Review of the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998
Consultation Paper
Office of Liquor, Gaming & Racing
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1 Introduction

The Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 (the LCRA) regulates the supply of liquor in Victoria.

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that liquor is supplied in a manner that minimises harm from the misuse of alcohol and recognises the benefits of a responsible and diverse liquor industry to Victoria.

The Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, the Hon Marlene Kairouz MP, has asked the Department of Justice and Regulation (the department) to review the LCRA and associated regulations as set out in the terms of reference in Appendix A. Submissions must be made within the scope of the terms of reference. As part of the review, the department is seeking submissions from individuals, community groups, councils, licensees and others on issues relating to the LCRA.

This Consultation Paper provides background information that will assist you to make a submission.

It is important to note that the LCRA is focused on the supply of liquor and the licensing of persons who supply liquor. It does not govern other government interventions and programs relating to alcohol-related harm – for example, drug and alcohol treatment and prevention services. These matters will not be considered by the review.

1.1 Structure of this paper

This Consultation Paper has two parts: one on facilitating a diverse industry and reducing red tape, and the other focussing on harm minimisation.

1.2 Making a submission

Submissions in response to this Consultation Paper must be received by 16 December 2016.

The preferred method of lodgement is online at https://myviews.justice.vic.gov.au/ or via e-mail to lcra.review@justice.vic.gov.au.

Please ensure that your submission does not include confidential, commercial-in-confidence or personal information. The department reserves the right to not publish information that is defamatory, discriminatory or unrelated to the review.

This Consultation Paper contains a range of questions about the operation of the LCRA. These questions are designed to assist you to make a submission, but you are not required to address all or any of the questions posed.
2 Facilitating a diverse industry and reducing red tape

Victoria has a large and diverse liquor and licensed hospitality industry that includes alcohol producers, restaurants and cafes, pubs, clubs, bars, packaged liquor outlets and other businesses. The department estimates that the industry supports over 60,000 jobs in the liquor production, wholesale and retail sectors.¹

The relevant objects of the LCRA are to “…facilitate the development of a diversity of licensed facilities reflecting community expectations” and “…to contribute to the responsible development of the liquor, licensed hospitality and live music industries”.

This section of the paper provides information about the LCRA that may assist you to make a submission about how the LCRA could better meet these objects.

2.1 The liquor licensing regime under the LCRA

The supply of liquor in Victoria is prohibited unless authorised by the LCRA.

Part 2 of the LCRA establishes the liquor licences and permits available in Victoria. A person seeking to supply liquor in Victoria must hold a liquor licence or fall within one of the exemptions specified in the LCRA.

The licence types provided for in the LCRA and number of licences under each licence type as at 30 June 2016 are set out in the tables below.

Table 1 – Renewable liquor licences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Licence Type</th>
<th>Common uses</th>
<th>Number (30 June 2016)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>Pubs, hotels, taverns</td>
<td>1,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-premises</td>
<td>Bars, nightclubs</td>
<td>2,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant and café</td>
<td>Restaurants, cafes</td>
<td>5,606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club (restricted or full)</td>
<td>Sporting clubs, community clubs</td>
<td>1,686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packaged liquor</td>
<td>Bottle shops</td>
<td>2,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late-night (general, on-premises or packaged liquor)</td>
<td>Late trading pubs, bars and bottle shops</td>
<td>870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-retail</td>
<td>Wholesalers, importers, producers</td>
<td>849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine and beer producer’s</td>
<td>Wineries, craft brewers</td>
<td>839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewable Limited</td>
<td>Small sporting clubs, caterers, motels</td>
<td>4,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BYO permit</td>
<td>Restaurants, clubs, party buses</td>
<td>1,280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL (Renewable licences) |                                      | 21,607 |

Table 2 – Temporary liquor licences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Licence Type</th>
<th>Common uses</th>
<th>Number (30 June 2016)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major event</td>
<td>Music festivals, street festivals etc</td>
<td>9,552 temporary licences were issued in 2014-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Balls, presentation nights, special events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.1 Exemptions from the requirement to hold a licence

The LCRA exempts some types of supply from the requirement to hold a licence, provided the liquor is supplied in accordance with the requirements imposed by the LCRA or the regulations. Supply by bed and breakfast operators, florists and gift makers, hairdressers, butchers, hospitals, residential care services, retirement villages and cruise ships are all exempt from the requirement to hold a licence.

¹ The number of jobs supported by the liquor industry in Victoria is very difficult to estimate. Statistics are not collected on the liquor industry in general, and there are a range of industries that are related to liquor, such as hotels, clubs, and other hospitality businesses.
2.1.2 Prohibitions

The LCRA prohibits the grant of a licence in respect of certain types of premises. These include drive-in cinemas, petrol stations, milk bars and convenience stores. The Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR), with the Minister’s approval, may grant a licence for a premises falling into one of these categories in special circumstances, such as in tourist areas or areas with special needs where there are not adequate existing facilities or arrangements for the supply of liquor.

2.1.3 Issues with the licensing regime

The LCRA creates obligations that apply to all licences or to all licences of a particular type.

The VCGLR has broad powers under the LCRA to impose licence conditions. These can be applied generally, to all licences of a particular type (for example, licences that meet a particular risk profile may be required to complete Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) training) or to individual licences based on individual circumstances (for example, where there are local amenity issues).

Some people need to hold more than one licence as their business activities do not fit neatly into any one licence type. One example is a club that has four licences. Most of its activities are covered by a full club licence. However, it also has three renewable limited licences for pre-booked functions, guests accommodated on the premises and a drinks cart on the golf course. Each of these licences is subject to different conditions and each licence incurs a licence fee. Some other clubs have these activities authorised by a single renewable limited licence.

An indicator of the problems with the licence types is the increase in the number of limited licences.

New modes of liquor supply exist today that did not exist when the LCRA’s licensing regime commenced. For example, there is no specific licence for online supply. Online suppliers can hold a packaged liquor licence, a renewable limited licence or a wine and beer producers licence. There are significant differences between the obligations that apply to these licences, including whether the licensee needs to obtain planning permission and the hours during which alcohol can be supplied.

2.2 Licence application processes

2.2.1 Applying for or varying a liquor licence

Part 2 of the LCRA deals with applications for a liquor licence. A person who wishes to apply for a liquor licence must lodge an application with the VCGLR. An application to vary a licence can be made by the licensee or permittee, a licensing inspector, or the Chief Commissioner of Police.

The LCRA specifies who must be notified of a licence application, including Victoria Police and the council of the municipality in which the licensed premises are to be located. The VCGLR may direct an applicant to notify a specified person or all persons in a specified area. Public advertising may also be required.

Persons who may object to a licence application include:

- the council, which can object on the grounds that the licence would have a negative impact on local amenity. Where the application is for a packaged liquor licence, the council can also object on the grounds that the licence may lead to the misuse or abuse of alcohol
- the general public, who can object on similar grounds to councils
- Victoria Police licensing inspectors, who can object on grounds of amenity, the licence possibly leading to the misuse or abuse of alcohol (for any licence) and on the suitability of the applicant to hold the licence, and
- the Chief Commissioner of Police, who can object on any grounds seen fit.

The LCRA sets out how the VCGLR is to determine applications.

A delegated officer of the VCGLR may make the decision about both contested (that is, applications in relation to which the VCGLR has received an objection) and uncontested applications. The VCGLR may make a decision about a contested application “on the papers” or at an inquiry.

The LCRA requires the VCGLR to give the applicant and each objector a reasonable opportunity to be heard. A person who has the right to be heard may appear in person or be represented.
2.2.2 Requirement to obtain a planning permit

The Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP) specify when a planning permit is required to use land to sell or consume liquor. In determining an application for a planning permit, the council must consider (among other things) the impact of the sale or consumption of liquor on the surrounding area.

Councils must also consider matters under the Planning and Environment Act 1987, which include “any significant social effects and economic effects which the responsible authority considers the use or development may have."

The LCRA requires an applicant for most types of liquor licence to provide, as part of the application, evidence that they have obtained planning permission or that planning permission is not required.

There is significant overlap between the matters considered during the planning permit process and liquor licensing process. For example, much of the information required by councils for the purposes of assessing a planning permit application is also required by the VCGLR for assessing a liquor licence application. Similarly, a person can lodge an objection on amenity grounds under both the planning and liquor licensing processes.

2.3 Licence renewal

Liquor licences are valid for one calendar year and must be renewed each year.

The licence renewal process set out in the LCRA is based upon several key dates. The renewal fee for liquor licences is due by 31 December each year. However a licensee has a “grace period” until 31 March of the following year to pay the renewal fee. The licence remains in force and the licensee can trade normally during this period.

If the licence fee is not paid by 31 March, the licensee ceases to be in force and the licensee has until 30 June to apply to the VCGLR for renewal. The licensee is not permitted to supply liquor during this period.

If a licence is not renewed by 30 June, the licensee is no longer able to renew the licence. The VCGLR must inform the owner, mortgagee of the licensed premises and any other person prejudicially affected by the failure to renew, who can apply, up until 30 September, to have the licence transferred to them. If the application for transfer is approved the licence is ‘revived’ with a new licensee.
2.4 The cost of a liquor licence

Since 2010, Victoria's licence types and licensing fees have been determined according to risk. Licensees of premises that are assessed as high risk pay a higher fee than licensees of premises assessed as low risk. A restaurant and café licence, for example, attracts a lower fee reflecting the lower risk posed by these types of premises. Fees for late night licences, on the other hand, reflect the higher risk associated with those venues that are authorised to supply alcohol late at night.

The LCRA provides that fees can be based on the type of venue, patron capacity and the licensee's previous compliance history. These factors are based on evidence that shows certain characteristics and practices are associated with a higher risk of alcohol-related harm.

The *Liquor Control Reform Regulations 2009* prescribe the fees for each licence type, each of which attracts a base renewal fee, with higher base renewal fees applied to those licence types identified as high-risk. Additional risk fees may also be added depending on the licensee’s:

- operating hours - this risk factor applies to late night, general, on-premises and packaged liquor licences only. Essentially, the later the venue trades, the higher the risk fee
- compliance history - whether the licensee has been prosecuted for any non-compliance incidents in the previous 12 months. This fee is $3792.10 if one or two offences have been committed and $7584.10 for three or more offences
- venue capacity - for some licence types, the renewal fee is multiplied by a number related to the number of patrons the venue can accommodate. This ranges from a multiplier of 1 for 0-200 patrons through to 4 for over 1301 patrons.

Licensees offering sexually explicit entertainment are subject to separate and higher fees prescribed in the LCRA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What opportunities are there for reducing the regulatory burden?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does the current licence type regime work? How could it be improved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How could the liquor licence application and renewal process be improved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is there scope for streamlining the interaction between licensing and planning processes? What are the biggest opportunities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are there opportunities to improve the risk based fee structure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How can the LCRA better foster diversity and support small business?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2 Non-compliance incidents are outlined in section 3.4.
3 Harm minimisation

The first object of the LCRA is to contribute to minimising harm arising from the misuse and abuse of alcohol, including by:

- providing adequate controls over the supply and consumption of liquor
- ensuring as far as practicable that the supply of liquor contributes to, and does not detract from, the amenity of community life
- restricting the supply of certain alcoholic products
- encouraging a culture of responsible consumption of alcohol and reducing risky drinking of alcohol and its impact on the community.

The LCRA prescribes measures aimed at minimising harm, including the process for obtaining a liquor licence, the obligations imposed on licensees and the offence provisions relating to the behaviour of licensees and individuals.

The review will assess the effectiveness of the LCRA’s harm minimisation measures, including the degree to which they contribute to minimising the incidence of family violence.

3.1 The liquor licensing process

The LCRA requires that the regulator, the VCGLR, consider of a range of matters when determining an application for a liquor licence. These include the suitability of the applicant to hold a liquor licence, the effect that the licence would have on the amenity of the area in which the licensed premises will be located and whether the licence would encourage the misuse and abuse of alcohol.

The LCRA defines amenity as “the quality that the area has of being pleasant and agreeable”. Factors that can be taken into account by the VCGLR when considering amenity include parking facilities, traffic movement, traffic density and noise. The LCRA provides that evidence of detraction from, or detriment to, amenity includes violent behaviour, drunkenness, vandalism, nuisance and littering if it occurs in licensed premises or outside licensed premises if “sufficiently proximate” to those premises. Any person can object to the grant of a licence on the grounds that it would detract from or be detrimental to the amenity of the area in which the premises is located.

Where the application is for a packaged liquor licence, a person can object on the ground that it would be conducive to or encourage the misuse or abuse of alcohol.

The VCGLR can refuse to grant an application if its grant would detract from, or be detrimental to, the amenity of the area or be conducive to, or encourage, the misuse and abuse of alcohol.

3.2 Licence conditions imposed by the VCGLR

The VCGLR can attach conditions to a licence. This gives the VCGLR the discretion to impose obligations on a licensee over and above those imposed by the LCRA and the regulations made under the LCRA.

Typical licence conditions that relate to harm minimisation include requiring the licensee to undertake RSA training, restricting the hours during which alcohol can be supplied and restricting the type and quantity of alcohol that can be supplied. The VCGLR also imposes conditions related to amenity - for example, limiting the noise that can be emitted from a live music venue.

The VCGLR may specify trading hours for licensed premises that are shorter than the ordinary trading hours prescribed by the LCRA or may specify shorter trading hours for certain areas of a premises (for example, a beer garden).

The ability to impose conditions provides the VCGLR with the flexibility to respond to the particular circumstances of each application, particularly where local amenity is concerned.
3.3 Licensee obligations

Licensees are not all subject to the same harm minimisation requirements. Different harm minimisation obligations apply depending on the type of licence the licensee holds.

For example, the requirements in the LCRA to undertake RSA training apply to holders of a general, packaged liquor, on premises and late night licence but not to the holder of a limited, wine and beer producers, major event and restaurant and café licence.

Packaged liquor licensees must comply with the packaged liquor code of conduct, which covers matters relating to the responsible supply of liquor such as marketing and promotion, minors on premises and signage as well as specific requirements for licensees who sell liquor by mail, facsimile, telephone or on the internet. These requirements do not apply to licensees selling packaged liquor under another licence type.

Nearly all licence types restrict the hours during which alcohol can be supplied.

The hours during which a licensee can supply alcohol fall into the following categories:

- ordinary trading hours – these are the hours prescribed in the LCRA and a licensee is entitled to supply alcohol in these hours without requiring any additional approval.
- extended trading hours – these are determined by the VCGLR on a case-by-case basis and are specified in the licence
- late night trading hours – these are determined by the VCGLR for each licence that is a late night licence and are specified in the licence.

For example, general, late night (general), on-premises, late night (on premises) and restaurant and café licences have ordinary trading hours of between 7am and 11pm (10am and 11pm on Sunday). Extended hours for general licences can allow trading to continue to 1am and start as early as 5am.

Late night hours for a late-night (general) licence are any other time determined by the VCGLR.

3.4 Offences

Part 8 of the LCRA contains a wide range of offences that apply to licensees. These include the following serious offences, for which a demerit point is also incurred (discussed below):

- supplying liquor to an intoxicated person
- permitting drunken or disorderly persons to be on the licensed premises
- supplying liquor to an underage person (other than as permitted)
- permitting liquor to be supplied to an underage person
- liquor being supplied to an underage person on licensed premises
- permitting an underage person on licensed premises.

It also contains offences for which a demerit point is not incurred but for which there is a prescribed penalty (a fine). These offences include failure to complete an approved RSA course or supplying liquor not in accordance with the LCRA and the applicable licence.

Shaping licensee behaviour by creating offences is an important harm minimisation measure.

3.5 Demerit points and star ratings

In 2012, Victoria introduced a demerit points and a star ratings scheme for liquor licensing. These incentive-based schemes aim to reward licensees who behave responsibly and to penalise those who repeatedly do the wrong thing.

Licensees begin with zero demerit points and are issued one point for each non-compliance incident detected. The accumulation of five or more demerit points within three years automatically leads to the suspension of the licence for a period of between 24 hours and 28 days, depending on the number of points accrued.

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3 Other hours apply to Good Friday and ANZAC Day.
4 In this paper, references to “licences” and “licensees” include BYO permits and permittees unless otherwise stated.
A licensee may apply to the Minister to suspend, cancel or delay a suspension.

Under the star rating system, all licences are initially rated at three stars. A licence is awarded an additional star if the licensee records two consecutive years without a non-compliance incident. The maximum rating is five stars, for having a clean record for three or more consecutive years. Stars are deducted for non-compliance incidents, with the minimum rating being one star.

Licences with a four or five star rating receive a five or ten per cent discount respectively on the annual renewal fee. Licences with one or two stars are charged a higher annual renewal fee due to the presence of one or more non-compliance incidents. A licence’s star rating is published online with other licence details.

The demerit point and star rating system can expose licensees to multiple consequences for non-compliance incidents: one offence leads to a fine, a demerit point and an impact on the star rating, directly affecting the cost of the licensee’s licence renewal.

3.6 Liquor accords

Liquor accords were first introduced into the LCRA in 2007, although voluntary agreements between licensees to manage patron conduct have existed in Victoria since the early 1990s. A liquor accord is defined in the LCRA as a code of practice or agreement that:

- affects the supply of liquor, the opening and closing of licensed premises or other aspects of the management of or conduct of business on licensed premises
- is entered into in writing between 2 or more licensees or permittees (or both), with the approval of the Victoria Police and the VCGLR, for the purpose of minimising harm arising from the misuse and abuse of alcohol.

There are currently 58 accords in Victoria: 46 in regional areas and 12 in metropolitan Melbourne. Liquor accords allow licensees to cease supplying liquor or allowing liquor to be consumed on their premises and can be used to ban individuals from the licensed premises.

Accords have undergone some significant developments in recent years. For example, there are now accords specifically for packaged liquor licensees and some accords allow individuals banned from licensed premises under one accord to be banned from licensed premises in a nearby area that has a different accord.

3.7 Freeze on late-night licences

Since 2008, a freeze on new late-night liquor licences has applied to the municipalities of Melbourne, Stonnington, Yarra and Port Phillip. The freeze was introduced in response to concerns about the proliferation of high-risk liquor licences and violence in the inner city.

Under the freeze, the VCGLR cannot grant a new licence (or vary an existing licence) to serve alcohol after 1.00am in bars, pubs and nightclubs in the freeze area. The freeze is created by decision making guidelines issued to the VCGLR by the Minister under the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation Act 2011. New decision making guidelines were issued in 2015, which enable licensees to apply to the VCGLR for an exemption to the freeze for approval to serve alcohol after 1am in specified circumstances. These circumstances are where VCGLR is satisfied that the premises is or will be:

- used as an accommodation hotel
- a venue that regularly provides live music entertainment
- a venue that supplies liquor on the premises provided that food is available at the premises at all times liquor can be supplied.

The applicant must also satisfy the VCGLR that the local council supports the application, that is has (or will put in place) a venue management plan, that the economic and social benefit of granting the licence will outweigh the impact of the licence on alcohol misuse and community amenity and that the patron capacity of the premises will not exceed 200 persons.
3.8 Designated areas – banning notices and exclusion orders

Under Part 8A of the LCRA, the VCGLR can declare an entertainment precinct where alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour has occurred to be a ‘designated area’. Designated areas are determined in consultation with the Chief Commissioner of Police.

Victoria Police has the power to ban people from licensed premises in designated areas or from the entire designated area for up to 72 hours if it reasonably suspects that the person has committed a relevant offence, which includes drunkenness, physical assault, property damage or failure to leave licensed premises. These are known as banning notices.

Courts have the power to issue an order to ban repeat offenders from a designated area (or licenced venues within the area) for up to 12 months. These are known as exclusion orders.

Currently there are 20 designated areas in Victoria, with a little over half of those in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Some designated areas cover a broad area such as an entire central business district, while others cover only a precinct such as a strip of venues.

In 2014-15, Victoria Police issued 301 banning notices to 294 different people. In the same year 49 exclusion orders were issued.

3.9 Offences by individuals

The LCRA creates a range of offences relating to individual behaviour. These include non-compliance with a banning notice or barring order, procuring liquor for a person in a state of intoxication, remaining in the vicinity of a licenced premises if refused entry, supplying liquor to someone under 18 and falsely procuring proof of age documents.

3.10 Barring orders

Part 7A of the LCRA gives licensees, responsible persons and police the power to issue a barring order that is enforceable by Victoria Police. A responsible person is any person who is in management or control of a licensed premises. A barring order can be served on a person who is drunk, violent or quarrelsome, or if anyone on the premises “is at substantial or immediate risk as a result of the consumption of alcohol by the person”. A barring order requires the person to leave a venue and not return until a time specified in the order.

A first barring order has a maximum duration of one month, a second barring order three months and third and subsequent barring orders six months. A barring order can be varied or revoked by the VCGLR or by the person who issued the order.

3.11 Family violence

In February 2015, the Victorian Government established the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

The Royal Commission delivered its final report in March 2016, and concluded that:

Although alcohol use is associated with a relatively small proportion of family incidents, it is widely regarded as increasing the severity and incidence of family violence. Acknowledging that alcohol consumption plays a part in family violence does not excuse violent behaviour. On the contrary, the Commission considers that more extensive engagement with all of the risk factors that contribute to family violence is required to appropriately respond to violence, to support victims, and to hold perpetrators to account. …

The Commission considers that greater attention should be paid to the relationship between alcohol supply and family violence in light of the evidence showing that alcohol misuse increases the severity and frequency of family violence, and that many in the community continue to believe that excess alcohol consumption excuses the use of family violence.5

The Royal Commission recommended that:

The Victorian Government ensure that the terms of reference of the current review of the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 (Vic) consider family violence and alcohol-related harms. The review
should involve consultation with people who have expertise in the inter-relationship between family violence and alcohol use

3.12 Compliance and Enforcement

VCGLR inspectors monitor licensed premises to ensure that licensees comply with their obligations under the LCRA and their liquor licence.

The VCGLR and Victoria Police have complementary (and in some cases overlapping) roles in monitoring and enforcing compliance with the LCRA.

Victoria Police has a variety of powers under the LCRA. Some of Victoria Police’s functions and powers under the LCRA include:

- participating in the licence application process
- issuing barring orders and banning notices
- assisting with the removal of persons from licensed premises
- seizing liquor from minors
- serving infringement notices.

Both the VCGLR and Victoria Police undertake inspections of licensed premises to monitor compliance and detect breaches of liquor legislation. They also conduct joint operations that target particular events, licensed premises or locations that may be susceptible to alcohol-related harms.

QUESTIONS

7. Could the current harm minimisation measures in the LCRA be improved? If so, how?
8. How should harm be considered in the licence application process?
9. How should the LCRA encourage best practice harm minimisation behaviour by licensees?
10. Could the current controls on patron behaviour in the LCRA be improved? If so, how?
11. What opportunities are there to address family violence within the LCRA?
12. Could the current compliance and enforcement provisions in the LCRA be improved? If so, how?
13. Are there other measures that could reduce harm? What would be the costs and benefits of including them?

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Recommendation 93, Royal Commission final report p. 301
Appendix A: Terms of reference

Background

The liquor and licensed hospitality industry makes a significant contribution to Victoria’s cultural life and economy.

Pubs, clubs, bars and licensed restaurants and cafés all contribute to our diverse and vibrant culture. Our unique small bars and our abundance of top quality restaurants and cafes, together with our great wineries and boutique breweries, are the envy of other states.

Melbourne is increasingly becoming a 24-hour city, with a growing night-time economy supported by late night and 24-hour public transport.

The liquor and licensed hospitality industry employs over 85,000 people and contributes to making Victoria a destination of choice for interstate and overseas visitors.

Given the important role licensed premises play in our cultural and economic life, it is vital that the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 (Act), which governs the supply and consumption of liquor in Victoria, keep pace with industry trends and modern regulatory practice. The Act must minimise regulatory burden and not unnecessarily impede responsible growth and innovation.

While acknowledging the importance of the liquor and licensed hospitality industries, the government is aware of the harm arising from the misuse and abuse of alcohol.

In March 2016 the Royal Commission into Family Violence recommended that the Victorian Government ensure that the terms of reference for this review consider family violence and alcohol-related harms. The government has committed to implement all of the Royal Commission’s recommendations.

Focus of the review

The Victorian Government will undertake a review of the Act with the aim of identifying ways to reduce red tape and regulatory burden. The review will ensure that Victoria has the right laws to support our liquor and hospitality industries, including our attractive café, restaurant, pub, club, bar and night-life culture.

The review will also assess the effectiveness of the Act’s harm minimisation measures, including the degree to which they can play a part in minimising the incidence of family violence, as recommended by the Royal Commission into Family Violence. The review will not, however, consider or recommend introducing lock-outs for late-trading licensed premises.

Consultations

The review will consult with industry and consumer stakeholder groups, and people who have expertise in the inter-relationship between family violence and alcohol use.