

13 December 2022
R&CA – NSW Liquor Licensing Reform Options



R&CA welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on these proposed Liquor Licensing Reform Options on behalf of NSW's restaurant, café and catering businesses.

R&CA is broadly supportive of the measures proposed by the NSW government. Planning reforms will help cut cumbersome red tape that will enable businesses to better adapt to changing consumer expectations.

R&CA is also supportive of changes proposed to the liquor licence model. The changes proposed would award restaurants, cafes and catering businesses more flexibility in how they serve alcohol and would reduce unnecessary administrative burdens that the current licensing model places on them.

Following two years of COVID-19, NSW's hospitality industry is still recovering from lockdowns and resulting staff shortages. Reforms that enable businesses to operate with flexibility will not only keep these struggling businesses alive but will help align the industry with the NSW Government's 24-hour Economy Strategy.

Restaurant & Catering Australia (R&CA) is the peak industry body representing over 58,000 restaurants, cafes and catering businesses across Australia. The members of R&CA are owners and operators of restaurants, cafes, coffee shops, catering companies, takeaway businesses, and function centres. The hospitality sector is vitally important to the national economy, generating over \$40.4 billion in retail turnover each year as well as employing 350,000 people.

Part A: Liquor Licensing and Planning Approvals

R&CA fully supports measures to simplify the process of getting a development application (DA) and a liquor licence.

As page 8 of the main document correctly identifies, applying for both a DA and a liquor licence is a time consuming and costly exercise for many operators. From feedback provided to R&CA from members, many venue operators experience enormous delays before approvals and in cases where venues have applied for both a DA and a liquor licence, one requires their other to be approved before anything is approved, leading to delays.

R&CA supports the creation of a single joint DA and liquor licence application process. By streamlining the process, R&CA believes that this will help new entrants into the industry and help existing businesses to expand without going through timely and costly processes that businesses currently face.

Further, R&CA believes that Plans of Management (POM) need to be further simplified or at least placed solely in the remit of L&GNSW. R&CA would support creating a single POM.

The layers of complexity and inconsistency make it extremely hard to conduct business. This is especially the case when it is a council POM.

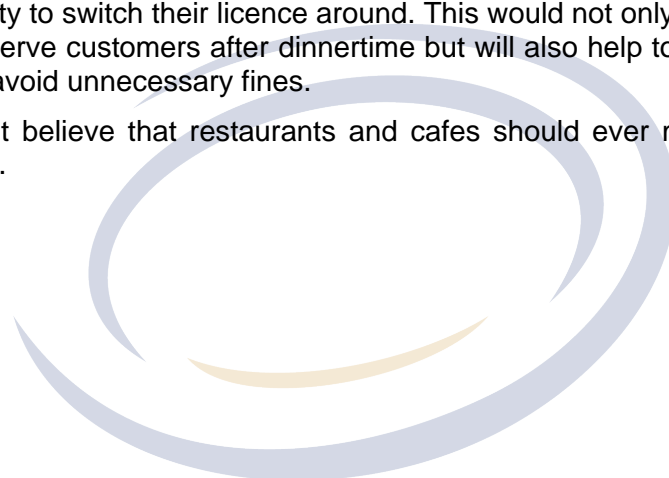
Part B: Risk-Based Licence Model

R&CA is supportive of reforming the current licence model. Reforms need to be made to better accommodate the move to outdoor dining as well as to support the NSW government's move to allow restaurants and cafes to provide takeaway alcohol ancillary to a meal.

R&CA supports the "licence builder" model as it supports not only changing consumer expectations but will help support the NSW government's vision of a 24-hour economy. This model will not only support businesses in Greater Sydney but also help businesses in regional NSW looking to provide diverse options to the community.

The ability for restaurants and cafes to transform into a small bar for a certain amount of time on certain days would be an absolute game changer. Currently there are many restaurants that operate in busy nightlife areas that would absolutely benefit from having this ability to switch their licence around. This would not only allow businesses to continue to serve customers after dinnertime but will also help to keep businesses compliant and avoid unnecessary fines.

R&CA does not believe that restaurants and cafes should ever meet the high-risk venue category.



Restaurant
& Catering