



CENTRAL
AUSTRALIAN
**ABORIGINAL
CONGRESS**
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION
ICN 7823

31 July 2026

Committee Secretariat
Legislative Scrutiny Committee
Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory
GPO Box 3721
Darwin NT 0801

Via email: LSC@nt.gov.au

RE: SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY INTO THE LIQUOR AMENDMENT BILL 2026

Dear Secretary,

Please consider this as a submission to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee's inquiry into the *Liquor Amendment Bill 2026* from Central Australian Aboriginal Congress.

Congress is one of the largest and most experienced Aboriginal community controlled health services in Australia, providing comprehensive primary health care to Aboriginal people in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), and remote communities across Central Australia including Ltyentye Apurte (Santa Teresa), Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Wallace Rockhole, Utju (Areyonga), Mutitjulu, Amoonguna, Imanpa, Kaltukatjara (Dockers River), and Yulara. For many decades, Congress has been a strong advocate for evidence-based public policy and legislation that reduces the high levels of alcohol-related harm in many areas of Central Australia. It is on the basis of this experience that we make this submission.

Clauses 12 and 13: Process for transferring a liquor licence

Congress does not support the amendments that make it easier for a person to have an existing liquor licence transferred to them. Alcohol is associated with significant social and health harms, and holding a licence for the sale of alcohol should be restricted to those who take the responsibility to prevent harm seriously. This should apply equally to those seeking to have an existing licence transferred to them and to those seeking a new licence. The same process should be applied to both in ascertaining whether the proposed licensee is or has remained a 'fit and proper person', and for determining whether the transfer is in the public interest.

Clauses 18 to 21: Repeal of Interim Alcohol Protected Areas (IAPAs) and their replacement with General Restricted Areas (GRAs)

Congress strongly supports these amendments. Under existing legislation, the IAPA protections would automatically be repealed on 28 February 2027 which would leave Central Australia facing a potential wave of alcohol-related harm such as we saw when the *Stronger Futures* provisions expired in 2022.

Clause 22: Varying or revoking a General Restricted Area

We are pleased to see that the amendments contain no 'sunset clause' for the GRAs, meaning that alcohol will remain prohibited in those communities and living areas affected until the community has an approved Community Alcohol Plan (CAP) in place.



However, the development of any CAP must be well-resourced; include all relevant parties; and support for any plan must be independently verified. Accordingly, *we advocate for the following additional amendments:*

- that when the Director of Liquor Licensing accepts an application for a CAP, they *must* give notice to all providers of health, education, aged care, and women's services that may be affected by any changes to the GRA status;
- that where a CAP application would allow alcohol to be available in the GRA, community consultations *must* be carried out by an independent body, such that all community members have an opportunity to independently (and if they wish, confidentially) have their say;
- that where a CAP is to be approved by a community, an independent body such as the Northern Territory Electoral Commission *must* conduct a secret ballot and provide a declaration of the results including that all those who participated have done so freely

Clause 25. Section 215 amended (Effect of banning notice)

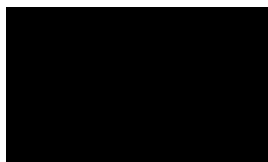
We do not support the proposal to extend the maximum length of a police-issued banning notice for high risk areas from 14 days to 90 days. We are concerned that this significantly increases the risk of criminalising people who are the subject of such banning notices, especially as there is no exemption for accessing essential services such banks, supermarkets and education facilities.

Clause 26. Section 258 amended (Police power to suspend licence or authority)

We do not support the amendment that requires the police give licensees an opportunity to prevent alcohol-related violence, riotous conduct or a breach of the peace on or in the vicinity of their premises before suspending a licence. It is the licensees responsibility to prevent such conduct (especially through the Responsible Serving of Alcohol) and the consequences for failing to comply with those responsibilities need to be severe enough to produce compliance.

I would like to thank the Committee for considering these important matters. I can be contacted on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] if you would like to discuss the matters raised in this correspondence.

Yours sincerely



John Boffa
Interim Chief Executive Officer