

November 20, 2019

## **Statement from Manny Atwal, President & CEO Regarding Serious Incident at Tyndall Market Liquor Mart**

Good Evening.

Earlier today, in what can only be described as an unprovoked attack at our Tyndall Market Liquor Mart, three of our employees were physically assaulted and injured with one being transported to the hospital. We have closed the store until further notice.

Our employees should not feel unsafe at work. They should not be subject to threats of harm or attempts of harm by anyone. They should not have to come to work every day wondering how many times someone will threaten or try to harm them, or one of our customers. Our customers should not feel unsafe when shopping in a Liquor Mart.

This has to stop.

As you are probably aware, we have had construction underway at the Tyndall Market Liquor Mart for a new security initiative. Originally, we were going to announce this next week, but the events of today have accelerated this announcement.

In a few days, the Tyndall Market Liquor Mart will be one of the first locations to be fitted with a secure entrance. This means that the store will be locked, and customers will be required to show valid photo-ID at a security station before being allowed to enter the store. While it will be the first, it will not be the last. The Secure Entrance Initiative will be rolled out to Liquor Marts in the coming weeks and months.

As a retailer that prides itself on customer service and offering a modern, shopping experience, we did not want to impose these measures – however, we have an obligation to provide a safe environment for our employees and customers.

While we work on bringing in these changes, we want to remind customers not to intervene if you witness a theft. We know you feel a sense of ownership of Liquor Marts. We understand you find it difficult to stand by and watch these thefts happen. But intervening, either physically or by taking photos and video, can result in the incident escalating, putting everyone in the store in a much more dangerous situation. It's simply not worth the risk.

For well over a year, Liquor Marts have been under siege. You have all seen the footage.

We have tried numerous tactics to address this issue, but it's clear to us is that more drastic measures must be taken. This is why we are introducing this new secure entrance initiative. This is going to result in changing our customers' experience. While we regret having to impose these measures, we have been left with no choice in order to protect our employees and our customers. We also realize this is a problem that is bigger than just Manitoba Liquor Marts and it is too big for us to try to solve on our own.

These rampant thefts that we, and other Winnipeg retailers have been experiencing are a symptom of much larger societal issues. As Manitobans, we all have a stake in this issue and tonight, I am asking that we come together to begin to address and solve this problem. This affects all of us. This is a call to action for retailers, the public and government to find solutions. We are prepared to be part of this solution.

On behalf of all of us at Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries, I want to thank the Winnipeg Police Service for their continued support and assistance in helping us deal with this issue over the past year. They have, and continue to play, a critical role in addressing this issue.

In closing, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge all of our Liquor Mart employees who continue to do an exceptional job in providing service to our customers during these difficult times. I want to let those employees who were involved and hurt in this evening's incident to know that we are thinking of you and you have our full support.

Thank you all for coming on such short notice.