

Dear Panel,

I have attached below an email that I sent to Minister Fyles. I am not sure if it has been forwarded to you from her department.

I would like to respond to your five key points.

1. Evidence based policy initiatives to reduce alcohol fuelled crime.
 - As a private citizen I cannot easily access information as to the extent of directly related alcohol fuelled crime. However it is clear from any visit to the hospital, court records and police comments that this is a major problem within our town.
 - The hotel association and their members need to be restricted in how they serve alcohol and make sure that they adhere to the current legislation. My suggestion about licences to be issued in two parts and the policing of these licenses is listed below.
 - The worst performing Government instrumentality over the last 10 years has been the liquor commission. If any other commission had performed to this low standard it would have had a total overhaul and dismissal of the chairman. He has now left this position but had a long relationship at the races every Saturday in Darwin with nightclub and hotel owners.
 - The lack of prosecutions of licensed premises easily bears witness to these comments. If you are not going to be prosecuted for bending the law you continue to do it at the expense of our community and Territory.
2. Safe and vibrant entertainment precincts.
 - A vibrant entertainment precinct is not generally associated with heavily intoxicated patrons. To make the precinct safe at 3/4/5 o'clock in the morning, is an impossible task and puts great strain on our police force.
 - I have referenced below changes that I believe should be made to the act to ensure that entrance to hotels and taverns after 11pm should only occur if the patrons that wish to enter are given a random breath test. The act needs to set a level as to what is acceptable and not leave it to either an individual staff member or a security guard. I am not aware of any liquor commission prosecutions that have successfully gone through the courts for serving intoxicated patrons and given a penalty of license suspension for a day. I personally have been in bars in Darwin where over 100 people could not possibly have been deemed to be fit for service of more alcohol. The act does either not properly address intoxicated patrons or it is not being policed properly. No weekend in Mitchell Street would pass the test in most of the liquor outlets that I have visited over the last 10 years.
3. Alcohol service provisions and management in remote communities
 - Licensed premise in remote communities should work providing they have proper guidelines. I don't believe there have been adequate trials in communities, however most communities are concerned that they will go back to the old days of domestic violence, fights and child abuse.
 - Education is important and this includes how to drink responsibly. Limit number of drinks and make sure they are light to mid-strength. No wine and no spirits. In 40 years' time are we still going to have dry communities and if so has anything changed?
4. Decision-making under the *Liquor Act*

- The Liquor Act has adequate provisions for policing of the consumption of alcohol. It doesn't however have a definition of when someone is deemed to be intoxicated, which is backed up by a blood alcohol reading. This makes it very difficult to prosecute properly when there have been blatant breaches of responsible service of alcohol.
 - Incorporation of the police as liquor inspectors is essential. They understand the methods of evidence taking, reporting and giving evidence in Court. The Liquor Commission could still serve a purpose of dealing with licence applications, The Act, and other liquor related issues.
 - Licences that are granted to supermarkets need to have conditions that require the outlets to take responsibility for the security in and around the outlet. There also needs to be a conscious effort made to remove or restrict product that is targeted for young and under-age drinkers.
5. The density of liquor licenses and the size of liquor outlets
- Liquor licenses in residential areas should be reviewed unless they are associated with a hotel or a club. The sale of takeaway alcohol by clubs with registered members should be encouraged as an alternative to liquor being sold from a delicatessen or mini supermarket. I believe this would help the issues in residential areas of itinerant people consuming alcohol in parks, ovals and public areas. Whilst Alice Springs and other towns within the NT are considered to be dry areas, it is not possible to police and there is no likelihood that any fines will be paid. This then results in jail terms for having a drink within the town precinct.
 - Large liquor outlets including Coles, Woolworths and Dan Murphy's need to realise that they have an obligation to the community if they are selling large quantities of alcohol products. Unfortunately their focus is on cheaper prices and larger volumes, this does not set well with responsible service of alcohol. This section of The Act is seen as something that occurs in a restaurant or over a bar. I do not see that this responsibility should stop in these two areas but should be included for every business that is involved in liquor sales. Responsible service of alcohol should also take into account any health reports that would indicate substance abuse or long term side effects through high contents of sugar. The tobacco industry took a long time to admit that they were selling harmful products. It is time that the liquor industry worked with Health and Government to make sure that they are operating in a responsible manner by Law. It cannot be long before an individual or a group look at taking action against Government, distilleries, liquor wholesalers and retailers. This could be a long bitter fight but eventually it will change the nature of how alcohol is introduced and served to young people.

Having been a resident in the Northern Territory for over 40 years and a licensee for 10 years from 1974-1984 I hope I have a broad enough understanding of the issues that continue to detract from our lifestyle and our appeal to the many visitors that come to the Territory.

I have made some suggestions on how to stiffen up The Act to ensure that the onus of selling alcohol in a responsible manner returns back to the licensees and owners of the liquor outlets.

I would be happy to discuss with your panel any of the items listed above and below. I welcome your review. Unfortunately there have been many reviews and trials that have been carried out over the last 10-15 years. It is my belief that a number of these trials have produced evidence that could not be refuted. However neither Government has had the strength to introduce them into the community

and thus shows that we are not prepared to take the steps needed to improve the lives of all who live within the Northern Territory.

Regards

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