



VOLUNTEERING: Mabellina Wong, Angela Harding and Esther Knight are Cairns Street Chaplains, keeping the peace. Picture: MARC MCCORMACK

# Baptism of fire for guardian angels

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IT'S 2013 and Esther Knight's first shift with the Cairns Street Chaplains.

A brawl breaks out near Reef Hotel Casino with "blood and guts, and everything everywhere".

"Ambulance, police - everybody was involved in it. There were people being carted off to hospital," recalled the Edge Hill woman.

Ms Knight said behaviour in the CBD had improved dramatically since her "baptism of fire" three years ago.

"We were always busting up fights and attending to people

who had been in fights," she said. "Now if we do a first aid, it's usually self inflicted - somebody who has had too much to drink or taken a drug they shouldn't have.

"People are much better behaved, it's much quieter."

Ms Knight joined the street chaplains at the urging of her pastor, while Angela Harding found her calling while surveying the city on her morning jog through Whitfield.

"I would pray for the city and I would pray particularly for our tourists," she said.

"When I found this opportunity to get involved with the street chaplains I thought 'that's a way I can practically

give to the city and support the city'. That was my motivation for getting involved and my desire is just to see our city being a safe city."

Working with emergency services, security guards and taxi marshalls, Ms Knight believes street chaplains have achieved just that.

"We can really see the difference on the streets since we've been out there," she said.

Mabellina Wong has been sacrificing her weekends for the past three years but wouldn't have it any other way.

"We have grown to love the city and the people, we have become so attached that we can't give it up," she said.

"We feel we have to be there for these people because the police are there to do their job, the security are bound to protect the pubs and in between, there's no one."

The Christian volunteer-run organisation this week celebrated its third anniversary and the launch of a "rest and recovery" vehicle.

Donated by the Queensland Ambulance Service, the converted ambulance is stationed on the corner of Grafton and Shields streets every Friday and Saturday night.

**Cairns Street Chaplains needs more volunteers, visit facebook.com/CairnsStreetChaplains or email cairnsstreetchaplains@gmail.com**

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**Time:** 10:30am for 10:45 start. Sessions ends at 4:00pm

**Venue:** Cairns Institute Room Building D3, James Cook University, McGregor Rd, Smithfield

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**REGISTRATION:** www.acbc.com.au/upcoming-events

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## Public hearing...

### Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

The **Transportation and Utilities Committee** is holding a public hearing in **Cairns** on the above Bill which includes a proposal to make a regulation providing for the payment of financial assistance to the taxi and limousine industry to implement a \$100M Industry Adjustment Assistance Package.

**Date:** Wednesday 19 October

**Venue:** Michaelmas Cay Ballroom, Pullman Reef Hotel, Wharf Street

**Time:** 10:45am - 12:15pm

Please register your interest to appear at the hearing by visiting the Bill inquiry page at: [www.parliament.qld.gov.au/tuc](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/tuc)

The hearing is open to members of the public to attend as observers. Phone: 3553 6633



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