

Campaign against longer hotel trading hours gains momentum

By MADELEINE LOGAN

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MORE than 1500 people have joined the fight against extended trading hours at five of the city's hotels.

The Toowoomba residents responded to a leaflet drop by lawyers Dan Toombs, Chris Meibusch and Michael Maguire.

About 300 people are expected at a public meeting at Groom Hall Park at 6pm today. Australian Leisure and Hospitality Group State manager Trevor Smith will join the crowd.

His company owns four local suburban pubs which have applied to open until 3am, seven days a week — the Federal

Hotel, Wilsonton Hotel, Highfields Tavern and Blue Mountain Hotel. The fifth pub is the Cube Hotel, which wants to open until 3am on Saturdays and Sundays and extend trading during the week.

Mr Smith said he was keen to discuss how to reduce the impact of late trading on neighbours.

“We can design acoustics, provide courtesy buses and put a curfew on live entertainment.”

— Trevor Smith

“We can design acoustics, provide courtesy buses and put a curfew on live entertainment,” he said.

He hopes longer trading hours will help offset new fees from the Office of Liquor Licensing.

He said extra staff training, which could cost up to \$10,500, was now compulsory.

“We now have to pay the same

fees (\$7500 a year) whether we open until 2am, or 3am,” he said.

“We also need to upgrade our CCTV cameras and pay \$2200 to open from 10am to 12pm.”

GP Connections chairman Dr Graham Emblen, optometrist Megan Sullivan and Mr Toombs, Mr Maguire and lawyer Anthony Bigby will speak at the public meeting.