

25 February 2013

Executive Officer  
Liquor Act Review Committee  
PO Box 6119  
EAST PERTH

Dear Sir/Madam

## Committee for Perth – Liquor Act Review Submission

The Committee for Perth, established in 2006, is an influential, member based organisation driven by Perth's business and community leaders. As an advocate for a brighter, more liveable future for Perth, the Committee promotes and enables change that will improve the cultural diversity, economic prosperity, sustainability and world class amenity of Perth. It is in this capacity the Committee has a strong interest in the current review of the Liquor Control Act 1988.

This submission has approved by the Committee's Reforming Working Group, a group of senior executives from a range of sectors and disciplines. It provides a high level overview of the Committee for Perth's views from a lay perspective. Our interest extends to three key issues:

### 1. Enabling the development of diverse licensed premises in Perth

We believe it is critical that the Liquor Control Act continues to enable the development of a diverse range of licensed premises to meet the needs of responsible consumers of alcohol.

The Committee for Perth strongly supports the 2007 Amendments to the Act that have enabled the establishment of new types of licensed premises in Perth, specifically small bars, as well as changes that have enabled the consumption of liquor without a meal in restaurants.

It is our view that small bars and restaurants provide high quality environments for responsible alcohol consumers and that these types of premises encourage more responsible alcohol consumption than other types of premises or outlets. This view is supported by current research, such as the 2007 study *Predicting alcohol related harms from licensed outlet density* (Chikritzhs T, et al) which indicates that these types of venues are less likely to be associated with alcohol related harm. It could therefore be concluded that not all licensed premises are equal when measured by risk.

We strongly believe that the burgeoning small bar scene in Perth has had a significant positive impact on the amenity, vibrancy, attractiveness and perceived sophistication of the city as a place to live and visit, benefits that have been widely reported in the media (from WA Today to the Sydney Morning Herald) and advocated by the tourism industry with Tourism WA's web site describing Perth's growing small bar scene as a 'cultural awakening'.

Committee for Perth Limited

ACN 118 292 792

Ground Floor, 996 Hay Street, Perth WA 6000

t (08) 9481 5699

f (08) 9481 7738

e [enquiries@committeeforperth.com.au](mailto:enquiries@committeeforperth.com.au)

Our work is fully funded by our members & foundation partners. We acknowledge:



A complete list of current members is available at: [www.committeeforperth.com.au](http://www.committeeforperth.com.au)

It is therefore the view of the Committee for Perth that the current review of the Liquor Control Act should aim to ensure that the Act continues to meet the needs of responsible consumers of alcohol by continuing to appropriately allow for the development of 'low risk' premises such as small bars and licensed restaurants, and that these are the most suitable types of premises for most of Perth's central and urban areas.

## **2. Reducing Alcohol Related Crime and Violence**

The Committee for Perth is aware, however, of the health problems associated with excessive alcohol consumption and increasing alcohol related violence in Perth and we therefore understand the need to ensure that the Act is effective in meeting its control and public health objects.

We therefore appreciate that there may be a need to ensure that there are adequate restrictions in place within the Act to avoid excessive proliferation of venues which suffer from high levels of alcohol related violent crime. This may be an issue not just of the amount of venues and their capacities but may also relate to their operating hours and function.

However, critically, we believe that curbing excessive drinking in Western Australia will require a fundamental cultural shift and that starting this process requires a comprehensive, funded education program and marketing campaign similar to the very successful anti-smoking campaigns of the late twentieth century.

## **3. The Objects of the Act**

The Committee for Perth believes that the role of the legislation should be to encourage the *responsible* promotion, sale, supply and consumption of alcohol and to balance this with appropriate public health objects.

Associated with this, we are concerned that amending the Act to make public health its primary object (as recommended by the Education and Health Standing Committee) would conflict with the primary role of the legislation (which is, in practice, to both enable and control the development and operation of licensed premises according to public need) by placing too much emphasis on restricting all types of liquor licenses in the interests of public health.

We therefore believe that the objects of the Act should balance public health goals; the needs of consumers; and the needs of the tourism and hospitality industries. We also believe that there should be a specific object to encourage responsible alcohol consumption, with an aim to curb the culture of excessive drinking in the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this review. We look forward to being informed of the outcomes of the review process.

Yours sincerely

Marion Fulker  
**CEO**