



MEDIA RELEASE

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO LIQUOR ACT REVIEW: STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE

Minister for Hospitality, Gaming and Racing Troy Grant today tabled the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government response to the five-year statutory review into the Liquor Act and the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act.

Minister Grant said 89 of the 91 recommendations made by the review have been supported, are in place or will be rolled out over the coming 12 months.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals are ensuring we have the best alcohol policy measures in the country as we strike the right balance between industry and individual responsibility,” Mr Grant said.

“The review, which was released in December 2013, pre-dates the NSW Government’s decisive actions in February to curb anti-social behaviour across the State and, in particular, in the Sydney CBD and Kings Cross.

“It is early days but we are already seeing encouraging signs of a fundamental shift in the way people enjoy our city.

“The NSW Liberals & Nationals are committed to reducing alcohol-related anti-social behaviour so the community can feel safe when out enjoying our State’s vibrant social life.

“Tough measures introduced by the NSW Government to date include:

- Three Strikes Disciplinary Scheme
- Creation of the Sydney CBD Entertainment Precinct and CBD-wide conditions including drink restrictions, 1.30am lockout, 3am last drinks and a two-year freeze on new licence applications
- Introduction of a risk-based licence fee scheme
- Licensing restrictions and ID scanners in Kings Cross high-risk venues
- Introduction of taxi marshalls at seven CBD ranks
- Restriction on all takeaway alcohol sales after 10 pm.

“There will always remain a strong need for personal responsibility and accountability in our society and that message is finally getting through.

“To ensure our system is fair and built on the risks associated with alcohol-fuelled anti-social behaviour the following measures will be introduced:

- Escalating sanctions for licensed venues caught selling alcohol to a minor – which, in addition to existing fines and penalties, will now allow a licence to be suspended for up to 28 days for a first offence, increasing to the automatic cancellation of a licence for a third offence in a 12-month period;
- Introduction of a package of 12 late trades a year – allowing some venues to drop from 2am or 3am closing back to midnight yet still be open later for key community events;
- Creation of a new licence sub-category providing a lower annual licence fee for small wineries, distillers and craft brewers recognising their lower risk profile and contribution to regional tourism; and

- Developing a tiered training scheme to improve industry competencies and compliance by tailoring training for different industry sectors.

“Increasing transparency and accountability on the way decisions are made is a core theme running through many of the recommendations which the NSW Government has adopted,” Mr Grant said.

“The Government’s response will ensure we have effective tools to prevent alcohol-related harm, improve community and stakeholder participation in the liquor regulatory system, and promote transparent decision making.

“Since taking the Ministerial reins, I have met with many stakeholders involved in this important area of Government policy and I will continue to meet with a cross section of the community and industry as these initiatives are progressed and implemented.

“The message to the community is clear: everyone has a role to play in ensuring we enjoy our vibrant communities in a safe and responsible manner,” Mr Grant concluded.

The Government response is available on the Office of Liquor, Gaming & Racing website at www.olgr.nsw.gov.au

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