

16 January 2023

[alcoholpolicy@nt.gov.au](mailto:alcoholpolicy@nt.gov.au)

**Re: Submission for the three-year review of the *Liquor Act 2019*.**

The Property Council of Australia is the peak body representing the property industry in the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory Division collectively represents billions of dollars of commercial investment in the Northern Territory. The value of the property industry to the NT economy is second only to the resources sector.

The Property Council's membership draws together key players from property investment and development, including owners of commercial office buildings and shopping centres, financial institutions, and construction companies.

Our membership also extends to those engaged in professions, businesses and provision of services directly associated with the property industry (architects, engineers, financiers, legal and other consultants, suppliers etc.).

As an industry, we not only have a keen interest but also a financial stake in the future development of the Northern Territory. We appreciate and take seriously the opportunity to provide a comment on your review of the 2019 Liquor Act.

There is grave concern in the property industry over the current level of property crime and anti-social behaviour throughout the Northern Territory. The repeated responses of "unacceptable" or listening to "the experts" is starting to wear thin on both the industry and the community. The only metric for policy success is very simple, real, and tangible results. Just plain and simple facts and statistics. Whilst the Property Council NT acknowledges that criminal reforms are outside our scope of expertise, recommending key performance indicators, accountability, and expectations are not.

**Property Crime Statistics as of 30 September 2022**

Category	Rate Per 100,000	Percentage Change (YoY)
Crime Against Property	10,503.7	17.75%

**Property Crime Statistics (Decade Average)**

	<b>Respective September (YoY)</b>	<b>Rate Per 100,000</b>
1.	2013	7,922.0
2.	2014	7,532.8
3.	2015	8,016.4
4.	2016	8,086.2
5.	2017	8,690.0
6.	2018	8,951.0
7.	2019	8,486.7
8.	2020	7,682.5
9.	2021	8,920.4
10.	2022	10,503.7
<b>Decade Average:</b>		<b>8,479.2</b>

Whilst the word “perceived” is bandied around in relation to crime and people’s general feelings of safety, the above statistics clearly dispel that political caveat. Property Related Crime in 2022 is 24% higher than the decade average. The results from current government policies are also unequivocal, and they are not working.

Subsequent to our earlier submissions, social issues arising from the abuse of alcohol continue to escalate rapidly within the community. In particular, we call on for immediate action to be taken in Alice Springs, given the impact on the local community and the untold reputational damage spoiling interstate and overseas visitation to the region. We also hold grave concerns that Darwin, a capital city of Australia, is rapidly heading in the same direction.

In addition to the foregoing, two Northern Territory cities (Alice Springs and Darwin) currently occupy the unenviable positions of being in the top 5 highest crime / unsafe areas in Australia.

Rank	City	Crime Index	Safety Index
1	Alice Springs	75.08	24.92
2	Rockhampton	67.88	32.12
3	Cairns	61.46	38.54
4	Darwin	60.80	39.20
5	Townsville	57.59	42.41
6	Toowoomba	56.15	43.85
7	Geelong	55.65	44.35
8	Ballarat	54.25	45.75
9	Wollongong	51.65	48.35
10	Newcastle	48.08	51.92

At a time when we have tourism and workforce attraction measures in place, criminal activity, public intoxication, and unacceptable behaviour are more prevalent than ever.

What we are hearing from our members and the general public is that people do not feel safe whilst going about their daily business, and we know that this is not an isolated night time issue. Unfortunately, this behaviour occurs at all hours and across the entire Territory.

Furthermore, antisocial behaviour and public intoxication are increasingly visible to the public. We have previously requested that this information and statistics be published in public reports to increase transparency. With increased reporting and statistics, we can develop more effective solutions.

To reflect the high levels of community concern, we are asking that the government seeks to prioritise policies that reduce incidences of crime, public intoxication, and property desecration. In addition, we further request that the NTG re-examine the 2019 policy changes made to the NT Liquor Act that previously addressed public intoxication.

At the time, and as quoted to the NT News, it was removed because "a health response is the preferred response to alcohol issues rather than criminalisation." (Spokeswoman for the Attorney General's Department, February 2020.)

Additionally, the Property Council NT Division has recommendations regarding other alcohol reforms that will assist with the economic conditions and revitalisation efforts.

**1. The introduction of licencing incentives for live music.**

- This could be achieved by either providing a fixed percentage discount on annual liquor licence fees and/or providing limited extended trading hours where live music is provided.

**2. The introduction of a new authority (licence category) for Micro Festivals for patron capacity < 500.**

- This would need to cover areas outside a licence holder's normal licenced area.
- Permits a licence holder to hold a specific number of events every year.
- Provides a cap on additional security to 2 additional persons.
- Provides flexible/extended operating times for international sports broadcasts

**3. Amend existing Small Bar Authority to lessen regulatory burden.**

- Remove the need for a Community Impact Statement.
- Provides interim approval to start trading upon lodgement of licence application (subject to planning application approval being received).

**4. Amend Community Event Authority to lessen regulatory burden.**

- Develop area specific provisions for any liquor licence applications / approvals processes for the purposes of holding events in those designated areas.

**5. Local Government – Outdoor Dining Licencing**

- Provide a legislated delegation to a City Council's Chief Executive for the purposes of approving an existing licence holder expanding their licenced area to Outdoor Dining Permit areas under the control of the Council.

Ultimately, the community and industry will fall behind the government's policies if it achieves results.

We look forward to your response.

Kind Regards,



**Ruth Palmer**  
**NT Executive Director**