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NEWS REPORT

Headline	Brisbane strip clubs caught breaking adult entertainment laws
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Page	1
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Strip clubs are being caught breaking adult entertainment laws against a backdrop of sexual assaults on dancers and prostitution claims.

The Courier-Mail can reveal venues are being regularly busted for failing to supervise lap dances, failing to produce the permits allowing the nude entertainment and serving minors on premises. But tougher measures are being called for after clubs mostly escaped with little more than a warning letter or minimum fines for more serious offences. The cases are revealed in Liquor Licensing reports obtained under Freedom of Information laws and expose the seedy side of Queensland the Bligh Government rarely talks about.

The incidents at clubs from Cairns to the Gold Coast come two decades after the Fitzgerald Inquiry exposed the thriving illegal practices of brothels and strip clubs centered around Fortitude Valley. Brisbane CBD club Showgirls faces losing its permit after a raft of incidents, including dancers getting too close to patrons and the alleged rape of a dancer in a VIP room during a performance.

An investigation at The Club of Mount Isa Hotel last April resulted in about \$6000 in fines from 16 breaches after dancers were caught brazenly offering sex, using drugs and dodging supervision. "This is the best time as no controllers are out the back to look so anything goes, even maybe full sex," a Polish dancer called Maria told an inspector. But industry group EROS Australia admits the cases are likely to be only the tip of the iceberg as Liquor Licensing inspected the 26 venues holding permits only once every seven weeks last year, down from five weeks previously.

Treasurer Andrew Fraser yesterday defended his department's enforcement, saying many "cowboy outfits" had been removed in recent years. Mr Fraser said more serious cases were referred to police. "(But we) can only act on incidents that have been reported or uncovered during inspections conducted by either officers or the police," he said. "An inspection rate of one visit every seven weeks represents significant enforcement action."

However, Opposition treasury spokesman Tim Nicholls said the fact the Government had filled only two of 10 extra inspectors promised six months ago was alarming. "It's sort of shadow industry operating in the shadows and as a result it seems this is the tip of the iceberg," Mr Nicholls said. "The enforcement seems pretty lightweight."

Clubs are supposed to provide controllers to monitor entertainment but FOI documents show supervisors were often caught out of position or distracted text messaging. Only a warning letter was given to Players at Surfers Paradise last July after a supervisor was distracted eating a packet of Twisties.

The Velvet Cigar, Paddington, April 1, 2007

Police found no controller was supervising four lap dances on upper level at just after 2am. "Dances were taking place and the dancers were totally naked at this time," a police report said. Controller claimed she left the area to speak to Mr Zanthopolous, despite a phone being there for that purpose. Mr Zanthopolous became defensive and poked policeman in the shoulder. "There seem to be several problems creeping into this premise of late," a police report said.

July 15, 2007

Warning letter issued for insufficient crowd controller supervising dances with manager acting in both roles. No signage advising patrons of CCTV cameras or of the house policy being available.

Showgirls, Brisbane CBD, March 15, 2007

Dancer alleged she was raped by a patron and associate of licensee during a lap dance in a VIP room, which was being renovated and could only be entered with fingerprint identification. Complaint later withdrawn.

October 13, 2007

Fined \$750 after adult entertainment was not supervised properly. Venue was also unable to produce its license.

December 1, 2007

Complaint made about an underage patron on the premises and/or consuming alcohol. Liquor Licensing could not substantiate the allegation.

January 18, 2008

Warning letter issued after advertising on promo cards and website was deemed illegal for describing explicit nature of entertainment. Licensee refused to be interviewed.

September 5, 2008

Three fines issues totalling \$2025 a dancer appeared to place her genitals in close proximity to patron's face and the controller was not supervising properly. Permit training register not available for inspection and poor record keeping found.

Cabaret Nightclub, Fortitude Valley, December 24, 2005

A patron placed his hand between a dancer's legs, she told him off and he hit her three times in the head. Police said security did not report the incident as 20 to 25 Rebel Motorcycle Gang members were at the club at the time and one was believed to be the offender.

March 16, 2007

Juvenile found on premises while adult entertainment was ongoing. He told police he was not required to produce identification at the door or when he bought drinks at the bar.

April 15, 2008

Licensee convicted and charged with permitting a minor to consume alcohol and view adult entertainment. Fines totalling \$6000 issued.

Scores Nightclub, Fortitude Valley, December 8, 2007

Police issued warning after crowd controller broke the law for unspecified matter.

December 12, 2007

Police issued warning after crowd controller broke the law for unspecified matter.

Players Universal Lounge, Brisbane CBD, February 17, 2007

Warning letter after lap dancing supervisor found to be unapproved.

July 14, 2007

Warning letter issued over supervisor breach.

September 6, 2008

Adult entertainment found to have insufficient lighting in the so-called "Fantasy Corner", poor record keeping for controllers, CCTV not covering previous 28-day period.

B Confidential, Spring Hill, September 9, 2006

Warning letter after two minors were found on premises/purchasing alcohol.

April 20, 2007

Warning letter issued after spot check identified crowd controller register not filled out properly and tables and chairs obstructing the fire escape.

Showbar 140, Mackay, November/December, 2007

Fined \$10,000 for a litany of breaches for using unapproved dancing supervisors, failing to the supervisor, poor record keeping and a damaged CCTV system.

June 25, 2008

Media advertisements, sandwich boards outside and pictures on website promoting "Jazz's Jugs Party" deemed to be too explicit, particularly given a Catholic Church and school are located within 150m of premises. No fine after negotiations fixed signage.

Rocklea Hotel, Brisbane, February 12, 2007

Fined \$525 after strippers dancing in the club were visible from the carpark outside because the club failed to enclose the adult entertainment area. Warning letter also issued after no crowd controllers stopping minors from entering adult entertainment area, poor record keeping was found and a lack of adult entertainment signage at one entry. "It was noted that patrons were freely walking in and out of the gate from the approved area top the car park. While no minors were detected ... you should consider placing a staff member in that area to avoid the chance of a minor gaining entry."

Xtreme Adult Club, Rockhampton, March 28, 2007

Fined a total of \$2550 for permitting children to enter the premises.

Hollywood Showgirls, Surfers Paradise. July 7, 2006

Warning letter issued after supervisor caught failing to supervise around 13 lap dances being undertaken, poor record keeping found and problems with signage.

October 20, 2006

Warning issued after three lap dances took place in the VIP Lounge while the controller failed to supervise and instead spun tunes as the DJ.

Love and Rockets (formerly Bad Girls), Fortitude Valley, February 24, 2007

Warning letter issued after controller in lap dance area not watching dances taking place and instead taking money.

February 16, 2008

Warning letter issued after controller failed to supervise lap dances as they were too busy taking money and talking to new clients. CCTV images were also deemed to be of poor quality.

Love and Rockets (formerly Bad Girls), Paddington, February 3, 2007

Warning letter issued after two controllers were found to be unregistered.

July 15, 2007

Warning letter issued after one person was found doing three roles, including manager, crowd controller and controller of adult entertainment.

October 13, 2007

Warning letter issued after one person was found doing three roles, including manager, crowd controller and controller of adult entertainment. The supervisor was also "entertaining" three men instead of watching dances.

Crazy Horse, Surfers Paradise, February 26, 2006

Licensee warned after controllers not adequately supervising adult entertainment and instead doing other work. He was also warned for being unable to produce parts of licence.

March 25, 2006

Fined \$150 after still unable to produce license details and venue found to be messy.

May 13, 2006

Fined \$525 after strippers' performance was visible from the footpath outside.

September 30, 2006

Warning letter issued after inspectors found poor record keeping and licensee was unable to produce responsible service of alcohol register.

November 17, 2006

Fined \$300 after girls touting for business with advertising cards during Schoolies handed one to an off-duty Liquor Licensing inspector. Girl admitted cards were handed out nightly.

November 23, 2006

Warning letter issued after advertising inside door visible from the street.

April 14, 2007

Warning letter issued after inspectors entered lap dancing room around 10.50pm only to find the controller "seated in a chair pushing buttons on his mobile phone, doing what seemed to be text messaging and not supervising the adult entertainment. When asked by police and Liquor Licensing Division officer how many dances were taking places, he stated three. However, police and Liquor Licensing Division officer noted four patrons in the room with four dancers." Seventeen minutes later, the controller was again caught text messaging and not monitoring adult entertainment. The view from the controller's chair only showed half of the dancers.

Players, Surfers Paradise, March 18, 2007

Warning issued after CCTV failed to comply with regulations.

April 25, 2007

Advice given after patron seriously assaulted by security guards and ended up in hospital.

November 11, 2007

Warning letter issued after a lack of controllers for adult entertainment, CCTV not working correctly and inappropriate advertising.

July 12, 2008

Warning letter issued after licensee failed to provide licence, ensure adult entertainment was being supervised properly and use approved controllers. The controller had been eating Twisties and drinking from a bottle.

The Club of Mt Isa Hotel, April 10, 2008

Fined more than \$6000 after a series of breaches including lack of supervision for dances, dancers offering sex, drugs being found, poor record keeping.

Bullwinkles Nightclub, Townsville, February 19, 2008

Complaint received that minors were on the premises and possible consuming alcohol. Liquor Licensing could not substantiate the complaint.

February 21, 2008

Warning issued after controllers found not to be supervising adult entertainment.

March 30, 2008

Warning issued after police found no controller supervising adult entertainment of two exotic dancers performing on the main stage. Also no controller supervising lap dancing area.

April 16, 2008

Police seized 23 brown ecstasy tablets.

Toy Box Showgirls, Cairns, May 12, 2006

Warning issued after inspectors observed patron with hands/fingers too close to dancer and controller was not supervising dances. Manager also failed to produce license document.

November 11, 2007

Warning letter issued after touting for customers outside venue. Nominee later provided false and misleading statements to inspectors.

August 28, 2008

Warning letter after employee was caught spruiking outside club on Orchid Ave and also advertising containing sexually explicit material.

Dodds House, Spring Hill, Brisbane, August 11, 2006

Warning issues after club was caught with no crowd controller supervising a lap dancer with a client.

Teezer's Nightclub (Covergirls Nightclub), Cairns, November 25, 2006

Fined \$1500 after child was found in adult entertainment area.

December 16, 2007

Patron allegedly groped female dancer while she was telling him the prices. "The defendant began to grope the informant in an inappropriate and offensive manner and refused to pay the fee," a police report said. He then picked a fight with security.

Non-adult entertainment venues caught offering entertainment, March 15, 2008

Elektrik Blue Girls, Maroochydore

Fined \$1500 after being caught providing adult entertainment with a permit.

August 15, 2008

Watergate Lounge Bar & Restaurant, Gold Coast

Fined \$300 after publishing an advertisement describing sexually explicit adult entertainment.

Source: Queensland Treasury Freedom of Information request, including only breaches of a Adult Entertainment Permits and not normal Liquor Licensing breaches between 2006 and 2008. More recent cases not included as investigations were ongoing.

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