Alcohol Policies and Legislation

REVIEW

IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
Draft Terms of Reference
For consultation

Introduction

The Northern Territory Government recognises that everyone has the right to enjoy a drink responsibly. However, alcohol abuse is a significant cause of violence, trauma and crime in our community.

The Government is addressing alcohol misuse and its effects on individuals, families and communities, with clear policies such as reintroducing the banned drinker register.

A strong whole of Government alcohol policy and licensing framework supports responsible alcohol consumption and a safer community.

A strong framework supports the prevention and reduction of harm resulting from chronic disease and violence for individuals and families, it supports businesses to operate responsibly in an environment that reduces antisocial behaviour, and supports health, police and emergency services to deal with the harmful effects of the misuse of alcohol, including alcohol related crime.

The sale, provision, promotion and consumption of liquor are regulated under the Liquor Act. The Liquor Act has not been reviewed in its entirety since it commenced in 1996. Although various amendments have been made over the years, it is clear that the Liquor Act does not meet the needs of today’s community.

A comprehensive and evidence based review will lead to contemporary policy and legislation suitable to the needs of our community – right across the Territory.

The Northern Territory Government is implementing a number of reforms that support the immediate and long term health and wellbeing of Territorians - in youth justice and community safety, the long term investment in early childhood development and parenting, housing reform to reduce overcrowding and local decision making for our remote communities.

Alcohol policy and legislative reform will support the Government’s implementation of each of these key policy reforms.
The purpose of the review

With the overarching objective of developing an integrated Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, based on the recommendations of an Expert Advisory Panel, the review will:

**Alcohol Policy**

1. analyse and assess the Northern Territory’s alcohol policies, their implementation and effectiveness.
2. consider best practice alcohol policies from other parts of Australia and overseas and how they would translate to the Northern Territory.
3. advise the Government on the development of an evidence-based strategic alcohol policy framework and implementation plan for the Territory.

**Alcohol Legislation**

1. consider best practice liquor and related legislation from other parts of Australia and overseas, and how it would translate to the Northern Territory.
2. advise the Government on reforms that need to be made to the Northern Territory’s Liquor Act.

**Key matters the review will report on:**

- evidence based policy initiatives required to reduce alcohol fuelled crime
- ensuring safe and vibrant entertainment precincts
- alcohol service provision and management in remote communities
- decision-making under the Liquor Act
- the density of liquor licences and the size of liquor outlets.
Governance of the review

An independent Expert Advisory Panel will be commissioned. The Expert Advisory Panel will be led by an eminent person with standing in the sector and specific knowledge of the Northern Territory.

The Expert Advisory Panel will comprise local and interstate experts in the fields of addiction, alcohol-related harm, regulation and policing, Indigenous knowledge and social welfare policy.

The Expert Advisory Panel will report to the Minister for Health and Attorney-General, following the public consultation process, with recommendations for the development of an Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy including advice on legislative reforms.

Issues paper

To inform a community-wide discussion and to provide guidance for those wishing to provide feedback and input into the review, the Government will release an issues paper. The paper will include data on alcohol usage, and will outline a range of health, social, community, commercial and economic issues associated with the supply, purchase and consumption of alcohol in the Northern Territory.

The issues paper will include information on the nature and scale of the alcohol-related harms arising from misuse of alcohol that need to be addressed.

The issues paper will also pose questions to seek input from the public on ideas, concepts and types of measures that could be adopted to minimise alcohol-related harm in our community.
Consultation on the review

Broad public consultation will be undertaken as part of the review, with multiple avenues for interested people and groups to put forward their views:

- through a dedicated website
- community forums in the major centres
- meetings with key stakeholders
- meetings with other groups, by arrangement
- written submissions.

All submissions, unless specifically requested otherwise by the author, will be published on the website with the author identified.

Timing of the review

The review will commence in April 2017 with release of the final Terms of Reference. Public consultation will occur following the appointment of the independent Expert Advisory Panel and the release of the Government’s issues paper. Various community forums will be held through to the end of July 2017. The Expert Advisory Panel will provide a report with recommendations to Government by the end of September 2017.

The Government will form a response to the recommendations for the development of the Strategy and legislative reform agenda. These will be released publicly along with the Expert Advisory Panel’s final report.