

JTR Investments Pty Ltd  
Trading as



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My name is Ron Townsend and together with my wife Sandy we are the Directors of JTR Investments Pty Ltd the Licensee of Hidden Valley Tavern situated on the Stuart Highway in Berrimah Northern Territory. I am the current Nominee.

I came to Darwin in late 1987 to take up a position as Financial Controller for the now defunct Australian Frontier Holidays. I moved from Weipa in far north Queensland where I was Licensee of the Albatross Hotel the only liquor outlet on the cape outside a few clubs and limited canteens. They had similar issues to those in the NT but due to the limitations on access to alcohol the situation at that time was more controllable.

A year or so later I found myself acting nominee at the Nightcliff Hotel. In my first week, a tribal fight broke out in the car park with dozens of people running amuck. I went out to try to quell the situation and found myself picked up physically by our security staff and returned inside and the doors were locked.

We have come a long way since then and we still have a lot more to do. Consultation between interested parties like the AHA and Government have been the keystone to the improvements achieved in curbing anti-social behaviour fuelled by alcohol and more recently the ever-increasing drug scourge.

**THIS CONSULTATION MUST CONTINUE.**

In recent times, we have seen a large increase in the issue of liquor licences especially in take away licences. It seems that groceries and liquor go hand in hand and now petrol is in the mix.

I believe that an application for a liquor licence needs to be more open for scrutiny. Yes, a liquor licence is worth money but the current economy determines the value there of. The suggested implementation of annual liquor licence fees will do nothing but further reduce the viability of some liquor businesses.

With the introduction of higher poker machine tax gaming venues will also be further at risk.

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Sandy and I have been working toward our retirement and have put in a lot and time and effort to build a nest egg only to see it dwindle away due to Government decisions. The recent decisions made to increase licensed outlets especially off-premise combined with increased gaming taxes could well spell the end of everything we have worked for.

The previous CLP Government changed the legislation so that we could not transfer the gaming machines to a new owner which closed the window of opportunity of a sale of our business after spending thousands of dollars on a national marketing campaign. The last offer we received was less than half of what it was 2 years ago. Now due to decisions made by our current Government we have to face the opening of a Super Store take away outlet less than 3 kilometres away from our venue.

Who is making these decisions? We need to have some input into the future of our industry and economic considerations including the financial impact on existing businesses must be considered. I am happy to open our books in confidence through our Accountants Merit Partners in support of the foregoing.

I have openly supported the re- introduction of the BDR mainly because I acknowledge like all responsible licensees that we need to try alternatives and initiatives to help curb alcohol abuse and harm within our communities.

Most take away venues are a member of a marketing group. These have been established throughout Australia over the years principally to improve purchasing power and to remain competitive and in regard to smaller venues to battle the big supermarket chains.

The members of smaller groups overall are private businesses. They remain local community focused. The big chains can and will drop prices in one area and pick up the shortfall thousands of kilometres away. They are famous for their "Loss Leaders". When this is applied to liquor it can lead to a very volatile situation in regard to alcohol consumption and community harm. In the end more liquor is sold for less price which appears to be inconsistent with efforts to reduce alcohol supply and increase the price of cheap discounted alcohol.

Sincerely



Ron Townsend  
Publican

30<sup>th</sup> June 2017