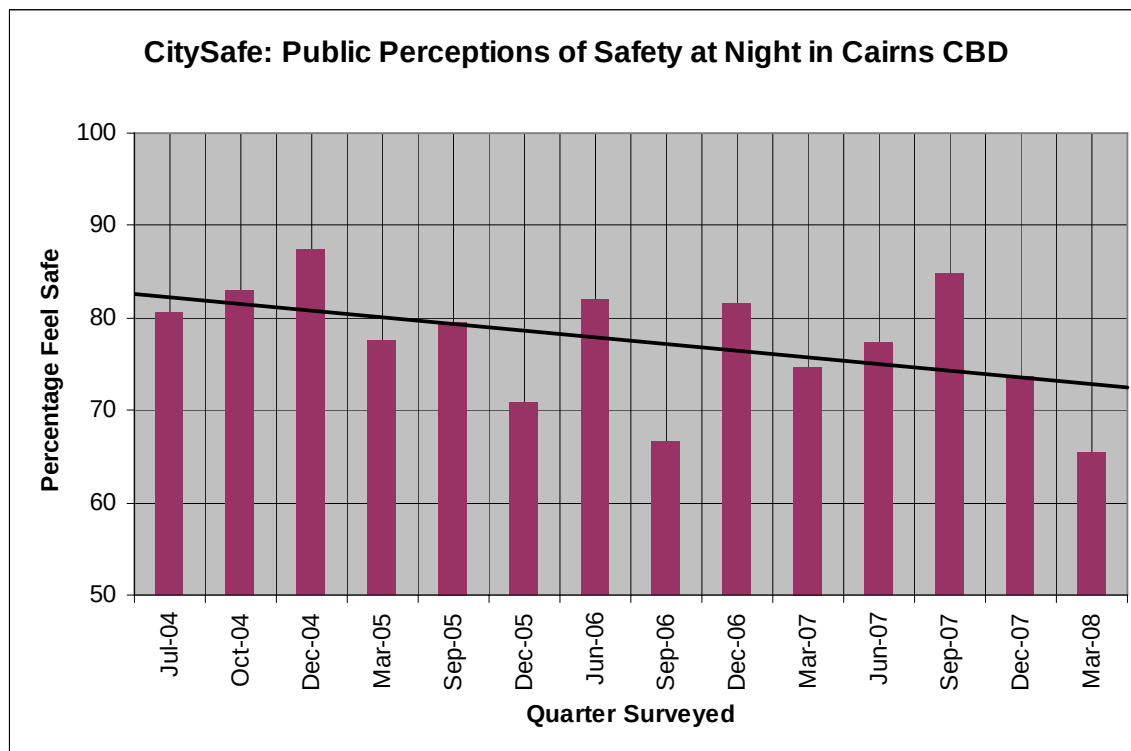


Perceptions of Safety

Whilst the actual number of incidents is a primary process measure for the Inner City Facilities unit, actual public perceptions of safety are also measured as a benchmark.

An independent public survey is undertaken on a quarterly basis to assess public perceptions of personal safety and security. The results of these regular surveys are shown in Table 7.

Table 3: Perceptions of Safety in CBD at Night



The disparity between the reduction in the number of incidents and the public perceptions is concerning. All stakeholders have identified that a major media focus on negative incidents is a primary cause of the poor perceptions of safety.

Inner City Precinct officers are currently working with Community Relations branch to identify appropriate forums and media to disseminate information on the positive outcomes from the City Safe program. It is hoped that this will assist in improving perceptions.

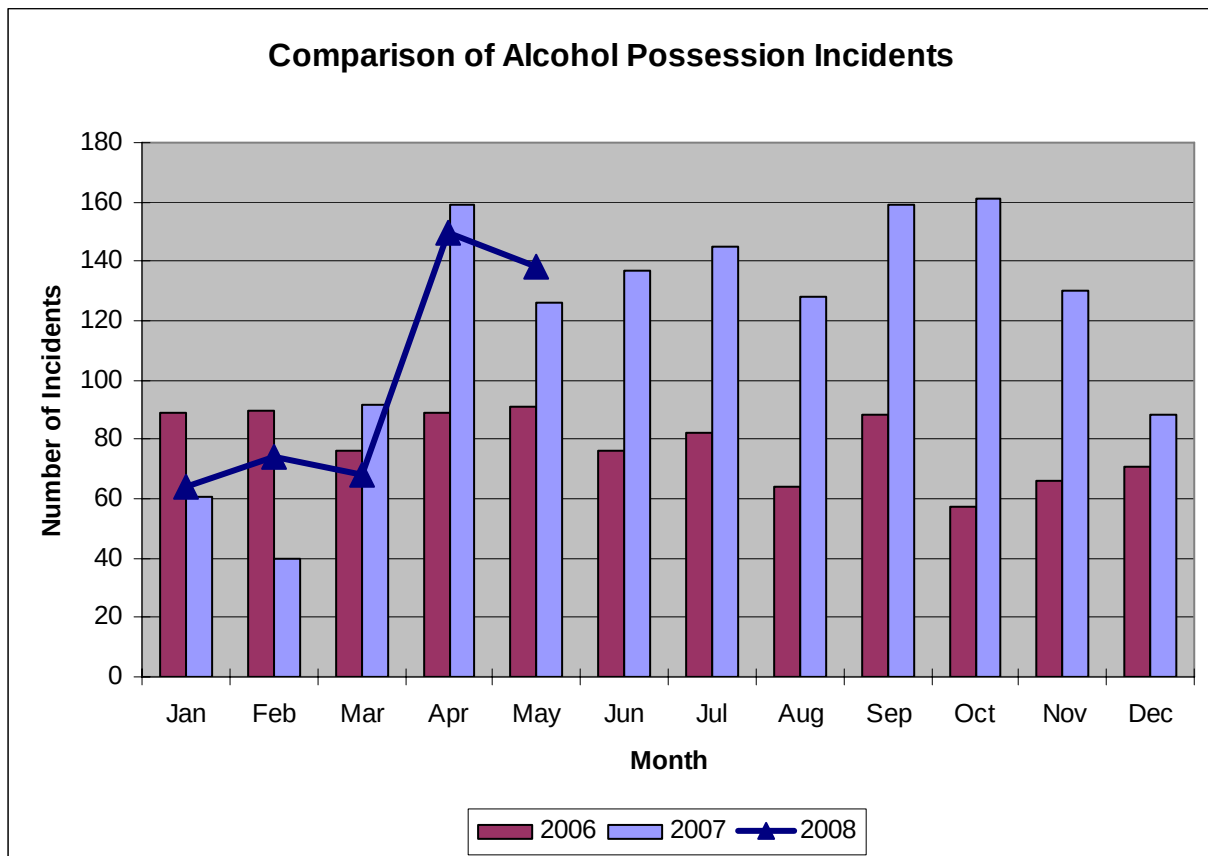
The public survey also includes an open-ended question asking respondents to indicate if they felt there were any safety or security issues that needed to be addressed. In the most recent survey, 48% of respondents believed there was a need for more police patrols in the CBD.

Current Focus Area

The one unacceptable incident area that has yet to show improvement is the public consumption of alcohol. The pattern of incidents is shown in Table 8.

Since April 2007 the number of incidents noted has increased considerably. City Safe stakeholders are now focussing on public consumption, and will be looking to roll out initiatives to specifically target this problem. A Cairns City Licensees public information initiative aimed at backpacker establishments is hoped to be rolled out in the next month to specifically address this issue.

Table 4: Public Consumption of Alcohol



Planned Upgrade of CCTV operational system

The current system has been built on a piecemeal basis over ten years. The current system was reliant upon “home-run” cabling directly linking all cameras back to the operations room. The ability to continue adding more cable runs within the CBD was limited and cost prohibitive.

The actual CCTV operations room was also developed on an ad-hoc basis, and as a result was neither fit for purpose nor up to acceptable industry standards. The main camera recording system was also outdated.

A consultant was engaged to undertake a strategic review of the City Safe system on July 2007, and all capital expenditure was put on hold until a clear direction for the overall system had been determined.

High priority recommendations from the review included:

- The current digital recorders be upgraded from DVR recording to IP network NDVR recording. Additional recording capacity be incorporated into the system to allow for recorded images to be retained for a longer time if required.
- The recommended recording standard be:
 - o 30 days minimum recording of all cameras
 - o 4CIF “high quality” recording of all images
 - o Recorded images to be at minimum of 6 frames per second
 - o Display of images on screen at “Live View” of 25 frames per second
- The basic system be upgraded from “home run” to IP.
- CCTV control room be upgraded to create a fit for purpose functional room to cater for multiple operators each with the ability to independently control the system. Design to include fit for purpose lighting, airconditioning, operator workstations and associated furniture, “Video Wall” and video wall display monitors installed , back up UPS power for computers, servers, communications and associated devices and appropriate access control
- Separate IT room be created where relevant infrastructure can be maintained in a fit for purpose environment (air conditioned, dust free, with filtered and backed up power)

The review included detailed analysis of a wide range of available operating systems so as to allow for specific direction on required equipment. Tenders for supply of the new equipment are currently under consideration, and engagement of integrators to roll out the upgrades will be instigated within the next month.

Once the operating system has been upgraded, 15 new cameras will be quickly rolled out. Funding for these cameras was allocated over the last three financial years, however purchase and installation of these cameras has been on hold until the new operational system was rolled out.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Corporate and Operational Plans:

Corporate Plan outcome 6.2 aims to improve safety in Cairns, and specifically identifies expansion of the CCTV network as a key tool.

Financial and Risk:

Cairns Regional Council funds the City Safe program with \$1,500,000 through the Inner City Precinct operational budget.

Around \$150,000 of Capital funds have been committed each financial year to expansion of CCTV system, with this amount including 50% from Security Improvement Program grant funding.

Council also receives \$77,800 annual income from CCTV operations relating to Cairns Port Authority camera monitoring services.

Sustainability:

The upgrade of the CCTV operating systems will allow the system to be expandable to accommodate new and emerging technology with a large capacity for growth well into the future. The system should have been developed to ensure the systems, softwares and components installed today have ability to cater for future needs, system and feature developments and incorporation of other intelligence as the requirements of Council emerge over the years.

Planned system upgrades are of non-propriety nature to accommodate the need for Council to obtain supply, service and support through multiple providers. Service level agreements with both internal and external providers are to be developed to allow for regular scheduled programmed maintenance to ensuring the maximum life of the asset.

CONSULTATION:

Council's Community Safety Officer and Team Leader, Community and Cultural Development were consulted in the development of this report.

OPTIONS:

That Council note this outline report on Cairns City Safe program.

CONCLUSION:

The City Safe program has demonstrated an ability to successfully reduce the amount of unacceptable incidents occurring in public areas with the Cairns Inner City Precinct. The combination of CCTV operations, foot and vehicle patrols, and communications systems enables a comprehensive combined approach between Council, Qld Police and other key stakeholders.

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A – City Safe Program

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ATTACHMENT A: City Safe Program

CCTV Monitoring

City Safe CCTV monitoring is conducted on a continuous basis, 24 hours per day, seven days per week. During off-peak times a single operator monitors the cameras. At peak times (Thursday/Friday/Saturday/Sunday nights and in relation to major events) two operators work monitoring cameras.

Council also provides a CCTV monitoring service to the Cairns Port Authority. CCTV operators also monitor both the Lake Street car park CCTV system, and a linked intercom system.

CCTV operators are charged with proactively monitoring the cameras to:

1. Anticipate, identify and prevent illegal and/or inappropriate behaviour which has the potential to alarm or threaten people, or to result in damage of property and the good order of the Cairns CBD.
2. Assist in identification and co-ordination of response to incidents that negatively impact upon the public safety of the community and visitors to Cairns
3. Obtain reliable information that may be used as evidence

The following is a list of incidents that are considered unacceptable in the Cairns CBD and which are monitored, recorded as incidents and responded to as appropriate:

- Begging
- Bikes/wheeled devices in prohibited areas
- Breaches of Local Laws
- Children left unattended
- Creating Public Disturbance
- Camping
- Hooning activities in Vehicles
- Illegal drug Possession/consumption
- Public Intoxication
- Public consumption of Alcohol/Metholated Spirits
- Possession of Glass in Prohibited Areas
- Physical Assault
- Public Urination
- Sex acts/sexual behaviour
- Theft
- Trespass in Lagoon after hours
- Touting/Flyer distribution
- Unauthorised Busking
- Unauthorised Fire
- Verbally Threatening persons

CCTV operators are trained to recognise behavioural patterns that indicate potential to initiate unacceptable behaviours. When either an unacceptable incident or precursor behaviours are identified, CCTV operators will advise either foot patrols or QPS patrols so that officers may attend and either defuse or prevent incidents.

A “mobile camera” was previously purchased as a component of the City Safe network. This unit is now operated separately by Technical Support Services Branch. This unit records images locally, and has the capacity to transmit images to the control room.

Consideration within the current upgrade has been made for purchase of new wireless mobile camera units; however there is no identified funding for this within the existing Capital budgets.

City Safe Foot Patrols

Council has a dedicated Inner City Patrol Officer who looks after security issues in the CBD area during normal business hours. On top of this, Council utilised contracted security officers to provide foot and vehicle patrols for a variety of areas.

Security guards patrol the Esplanade around the clock seven days per week. One guard provides this during daytime hours, and three at night time. These guards have a specific focus on preventing access to Esplanade Lagoon after hours, and preventing vandalism to facilities and local law offences.

Security in the CBD area is adjusted depending upon peak incident times. Up to six foot patrol guards operate in the CBD on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights between 11pm and 7am, which is the most critical time for incident management.

City Safe Mobile Patrols

To allow for an expanded coverage of at risk areas around the CBD fringe, Council in September 2006 initiated an expansion of the foot patrol operation. Contracted security was tasked with utilising a Council vehicle to patrol CBD fringe streets and parklands four times per night. This expansion was achieved utilising available resources, and so was no extra cost to Council.

This patrol focuses on identifying at risk persons and persons congregating in parks after hours. Priority is still given to CBD areas if there are major incidents occurring, however the mobile patrol has proven to be an effective deterrent in many known trouble hotspots on the CBD fringe.

Partnerships

Council officers work very closely with Qld Police Citybeat office to achieve the required outcomes. On occasions Police officers assist with CCTV operations on peak nights such as New Years Eve, and in association with major events impacting the CBD area. In these instances Police officers provide a key communications link in relation to observed incidents indirectly to on-duty Police officers so as to enhance response times.

In order to achieve the required outcomes Council has also become involved in a number of key forums focused on addressing alcohol related crime in the CBD area. These forums include:

- Cairns CBD Safety Summit
- Cairns City Licensees Safety Association

Through networks associated with the above forums, issues are identified and addressed by a wide range of stakeholders. Members of the above groups include:

- Qld Police Service
- Liquor Licensing Division
- Qld Transport
- Cairns Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism Tropical North Queensland
- Cairns Port Authority
- Sunbus
- Queensland Security Providers
- Black and White Taxis

Key outcomes from these forums include:

- Implementation of the “Safe Rank” system of CCTV surveillance, security guards and rank marshals at the Lake Street Taxi Rank.
- Development and operation of a Memorandum of Understanding between Council and Licensed venues aimed at developing a cooperative approach to dealing with incidents within the CBD area.

Council has also worked closely with management of late trading licenced venues within the CBD so as to reduce the number of incidents arising from individual venues, and to address known issues in the vicinity of those venues.

- Implementation of CCLSA financed roving security patrols in areas where patrons are regularly moving between licenced venues.
- Implementation of Gilligans venue funding two licenced security officers patrolling the main pedestrian areas over a city block adjacent to that venue for 1 hour after closing
- Current discussions over Woolshed and PF Obrien’s venues funding security officers patrolling City Place area from 11pm until 6am.

Through the CCLSA, Council advises of incidents where those persons involved are known to have last been drinking at individual venues, and these figures are used as a benchmark by those venues to review practices against responsible service of alcohol.

Communications

Communications are the most vital component of the City Safe system. Proactive response to incidents is considered far more beneficial than retroactive investigation and prosecution, and therefore the ability to provide information to both Police and other stakeholders within the CGBD is of top priority.

Images from the CCTV system can be viewed on monitors in both the Qld Police operations room, and within the Citybeat operations room. When incidents are observed by CCTV operators, the live images are patched through to Police operations so that police may make assessment as to appropriate response.

In 2004 a radio was purchased by Council for installation in the QPS inner city patrol vehicle to allow direct communications between CCTV operations and Police on the beat. A hand held radio unit was also subsequently supplied to Police on foot patrol.

To prevent delays in phone communications between CCTV operations and Police operations, Council has installed a telephone "hot-line" that gives a direct line of communication between CCTV operations and Qld Police operations when required.

Council also has direct radio communications with licensed venue security at all late trading CBD venues except Shenanigans and Freakquency.

Data Capture and Analysis

In April 2006 Council developed a database system for recording all incident data captured via the City Safe program. Prior to 2006 this data was recoded manually, and interpretation was time consuming and difficult.

The current database system records all incidents observed by CCTV operators, mobile and foot patrols. Data is recorded in a manner that allows for detailed analysis and identification of not only hot spots for incidents but also the days and times that these incidents are occurring. Proactive responses can be programmed in relation to these patterns.

Examples of this are shown below in the following Table 1 and Table 2. In these two examples the time period patterns of firstly assaults and secondly public drunkenness are shown.

Table 5 : Comparison of Assault Times

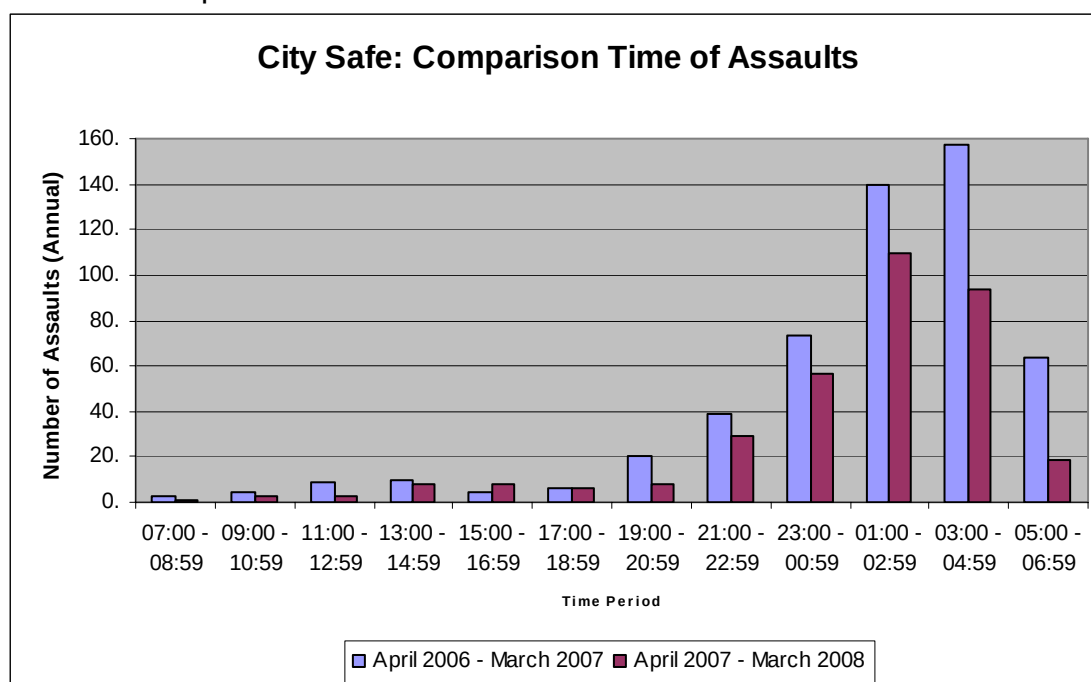
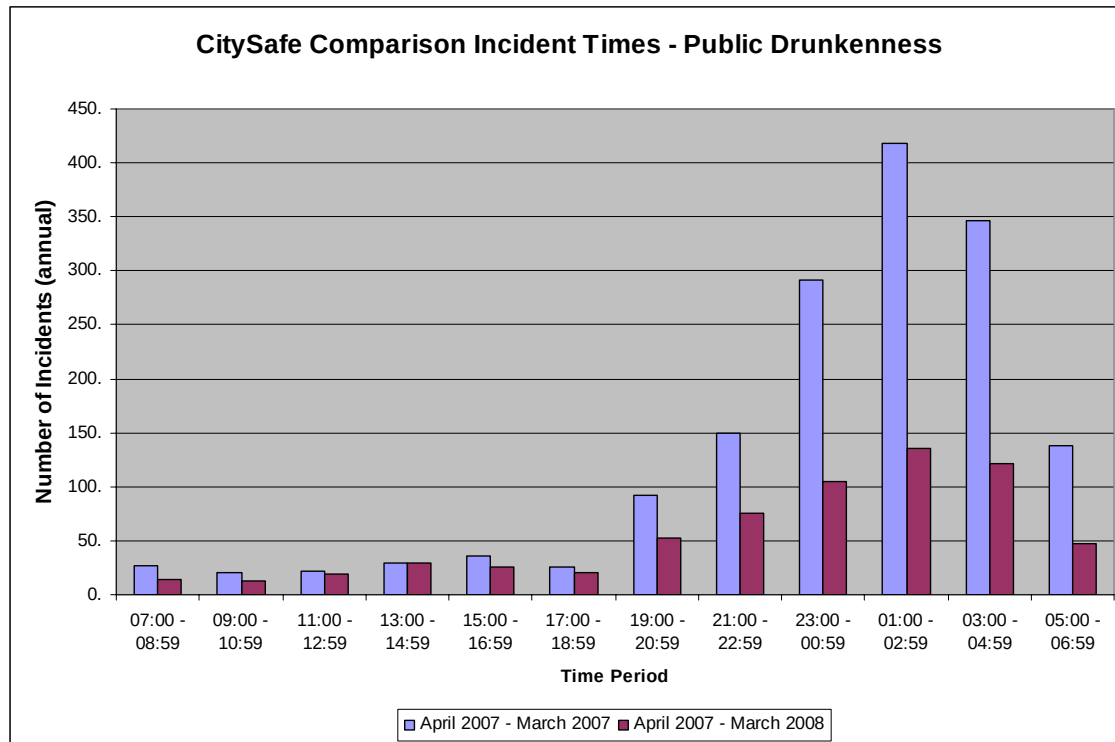


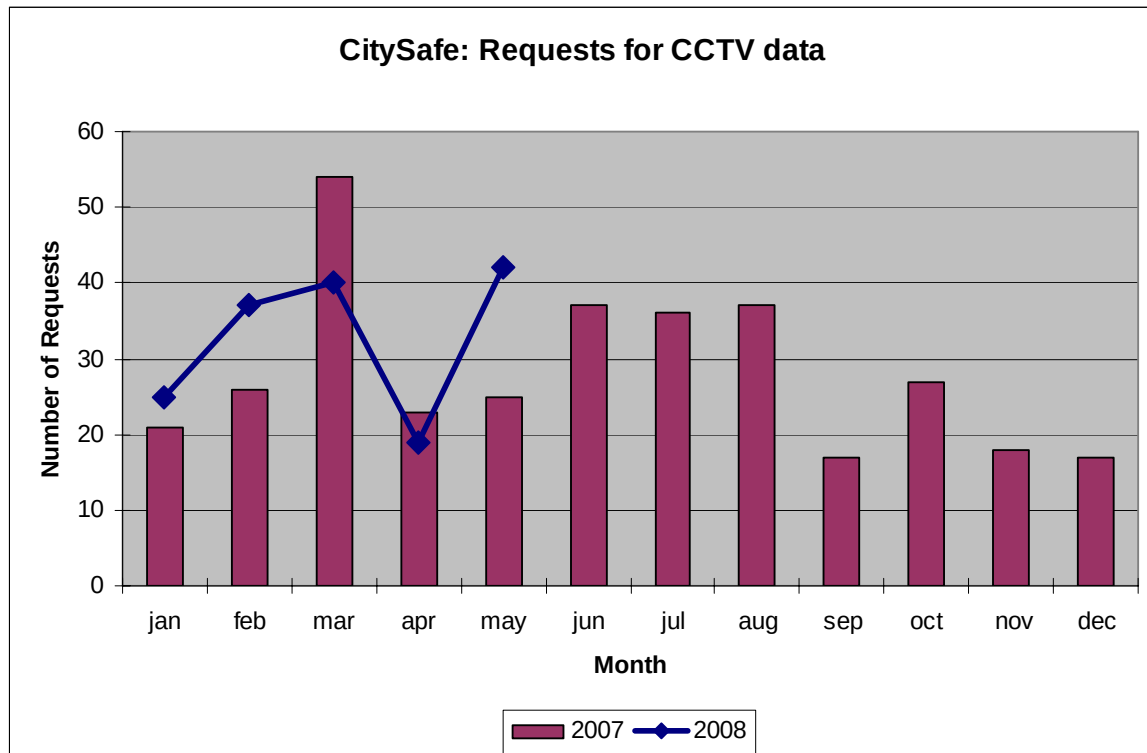
Table 6: Comparison of Public Drunkenness Times



Council City Safe foot patrols have been adjusted in relation to the main incident time to insure that the maximum deterrent affect can be given. The incident data is made available to Liquor Licensing and Qld Police and both of these agencies have also used the data in formulating operations to address specific identified issues.

CCTV data is also regularly utilised for investigation into prosecutions by Qld Police and Liquor Licensing. The number of requests for CCTV data is shown in Table 3, below.

Table 7: Requests for CCTV Data



Council security also endeavours to identify wherever possible the venue where alcohol affected persons were last drinking prior to involvement in an unacceptable incident. This data is recorded and made available to licenced venues so that they may review their practices as required. An example of this data as relating to one CBD nightclub is shown below in Table 4.

Council also provides to licenced venues information on the number of incidents occurring in the immediate vicinity of their venue, as well as the times that these incidents occur. This information has led to both the Cairns City Licensees Association and some individual venues enhancing the numbers and responsibilities of their licenced security in order to ensure a safer environment around the venue.

Table 8: Example of Last Drinks Venue Data (Venue not identified by name)

