



NORTHERN TERRITORY POLICE ASSOCIATION

Working together to protect our future

Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory
Legislative Scrutiny Committee

By email: LSC@nt.gov.au

Dear Secretary

Liquor Legislation Amendment (Fast Track Approvals) Bill 2026

Title: Liquor Legislation Amendment (Fast Track Approvals) Bill 2026

Agency: Northern Territory Police Association (NTPA)

PURPOSE

To advise Cabinet of the implications of the proposed amendments to the *Liquor Act 2019*, particularly in relation to policing, community safety, and regulatory oversight.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Legislative Scrutiny Committee note the recommendations from the NTPA.

1. **Note** the introduction of a fast-track approval process for low-risk liquor licence applications.
2. **Note** the reduced regulatory and community oversight associated with these applications.
3. **Note** the potential impacts on policing visibility and community safety.
4. **Agree** that appropriate safeguards and information-sharing mechanisms with the Northern Territory Police Force (NTPF) be considered as part of implementation.

BACKGROUND

The Bill implements elements of the Northern Territory Government's "*Saying Yes to Business*" reforms, aimed at improving efficiency in liquor licensing.

Key objectives:

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- Reduce administrative burden for low-risk applications.
- Accelerate approval timeframes.
- Maintain core regulatory safeguards.

KEY PROVISIONS

Fast-Track Low-Risk Applications

- Establishes a new category of “**low risk applications**”
- Exempts such applications from:
 - Public interest and community impact assessments.
 - Public notification and consultation requirements.
- Simplifies documentation requirements.

Fit and Proper Person Test

- Introduces a clearer legislative framework for assessing applicant suitability.
- Presumption against applicants with relevant offences within the previous 10 years.
- Discretion retained for exceptional cases.

Transfer of Decision-Making Authority

- Responsibility for approving material alterations transferred from the Liquor Commission to Director.
- Director empowered to determine whether applications are low risk.
- Decisions to reclassify applications are not reviewable.

Reduced Oversight Mechanisms

- Removal of public notice requirements for low-risk applications.
- Reduced external scrutiny and community input into licensing decisions.

Additional Amendments

- Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) certification validity extended from 3 to 5 years.
- Transitional arrangements preserve existing processes for current applications.

ISSUES / RISKS

Community Safety

- Reduced community consultation may limit identification of local risks.
- Potential cumulative impacts from multiple low-risk approvals in high-demand areas.

Policing and Visibility

- Decreased visibility of licence applications may affect proactive policing and intelligence gathering.
- Increased reliance on post-approval compliance and enforcement.

Governance and Accountability

- Expanded Director discretion with limited review mechanisms.
- Reduced external scrutiny may increase perception of regulatory risk.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- Whilst no direct financial impact to the NTPF has been identified, it is highly likely that indirect costs to the NTPF will occur through additional Liquor Law enforcement activities relating to licence compliance checks and social order issues associated with Licensed Liquor venues.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACT

- **Industry:** Reduced regulatory burden; faster approvals.
- **Community:** Nil opportunity for input into licensing decisions, and concerns to be raised by members of the community, which may lead to the loss or restriction of enjoyment of public spaces surrounding or in the vicinity of licensed premises.
- **NTPF:** Potential operational impacts relating to increased visibility and monitoring by NTPF members to cater for additional licensed liquor venues.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

- Establish clear information-sharing protocols between licensing authorities and the NTPF.
- Monitor impacts of fast-tracked approvals, particularly in high-risk locations.
- Consider review mechanisms or reporting frameworks to assess cumulative impacts.

CONSULTATION

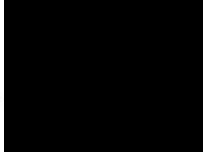
- Internal consultation within NTPF / NTPA, members in respect to Liquor Licence Applications prior to approvals
- No formal consultation undertaken by Government with the NTPF or the NTPA regarding the proposed Bill.

CONCLUSION

The Bill delivers a significant shift toward regulatory efficiency and reduced administrative burden in liquor licensing. While beneficial for industry, it introduces reduced oversight and increased reliance on internal safeguards, with potential implications for community safety and reliance on NTPF members to enforce Liquor Licence compliance.

The removal of requirement to conduct public interest and community impact assessments constitutes a risk as does the absence public notifications and consultation requirements in the liquor licensing application process. It is a concern for the NTPA and its members along with members of the public but can also provide an appearance that the application could be open to bias or at least the apparent apprehension of bias from the Director of the Liquor Licensing Commission, given the absence of public scrutiny and/or notifications.

Yours Sincerely



Nathan Finn
CEO / President