



Liquor Amendment (Parliamentary Precincts) Bill.

Second Reading

Mr GRANT McBRIDE (The Entrance—Minister for Gaming and Racing) [8.56 p.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill may be short, but it has a very significant purpose and will permanently alter the shape of liquor service at Parliament House. This Government has been committed to improving the harm minimisation measures related to the sale and service of alcohol. One important aspect of this commitment is applying to ourselves the same rules that apply to the community at large. This bill embodies the Government's commitment to applying the New South Wales liquor laws to Parliament House. It might surprise many to learn that the parliamentary precincts are exempt from the operation of the liquor laws—not just in this State, but across all the States of Australia. The exemption dates back to at least the early 1900s.

Regardless of its long-standing nature, the time has come to remove this archaic exemption and bring the New South Wales Parliament into line with current harm minimisation practices. In place of the exemption, the bill will enable the Governor to issue a licence authorising the sale of liquor within the parliamentary precincts. This type of licence is commonly known as a Governor's licence. It is the type of liquor licence granted to unique Crown facilities like the Sydney Opera House, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, and the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Domain. The Governor will be authorised to impose conditions on the Governor's licence granted in respect of Parliament House.

As with all Governor's licences, the licence conditions will delineate the boundary of the licensed premises, identifying areas in which liquor may be served. The licence will also name the person, or licensee, who is the holder of the licence. These licence conditions will be formulated through discussions between government officers and parliamentary officers nominated by the Presiding Officers. Some time will be required for government officers to work with parliamentary officials to finalise appropriate licence conditions. The Government expects that this process will be carried out and completed during the winter recess. This is why it is proposed that the bill commence on a day appointed by proclamation. All attempts will be made to ensure that the Governor's licence will be in place prior to the spring session of the Parliament.

This bill ensures the principle object of the Act, harm minimisation and responsible service of alcohol requirements, will apply to Parliament House. Many of these requirements are already evident within the Parliament House precincts. For example, Food and Beverage staff have been trained in the responsible service of alcohol, and relevant regulatory signage has been posted in bar areas. In these situations, the bill will endorse what has already been a common practice here for some time. The bill will make one other important amendment. It will insert a provision into the Parliamentary Precincts Act 1997 that will enable the Presiding Officers to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Director of Liquor and Gaming.

The Director of Liquor and Gaming is the chief regulatory officer in the Department of Gaming and Racing. This provision is similar to existing section 27, which allows the Presiding Officers and the Commissioner of Police to enter into a memorandum of understanding regarding the exercise of police powers within and around the parliamentary precincts. The Director of Liquor and Gaming has functions and responsibilities similar to those of the Police Commissioner for enforcement of the liquor laws. The Government's liquor law inspectors undertake a range of compliance-related functions under the director's delegation. As part of this role, liquor law inspectors have entry powers to all licensed venues.

It is important that inspectors, along with police, have appropriate access to Parliament House for the purpose of the liquor laws. The proposed power enabling a memorandum of understanding will provide certainty for members of Parliament, parliamentary officials, and liquor law inspectors. As with the conditions which will apply to the Governor's licence, government officers will develop the memorandum of understanding in consultation with the Presiding Officers or their nominees. None of the measures in the bill raise any issues relevant to the Legislation Review Committee's scrutiny of bills function. I am satisfied that the bill will not trespass unduly on personal rights or liberties; will not make rights, liberties or obligations unduly dependent upon insufficiently defined administrative powers or upon non-renewable decisions; and will not delegate legislative powers. I commend the bill to the House.

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