

NSW Government's management of the COVID-19 pandemic
Answers to questions on notice - hearing date: 18 September 2020
Mr Karl Schlothauer, Independent Bars Association

Question:

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Well, can I just press that point to say that when I have talked to venue operators one of the things they say on outdoor dining is in normal times an application to do this is just never going to happen, particularly for outdoor performance. It is just not possible to make it through the thicket of regulations between State and local government. How possible is it to crash through this quickly? How important is that?

Answer:

It is critical. The NSW Independent Bars Association suggests that authority be given to local government to approve the temporary use of land, without the need for approval from various other government agencies. Consideration should also be given to persuading Police Local Area Commands as to the merits of outdoor dining and performance, as our experience is that most default to opposing any changes that are liquor-related.

Question:

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: I just wanted to touch on the complexities around noise complaints, if you like, now in terms of we will see more outdoor dining, rooftop dining and balancing that with the expected increase from residents around some of these businesses. I heard from a number of business owners after the lockdown laws were relaxed on 1 June that quite soon after opening and having people back in courtyards, and what have you, in bars and pubs that the complaints started rolling in again. From a personal perspective, given the huge numbers of job losses in the hospitality industry, I feel we have all had to sacrifice a little bit. Potentially people who are thinking that there is a noisy courtyard can think about that as well. But would you confirm that that is been the case from your members? Have people relaxed a little bit in terms of accepting that we need to keep things going, or have they clamped down because they are at home a lot? What is your experience? I will go to Mr Rodrigues.

Answer:

Yes, feedback from members is that there is generally a sense of community support for all businesses and there is more understanding of the challenges everyone faces in the context of COVID. Most members also report they maintain an open dialogues with their nearby residents. That being said, there will always people that complain and unfortunately, COVID has not changed that.

Question:

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I think that even with those changes and restrictions, that probably left venues in New South Wales in a better position than their counterparts in other States that have been unable to reopen as early or stay open during outbreaks. Would you agree with that?

Answer:

This is beyond my area of expertise, as our member base is confined to NSW.