



Andrew Barr MLA

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

TREASURER

**MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MINISTER FOR TOURISM, SPORT AND RECREATION**

MEMBER FOR MOLONGLO



**A.C.T. LEGISLATIVE
ASSEMBLY
COMMITTEE OFFICE**

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2

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Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA

Chair

**Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety
ACT Legislative Assembly**

Dear Mrs Dunne

I write in my capacity as Acting Attorney-General. I note that the Inquiry into the Liquor Licensing Fees Review and Subordinate Legislation has asked for submissions to be lodged by the end of January 2012.

I acknowledge that the setting of liquor fees is a difficult area to reconcile and that there is no perfect formula. Decreases to fees for some will inevitably lead to increased fees for others. In the interests of fairness, the Government has used an evidence-based approach to determine a risk fee formula which favours licensees who choose to close earlier and operate at less risk. There is now evidence to show where the police resources are most needed and the licence fees reflect this risk profile. Where adjustments are made to fee levels based on risk, there will always be some industry sectors which will benefit less than others.

The positive community safety outcomes and strong compliance we have witnessed since the new laws took effect are directly related to the liquor fees. These outcomes are only achievable because of the current additional police and Office of Regulatory Services' resources which are the consequence of the fees.

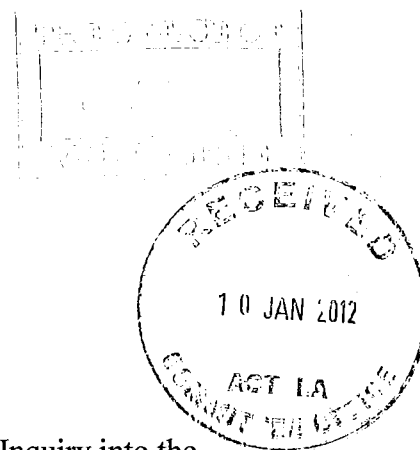
The Government's decision to levy additional liquor licensing fees had a number of objectives. Its primary purpose was to satisfy the community's concerns about the increase in violence around licensed premises, particularly in the early hours of the morning. The fee structure encourages the liquor industry to partner with the community in dealing with the harm caused by irresponsible drinking, particularly by being more responsible with the service of alcohol.

The recent liquor reforms with an enhanced focus on community safety and harm minimisation have been very successful since their introduction on 1 December 2010. ACT Policing has recorded sizeable reductions in the number of liquor related arrests, assaults and the number of people taken into protective custody over this year.

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

London Circuit, Canberra ACT 2601 GPO Box 1020, Canberra ACT 2601

Phone (02) 6205 0011 Fax (02) 6205 0157 Email barr@act.gov.au



In comparison with last year, the number of alcohol-related arrests has fallen by 18 per cent, the number of assaults has fallen by 12 per cent and the number of people taken into protective custody has fallen by 19.2 per cent. ACT Policing has issued 514 liquor criminal infringement notices. 79 notices were issued for the new offence of failing to leave a licensed venue when requested to do so, and five notices were issued for the new offence of abusing, intimidating, or threatening staff exercising the mandatory responsible service of alcohol principles.

Attached is a copy of the Government's Final Report on the Review of Liquor Licensing Fees which clearly demonstrates the evidence-based approach taken by the Government in setting the new liquor fees for 2012.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Barr', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Barr MLA
Acting Attorney-General

6.1.12