# MEDIA RELEASE

## Tasmanians' wellbeing is on the line with easier and faster liquor licences - By Jackie Hallam

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It is a well-known fact that if you pull one lever in one part of a system, then it will impact other parts.

In this instance, I am specifically referring to recent developments occurring in Liquor & Gaming that will have flow-on impacts in health, justice and youth sectors.

On 16 March, the Tasmanian Premier, Jeremy Rockliff, issued a media release that detailed changes to liquor licensing processes.

Put simply, the main change is about reducing the time it takes to get a liquor licence from the current 14-days to a 10-day approval process. If there are no objections from the community in that window of time, the licence will be granted automatically.

Easier and faster liquor licences, with even less time for the community to have their say, put next to the availability of rapid online alcohol deliveries, and an Act that is not equipped to handle this, and you can see why the ATDC and others are concerned.

The Premier's media release went on to say that Tasmania's Liquor laws had not been amended for a long time. The statement was right. They have not.

The Act does need to be changed.

Some years ago now the ATDC highlighted that our current 14-day process to approve licences in Tasmania was the shortest turnover time for community consultation of any State/Territory in Australia. This window of time is important because it ensures that the community has sufficient time to respond and have a say where alcohol is made available in their communities.

Triangulating three main data points shows that Tasmania reports higher rates of daily drinking and a larger proportion of treatment clients with alcohol as a primary drug of concern (10 per cent to 28 per cent) more than the national average. Tasmanians on average drink more at greater risk to their health, and experience more harm than most Australian jurisdictions.



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A lot of people are unaware that alcohol is classed as a Group 1 carcinogen, meaning that it is a known cause of cancer in humans. And that cancer is one of the top five alcohol-attributable deaths in Australia.

There's a lot of research that shows that Liquor Acts are a good instrument to support positive health and wellbeing. Things such as restricting alcohol advertising, setting limits on the number of places where alcohol is available, as well as minimum unit pricing, will have a positive effect on lowering the number of people who develop problems with alcohol and also other things like lessening family violence, road accidents, etc.

Right now, the ATDC is formulating its submission to the Tasmanian Government's 20-year Preventative Health Strategy that aims to maximise the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians.

This announcement is glaringly at odds with the intent and purpose of this essential long-term strategy.

In the media release, the Premier stated: "These reforms are about modernising outdated rules, cutting red tape and, importantly, creating new opportunities for small businesses. We will make it easier and faster to get a liquor licence through a new digital system that will allow businesses to submit applications, track their progress and receive approvals faster."

The Premier is putting the interests of private business ahead of the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians.

In doing so he is also dismissing evidence and policy and putting Tasmanians at risk.

**Jackie Hallam is the CEO of the Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Council**


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### Available for Interview:
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atdc
Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council Tasmania

## Who are the ATDC?

The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council of Tasmania is the peak body representing and supporting community organisations, and the people they assist, to reduce alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harm for all Tasmanians.

Our vision is a Tasmania without alcohol, tobacco or other drug related harm or discrimination.

## Language matters

Language is powerful, especially when discussing alcohol and other drugs and the people who use them. Stigmatising language reinforces negative stereotypes. "Person-centred" language focuses on the person, not their substance use.

| Try This | Not This |
|---|---|
| Substance use, non-prescribed use | Abuse, misuse, problem use, non-compliant use |
| Person who uses drugs | Drug user, drug abuser |
| Person with a dependence on.... | Addict, junkie, druggie, alcoholic |
| Person experiencing drug dependence | Suffering from addiction, has a drug habit |
| Person who has stopped using drugs | Clean, sober, drug-free |
| Person with lived experience of drug dependence | Ex-addict, former addict, used to be a... |

Please see the 'Language matters' resource at: www.nada.org.au/resources/language-matters/
Mindframe for Alcohol and other Drugs: https://mindframe.org.au/alcohol-other-drugs
The Power of Words: https://adf.org.au/resources/power-words/

## Add help-seeking information

Always include help-seeking information alongside any story about alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.

Help and support for alcohol, tobacco or other drugs in Australia (24 hours 7 days a week):

- Alcohol and Drug Information Service - 1800 811 994
- Counselling Online - counsellingonline.org.au
- Family Drug Support - 1300 368 186

Tasmanian alcohol, tobacco and other drug support services including face-to-face services:

- ATDC Service Directory - atdc.org.au/service-directory



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