

25 March 2026

## **Submission to the Legislation Scrutiny Committee**

Inquiry into the *Liquor Legislation Amendment (Fast Track Approvals) Bill 2026*

### **Hospitality NT**

Hospitality NT is the peak industry body representing the Northern Territory's hospitality sector, including hotels, clubs, pubs, bars, restaurants, breweries, distilleries and licensed venues across urban, remote, and regional areas.

We welcome the opportunity to provide this submission to the Legislation Scrutiny Committee regarding the *Liquor Legislation Amendment (Fast Track Approvals) Bill 2026* (**'the Bill'**).

We commend the Northern Territory Government for its ongoing commitment to regulatory reform, such as through its acceptance of key recommendations from the *Saying 'Yes' to Business* Taskforce report. We believe that the Bill represents a measured step toward reducing unnecessary regulatory burden for hospitality operators in the Northern Territory, while preserving the integrity of our liquor licensing framework. We acknowledge the work of Rebecca Bullen, who represented the hospitality industry on the Approvals Taskforce.

The amendments reflect a constructive approach to streamlining licensing processes, particularly for low risk applications, and align with the Government's broader objective of improving the ease of doing business in the Northern Territory.

Our members have consistently raised concerns regarding the complexity, cost, and time associated with liquor licensing processes in the NT. When compared with other Australian jurisdictions, the current framework is disproportionately burdensome.

The Bill delivers on several operational recommendations that will provide tangible benefits to licensees, including:

- **Fasttrack approvals for low risk applications** – Prescribed low risk authorities will no longer be subject to the full public interest, community impact, and public notice requirements, significantly reducing approval timeframes and compliance costs for restaurants, community clubs, caterers, liquor producers, accommodation and special ventures authorities. We support the right of the Director to reclassify an application where the public interest requires it.

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- **Clear fit and proper person criteria** – The introduction of section 5D provides greater certainty for applicants and regulators by codifying matters to be considered, while retaining appropriate discretion. This will assist with sales of hospitality businesses, so that buyers are aware of what the regulator will be considering.
- **Transfer of material alteration approvals** – Moving responsibility from the Liquor Commission to the Director under section 10 will reduce delays for minor venue modifications, allowing businesses to respond more quickly to operational needs.
- **Extended responsible service certificate period** – Increasing the validity period from three to five years reduces administrative duplication for responsible staff who are working day in and day out in the industry.

These changes are consistent with the recommendations previously outlined in the *Review of the Liquor Act 2019* Options Paper, particularly regarding the need for a more proportionate approach to licensing processes.

The Bill makes these efficiencies without diminishing existing compliance or enforcement mechanisms. The Director, Commission, and police retain full authority to investigate and address noncompliance, alcohol related harm, or other concerns through established processes.

We thank the Legislation Scrutiny Committee for its consideration of this submission and welcome the opportunity to provide further input should it be required.

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