

Ms Jennifer Buckley
Secretary
Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee,
GPO Box 3721, DARWIN NT 0801
EPSC@nt.gov.au.

Dear Ms Buckley

Thank you for the opportunity for the Darwin Northern Suburbs Liquor Accord (DNSLA) to provide comment to the Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee on the recently re-written Liquor Bill (2019).

The Darwin Northern Suburbs Liquor Accord was convened in 2016 in response to high levels of anti-social behaviour and concerns with community safety and/or reduced amenity in and around licenced venues in the Northern Suburbs region of Darwin. DNSLA has a range of strategies aimed at reducing issues in the local area and supporting accord members to maintain responsible sale, provision, promotion and consumption of takeaway alcohol.

The DNSLA notes the inclusion of more detailed requirements around Liquor Accords in the rewritten Liquor Bill (2019), including the ability of the Director General of Licencing to direct a licensee to be a part to a local liquor accord; the linking of Accords to the proposed new risk based licencing framework and the possibility of reduced licence fees for licensees joining an accord. While we understand that the Regulations to the Act are currently being written which may address the specifics of accords under the new Liquor Act, we draw your attention to the following:

- We urge the Committee to ensure local liquor accords are given due consideration with regard to their administration, strategies and effectiveness to ensure relevancy and that they positively contribute to community amenity;
- We ask that determinations given to possible licencing fees in relation to accords incentivise licensees to join and participate in their local accord to ensure that membership is not just 'tokenism' and only for the sake of compliance;
- Clear guidelines will be required around the administration and/or recording of attendance of members, should their attendance be linked to licence fee reductions;
- If the administrative burden around accord management is likely to significantly increase or specific administrative tasks are required, we ask that consideration be given to directing resources that assist with this;
- We ask that clear stipulations around administrative requirements under the new Act are provided, including the consideration of specifics aspects such as:
 - Determinations related to the requirement of representation by licensees at accord meetings, should they be directed by the Director General;
 - Information provided regarding minimum attendance requirements to maintain the proposed discount under the RBL framework (if implemented);
 - Whether members can be represented by an Association and if so, they maintain any reduction in licence fees in that case;

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- Consideration and clarity of how the accord/s and associated memberships will be determined, for example, by Local Government Area? (We note there are currently two accords in the greater Darwin region; the DNSLA and the Darwin Inner City Packaged Liquor Accord, with Palmerston and the rural area not included in these);
- Requirements for specific administrative conditions such as standardisation of documents across accords and/or expectations of the provision of such to the Commission are considered and/or provided;
- That ongoing consultation with the sector regarding accords, their implementation, management and/or administration is maintained by the Commission.

If there is intent in the proposed Liquor Act (2019) to formalise local liquor accords as part of a broader harm minimisation approach to the sale, supply, service, promotion and consumption of liquor in the NT, clarity on their administration and how they fit within the context of the ongoing, responsible development of the local liquor industry will be very beneficial and welcomed by the sector. Further, whilst we recognise the expectation that accords will continue to be largely driven by members (with participation from other entities such as Police, local Government and community groups) ongoing monitoring, guidance and assistance going forward will ensure relevancy, good governance and the continuation of effective strategies to address local issues.

Yours sincerely



Russell Reid,
Chair, Darwin Northern Suburbs Liquor Accord

14 June, 2019