



# Communities

Office of the Director-General

Ms Eve Gallagher  
Research Officer  
Public Accounts Committee  
Parliament of New South Wales  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

[ By email: [Eve.Gallagher@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Eve.Gallagher@parliament.nsw.gov.au) ]

Dear Ms Gallagher

I refer to your email correspondence to Paul McCarthy in my office seeking further information on the response provided on 23 June 2009 by Communities NSW to the recommendations of the Auditor-General in Report No. 179 *Working With Hotels and Clubs to reduce alcohol-related crime* (April 2008).

The report recommends (on page 7) that the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing, by July 2009, monitor the effectiveness of liquor accords to identify strategies that reduce alcohol-related harm, such as crime and anti-social behaviour.

You have sought information as to whether OLGR has adopted, or plans to adopt, objectives and performance measures in the liquor accords, and then use them to monitor the effectiveness of the accords.

The operation of all of the liquor accords is monitored by this Department, with assistance provided as appropriate. A significant element of our assistance to accords is advice on strategies to reduce alcohol related violence and anti-social behaviour, as well as effective accord functioning.

The objectives of liquor accords are set out in the statute. Section 131 of the *Liquor Act 2007* sets high level objectives for accords, including the elimination or reduction of alcohol-related violence or anti-social behaviour or other alcohol-related harm.

The way in which the statutory objectives of accords are to be achieved is a matter for agreement by the parties to each accord. The process is, ideally, an organic one that sees the development of "local solutions to local problems", rather than strategy setting by Government. It is also desirable for strategies to be amended by accords as local circumstances change.

The issue of evaluation of the operation of individual liquor accords is vexed. While this Department is keen to ensure that accords operate effectively, we acknowledge that they are a voluntary, community based mechanism that does not receive public funding and that participation needs to be attractive. Members of the accord have many demands on their time and there is a legitimate concern to avoid undue administration and reporting.

Active consideration is currently being given to processes to better support the evaluation of liquor accord initiatives and strategies. This type of evaluation process would usefully inform other liquor accords considering the implementation of similar strategies.

In considering our approach to this issue it is important to acknowledge that the Government has assigned high priority to addressing alcohol-related violence over the last year. Departmental resources have been prioritised to designing and implementing strategies to meet this objective, some of which may ultimately be implemented through accords.

In the last year we have worked hard to strengthen partnerships with industry to collaboratively reduce the risk of alcohol related violence. Actions in this regard include:

- regular meetings between the Director-General and peak industry bodies;
- information sessions and briefings to industry;
- several cross-sectoral working parties, including industry, such as the Safety Rating System Working Party and the Sydney Liquor Taskforce and subgroups; and
- consultation meetings with liquor accord chairs to inform policy development.

While day to day work with liquor accords has continued over the last year, the completion of work relating to enhancements of accords has not been as high a priority as other initiatives to reduce alcohol-related violence.

Going forward, I am committed to enhancing the operation of liquor accords through a stronger focus on industry engagement and preventions and early intervention.

If you seek further clarification on this matter, please contact Claire Bowdler on 8233 1350 or at [claire.bowdler@communities.nsw.gov.au](mailto:claire.bowdler@communities.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**Carol Mills**  
Director-General

19 October 2009