

Welcome to the first edition of Licensing eNews. Licensing eNews will be distributed quarterly, informing industry of policy changes, updates, recent events or activities that have occurred in respect of the various portfolios administered by Licensing, Regulation and Alcohol Strategy. The information may be of interest or affect you as a client of Licensing, Regulation and Alcohol Strategy.

Message from the Executive Director

In February, the Minister announced a new initiative in the fight against alcohol-fuelled violence in our community. The Northern Territory Government is committed to ensuring that people can go out, enjoy a few drinks and have a good time without being subjected to alcohol-fuelled violence and unacceptable behaviour. It's also pleasing to be working with the Australian Hotels Association and ClubsNT to deliver this message.

Our focus is on banning those people who cannot behave themselves, from licensed premises and the designated precincts. The proposed laws deliver substantial new powers to the police, the inspectors and licensees to assist in the reduction of antisocial behaviour associated with alcohol consumption.

Police officers will be able to remove troublesome people from licensed premises without having to be requested to do so by a licensee. Once removed, it will be an offence to attempt to re-enter the premises within 12 hours of being removed. Infringement notices can be issued to people who refuse to comply with the request to behave. The laws will also allow the Minister to declare "designated areas". Powers to ban and exclude people who commit certain offences from the designated area or from licensed premises within the designated area will also exist.

Offences dealing with minors entering licensed premises will be introduced. Lending, altering or providing false ID to enter licensed premises become offences. The power for licensees, inspectors, security, or police officers to seize ID they suspect is fake is also included.

We are also pleased with the increasing number of liquor accords being established. Changes to the *Liquor Act* will provide a legal foundation for accords and will increase support to licensees who are working together to actively reduce alcohol related harms in their communities.

These are significant changes that should enhance the capacity of police, regulators and industry to work together to ensure licensed premises are safe and enjoyable.

As part of the joint initiative awareness campaign "Got the Moves?", a range of promotional material has been developed and will be distributed to licensed venues over the next month. We would appreciate the support of licensees in distributing the t-shirts to staff, using coasters in your venues and placing posters around the venue such as on toilet doors etc. The packages for licensees should have been delivered by the end of April.

Micheil Brodie
Executive Director
Licensing, Regulation & Alcohol Strategy



The 'Got the Moves?' campaign encourages people to look out for their mates when drinking.

Liquor Accords

Licensees in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek have recently joined forces to form liquor accords for each of the towns. The formation of these accords is seen as a positive step by licensees and regulators to work together to create a safe environment in and around licensed premises. The introduction of common barring in Alice Springs has been a significant and successful achievement.

The great value in accords is licensees meeting and working with police, regulators and the community to address alcohol issues. The accords will complement recent legislation introduced by the Northern Territory Government through the Liquor Legislation Amendment Bill.

Camera Surveillance Systems

In the second half of 2010, Licensing, Regulation and Alcohol Strategy will be conducting audits on camera surveillance systems for all licensed premises required to have camera surveillance on their premises.

It is timely that licensees have their systems checked before this occurs and consider any changes that may require the Director of Licensing's approval.

Licensees should also ensure their camera surveillance plans are current and up to date and that their systems are working and compliant with their Camera Surveillance Plans and the Camera Surveillance Requirements specifications. If licensees have any queries regarding camera surveillance or the systems.

ID Scanning System

The introduction of the ID system into Alice Springs and Katherine has seen some positive results. In 2009 in Alice Springs, the system prevented 374 attempts to purchase alcohol while prohibited and 5905 attempts to purchase products in excess of purchase limits.

As with the introduction of any new system, it took some time for the public to get used to the idea of having to produce ID, but with the assistance of licensees, the message is now out there. The need to communicate in this regard is ongoing and LRAS will continue to focus on getting the message into the public arena, particularly to tourists.

Recently, Steve Newland and John Downer travelled to Pine Creek, Katherine and Mataranka to implement a software upgrade associated with the Alcohol Management ID Scanning systems. A recent change to the NT Drivers Licence format led to the scanning equipment returning incomplete scans of ID. This often caused significant delays for customers and staff.

A new version of the ID scanning software has been installed at venues. The software will prevent the equipment returning incomplete scans by authenticating the new NT Drivers licence format. In total, 18 terminals were upgraded within the Katherine region.

REMINDER

Justices of the Peace
and
Commissioners for Oaths

Renewal applications will be mailed to your postal address (6 months prior to expiry for JP's and 2 months for Commissioners for Oaths). Be aware of your expiry date and make sure all your contact details are current.

You can update your details by contacting (08) 8999 1809, by sending an email to statutoryappointmentsoffice@nt.gov.au or by submitting a change request through the website at <http://www.nt.gov.au/justice/jop.shtml>

Intoxicated Patrons on Licensed Premises

Under section 121 (1) of the *Liquor Act*, a licensee or employee shall, or Government inspector may remove or ban a patron if the patron is:

- a) intoxicated
- b) violent
- c) quarrelsome
- d) disorderly or
- e) incapable of controlling their behaviour.

This provision is currently being extended to allow police officers to remove a patron without having to be requested to do so by a licensee, and to include penalties for patrons who refuse to leave or attempt to re-enter after being removed.

Having staff trained in Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) and supporting them in applying RSA principles so they can prevent and detect intoxicated patrons is critical.

Staff should be proactive and encouraged to 'get to know' the patrons which can assist in spotting potential problems early. For example, crowd controllers should move around the room and engage in conversation with people and, based on the responses may be able to detect early indicators of intoxication.

Staff who detect early signs of intoxication should be reporting the behaviour to the appropriate people. Working as a team and being proactive will help to prevent alcohol related problems from occurring or getting out of hand.

Gaming Machine Managers

Licensing has become aware that some gaming machine venues are operating machines at times when there isn't a Gaming Machine Manager on premises, supervising the gaming machine activity.

Section 60(5) of the Gaming Machine Act requires that, at least one machine manager is in attendance on the premises **AT ALL TIMES** when gaming is being conducted.

Penalty: \$10,000 or imprisonment for two years.

This is a serious offence and any breaches of this section will be investigated fully. Recently, the Director of Licensing has successfully prosecuted one venue for failing to have a Gaming Machine Manager on premises while machines are operating and a complaint is currently before the Court in relation to a second venue.

Venues are reminded that if a Gaming Machine Manager is not on duty, then machines **MUST NOT** be in use. If this occurs, then you must contact Maxgaming on 1800 700 116 and request that the machines be disabled until further notice. Maxgaming are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Inspectors will be visiting licensed gaming venues to ensure ongoing compliance with this requirement.

REMINDER

Reminder to Travel Agents

Licensed travel agents are reminded that the annual licence fee and annual return are due to be lodged with the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs by 30 June 2010.

Annual return packages were sent to licensees early May 2010.

Any enquiries may be directed to Nick O'Brien, Licensing Officer on (08) 8999 1349.

School Liaison Program

The School Liaison Program was established as a result of an identified gap in the services provided to schools and the problems associated with the sale and consumption of alcohol and tobacco by minors.

In April 2007, a complaint was received by Licensing, Regulation and Alcohol Strategy that a group of 8 students aged 13 to 15 years had allegedly purchased alcohol at a store in Darwin during school time. The minors consumed the alcohol before going back to school. A number of the students were extremely affected by the alcohol with one of them getting lost and unable to be located until some time later.

This led to four Licensing Inspectors across the Northern Territory being allocated the responsibility of School Liaison and all complaints relating to the supply of liquor and tobacco to minors. Teachers, parents, school committees and students now have direct contact with a Licensing Inspector who can respond to incidents or concerns in a timely manner.

The program has also expanded into working closely with licensed crowd controllers, police, parents and teachers in detecting false or altered forms of identification that may be used by minors to gain entry onto licensed premises or to purchase liquor or tobacco products.

The Licensing Inspectors also attend schools, career expos and other events that attract the interest of youth as an ongoing education process to inform them of the potential ramifications of attempting to illegally access licensed premises or alcohol products, particularly with the use of false or altered IDs.

If Licensees or staff wish to obtain further information or speak to one of the School Liaison Licensing Inspectors please contact (08) 8999 1800 in Darwin and (08) 8951 5238 in Alice Springs.

Self Assessment Checklist for Licensed Premises

Licensing, Regulation and Alcohol Strategy are looking at introducing a self assessment process whereby licensees will be asked to complete checklists demonstrating compliance with requirement of the *Liquor Act* and liquor licence conditions.

LRAS recently identified Licensees in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek to participate in a pilot program of self assessment in the audit requirements of their liquor licence conditions. The feedback received was very positive.

All licensees will be consulted and informed as the process is further developed. It is envisaged that long term self assessment checklists will be introduced across most sectors of Licensing.

REMINDER

Public Officers
(Associations Act)

Are you aware that:

If the office of Public Officer of an incorporated association becomes vacant, the committee of the association must, within 14 days after the vacancy arises, appoint a person to be the public officer.

A public officer also must, within 14 days after appointment, notify the Commissioner in writing of his/her appointment with full name and address.

If a public officer changes address, he/she must also notify the Commissioner in writing, within 14 days after the change.

Please note that failure to do any of the above may attract a penalty. If you require any clarification or advice, contact the Licensing Unit on (08) 8999 1315.