# Three year review of the NT Liquor Act

In 2023, the Northern Territory Government announced a review of the *Liquor Act 2019* (the Act)*,* to assess how the Act is meeting its objective of minimising alcohol harm. As part of the review, a Discussion Paper was published that outlined key issues and potential reforms.

FARE’s submission responded to the Discussion Paper and outlined recommendations for evidence-based, community-centred measures that can protect people from alcohol harms.

## FARE’s recommendations:

### Principles

1. Adopt an evidence-based, public health approach to preventing alcohol-related harm in the Northern Territory (NT).

2. Implement appropriate management of the conflict of interest that affects the participation of the alcohol industry in alcohol policy-making. Focus solutions to the problem of alcohol-related harm on measures to control the harmful conduct of the industry that drives alcohol use and harm.

3. Ensure that alcohol policy reflects Australia’s commitments under international human rights law.

4. Ensure that alcohol policy reflects a commitment to justice and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Ensure that the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are included and heard in decision-making about alcohol policy in the NT and changes to the Act.

### Transfer of licence

5. Amend the provisions relating to the transfer of a licence to include public interest and community impact criteria, public notification, and the right to object.

6. Amend the provisions for the substitution of a premises so the provisions for deciding an application for a new licence apply, including the requirement for a public notice of the application for substitution. Repeal section 75(3) to remove the inconsistency between sections 75(1) (substitution applications as new licence applications) and 75(3) (substitution applications as variation applications).

### Liquor accords

7. Undertake a comprehensive review of liquor accords in the NT to determine if they reduce harms from alcohol, whether they should be retained and if so, whether the Act needs to be amended for more effective use of liquor accords to achieve the purposes of the Act. Amend the Act to make compliance with the terms of a liquor accord a condition of a licensee’s licence.

### Secondary supply of alcohol

8. Do not increase penalties for offences relating to secondary supply, nor create new offences such as ‘transporting liquor intending to supply’ or ‘possessing liquor intending to supply’. Implement the Riley Review recommendations that an ‘education campaign be conducted in remote communities to raise awareness of the problems that sly-grogging causes.’

### Expansion of search and seize powers

9. Do not grant ‘special search and seizure powers’ to additional categories of persons such as transit officers, public housing safety officers, park rangers, council rangers and contracted licensed security officers.

### Extension of moratorium on takeaway licences

10. Extend further the Riley Review recommended moratorium on takeaway licences.

### Risk-based licensing

11. Retain risk-based licensing (RBL) with higher penalties for licence breaches and reduced deductions for compliance.

### Banned drinkers register

12. Defer any decision about the Banned Drinkers Register (BDR) until the completion of the current review of the BDR being led by Deakin University and the Menzies School of Health Research, and until there has been adequate public consultation with all relevant stakeholders on the findings and any options for reform.

### Alcohol marketing restrictions

13. Advocate at the national level for independent, legislated control on the content, placement and volume of all forms of alcohol advertising and promotion. Also advocate at the national level that the issue of alcohol advertising during telecasts of live sports events be reviewed, with a view to prohibiting such advertising.

14. Ensure that publicly owned assets in the NT such as buses and buildings are free of alcohol advertising.

15. Amend the Act to specifically prohibit certain types of promotional activities, such as shopper dockets (liquor promotion vouchers on the purchase receipts) and harmful price discounting such as the sale of alcohol at half, or less than half, of the usual price.

16. Ban the display of point-of-sale promotional materials for liquor (such as ‘happy hours,’ free gifts with purchase, prominent signage, competitions, price discounts for bulk purchases, and sale prices) on and around licensed premises where children or young people are likely to be present.

17. If a ‘guideline’ on advertising and promotion has not been created under section 316 of the Act, this be done as matter of priority so as to give full effect to the rule in section 103 against promotions that ‘could be construed as inducing the irresponsible or excessive consumption of liquor or in licensed premises.’

[open submission](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/FARE-submission-to-the-Review-of-the-NT-Liquor-Act.pdf)