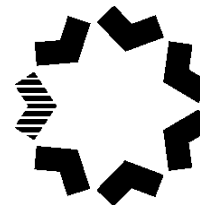


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MEDIA RELEASE

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National Competition Council welcomes report released by NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

The National Competition Council (the Council) today welcomed a report released by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research regarding the correlation between liquor outlet concentrations and alcohol-related neighbourhood problems.

The Council's Executive Director, Mr John Feil, said the report was a useful contribution to the issue of liquor regulation.

"The National Competition Policy (NCP) undertakings of all Federal and State Governments are not at odds with prudent and public-interest based regulation of alcohol. Indeed the Council has always agreed that regulation of alcohol is necessary," said Mr Feil.

"The Council's legitimate concern has been that some previous liquor regulation has restricted competition on commercial grounds rather than public interest grounds," said Mr Feil.

Specifically, the Council has previously raised concerns that some liquor regulation has restricted competition on the basis that new licences might impact adversely on the profits of incumbent licence holders.

However, competition restrictions that are proven to legitimately serve a public interest (i.e. harm minimisation) are consistent with governments' NCP undertakings and have always been welcomed by the Council.

"The Report released today by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research makes reference to a Council statement made in 2002. This statement is outdated as it referred specifically to the NSW liquor regulation at that time," said Mr Feil.

Subsequent changes to NSW legislation have satisfied the Council that the State's liquor regulations meet NCP requirements whereby legislation restricting competition must be proven to be in the public interest.

In its December 2005 Assessment of governments' progress in implementing the National Competition Policy and related Reforms (available for download from www.ncc.gov.au) the Council said of NSW's current liquor regulation arrangements:

"... setting potential social harm as the crucial licensing criterion is a marked advance on the previous arrangements which allowed for consideration of the impact of a new licence on the profits of incumbent licence holders."

"NSW has met its NCP obligations with regards to liquor licensing and the current arrangements rightly allow for consideration of the impact of liquor outlet concentrations and alcohol-related neighbourhood problems," said Mr Feil.

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See also:

'Identifying a framework for regulation in packaged liquor retailing' – a report prepared for the National Competition Council by Marsden Jacob Associates in June 2005 (available for download from www.ncc.gov.au)

For further information:

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