# Submission to the Liquor & Gaming NSW evaluation of the Community Impact Statement requirement for liquor applications

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### NAAPA sends a strong message that the phased removal of alcohol advertising in NSW is needed in order to reduce the incidence of alcohol harm.

Community participation in licensing matters is a function of democratic governance and procedural fairness. That is why the NSW ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance (NAAPA) welcomed the opportunity to provide comment on the Liquor & Gaming NSW Evaluation of the Community Impact Statement requirement for liquor licence applications Discussion Paper.

NAAPA’s submission supports the 2013 research report conducted by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education (FARE) on *Breaking down barriers: community involvement in liquor licensing decisions in NSW.*

NAAPA argues that current system is flawed and there is a clear need for reform that addresses four key areas:

1. the need for greater transparency and objectivity
2. giving communities a voice
3. reversing the onus of proof
4. properly resourcing assessors and regulators.

The submission sends a clear message that in order for the public to effectively engage in licensing matters they need to be appropriately supported and informed, processes need to be transparent and the regulators need to be sufficiently resourced and act with the highest levels of objectivity and impartiality.

## Recommendations

1. That the NSW Government make liquor licencing processes more transparent and improve public awareness, engagement and community input to these processes.
2. That the NSW Government make the CIS a requirement for all licence applications and notify at a minimum the local consent authority, local police and all occupants of neighbouring premises within the primary trade area.
3. That the NSW Government make the CIS and all supporting documentation, including the social impact assessment, publicly available in real time on the Liquor and Gaming Application Noticeboard. Any submissions made in favour or opposition of a licence application should also be published.
4. That the NSW Government establish an independent Community Defender’s Office (CDO) to support communities in licensing matters. The CDO should consist of an advisory service and central information service, with staff that have appropriate skills and expertise in alcohol related planning and licensing systems, including legal skills and an understanding of community needs and expectations.
5. That the NSW Government ensure that the onus of proof is on applicants, not community objectors.
6. That the NSW Government properly resource ILGA to monitor compliance and independently assess every application.
7. That the NSW Government keep community consultations at the Development Application (DA) process and the liquor licence CIS process separate. Local Council should also be resourced and supported to adequately assess a DA.

[view the submission](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/NAAPA-Submission-NSW-CIS.pdf)

[view the media release](https://fare.org.au/bound-and-gagged-nsw-liquor-licensing-silences-community-objections/)

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