

The Official Publication of the Australian Hotels Association







OURHOTEL – YOUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME

otels, whether they be 600 room skyscrapers in the city or historic 5 room pubs in a small country town, whether they cater for the locals, the backpackers or the well heeled international tourist, are not just a key part of the Australian Tourism and Hospitality industry. They are an essential component of the broader economic and social fabric of any community.

The Australian Hotels Association (AHA) is recognised as the leading hospitality and tourism industry body in Australia. It represents over 8500 pub-style and 3, 4 and 5 Star accommodation hotels throughout the nation.

We have prepared this special supplement of our national magazine OURHotel to inform local Councillors of some of the key issues confronting our industry today.

We hope that you find it interesting and informative. We want it to assist in identifying ways in which we may work constructively with local councils to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes for our members and the broader community.

The World, Australia and our industry has changed significantly over the last 20 years. Australia has had a fantastic period of economic growth, but the business environment doesn't seem to be getting any easier, especially in regional communities coping with the worst drought in 100 years.

Our accommodation members continue to show that they are some of most resilient business operators across the decades. Where others have crashed and burned they have been knocked down over and over again and still keep getting up. They have survived everything from recessions, 9/11, SARS, wars, the Ansett collapse, bird flu and more!

Our "pub" members operate in a highly regulated market and are required to meet a range of compliance obligations. Our members accept these obligations to ensure the appropriate public use of the products and services they provide.

However, we can only do so much. Increasingly social issues undermine our attempts to provide safe venues for our patrons that promote responsible gaming and drinking. We recognise the need to work with the broader community to deal with these social issues. Our capacity to influence in isolation is limited when one considers that we are a relative minor player in gaming and the gambling industry and the shift away from "on premise" consumption of alcohol means that 70% of alcohol is now consumed away from licensed premises.

The changing face of Australian society means that local communities now, more than ever, will need a place to meet and socialise. Hotels have held a unique place in Australian society. We know that the ban on smoking in enclosed areas being introduced in all states will see a significant initial drop off in trading. However we know that hoteliers will use this challenge to identify and reach out to new markets and ensure we continue to be the local community's "home away from home".

The Australian Hotel industry is proud of what we have achieved and what we provide to the Australian public. Our members will continue to provide safe venues for people to meet, stay and be entertained. We will continue to contribute to and support the communities in which we operate. We look forward to building on the good relationship we have with local government bodies around the country to achieve this goal.

WORLD CLASS ACCOMMODATION ON YOUR DOORSTEP

ustralia's reputation as a favourite destination for tourists, among people from overseas and among Australians wanting to holiday within their own country, has been superbly enhanced by the high standards that are continually set by our accommodation hotels. World-class facilities are a given for accommodation in hotels, whether they are located in our major capital cities, such as Sydney and Melbourne, or alongside major tourist attractions in more remote parts of the country. Australia's accommodation hotels are also famous for their high levels of service.

Our ability to successfully stage major events on a world scale is well known around the globe; the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney is evidence of this, our ability enhanced because of the support and infrastructure provided by major hotels. We have every base covered.

THE HOTEL INDUSTRY AND TOURISM





ow many people visit your local government area each year? Why do they come? Where do they stay? How much do they spend? What do they do when they are there?

The Commonwealth Government's new Tourism promotion strategy seeks to increase the number, spend and dispersal of overseas visitors.

The Report of the National Tourism Investment Strategy Consultative Committee recommended that the full benefits of tourism at a local level would only be achieved with the Federal, State and local governments working towards a whole of government approach to promoting destinations both externally and internally. This also means involving local government and rural areas in the development of Destination Management Plans specific to individual regions covering several local government areas.

Today a 'tourist' is not just someone on holiday; the tourist tag can also apply to those who visit your area for work, leisure and community activities. The ease in which these visitors can access your area, and the experiences they have during their stay, be it dining out, staying in local accommodation or shopping, will impact on their decision to return. As we all know word of mouth is one of the most powerful marketing conduits and should someone have a less than satisfactory experience; bad news travels fast.

Councils are being encouraged to review local and regional tourism plans and expand them into Destination Management Plans in order to ensure they capture and contribute to growth in the international and domestic 'visitor' market. Knowing who comes into your area, how and why, will form the basis to your area's Destination Management Plan enabling Councils to plan for future amenities in order to attract the domestic tourist. The quality of the attractions and amenities in your municipality - entertainment, accommodation, dining, cultural and sporting – will impact on the investment in discretionary spending by visitors; domestic tourism accounts for 70% of tourism expenditure.

One of the factors that influence a visitor's decision to return to a destination is the quality of accommodation available locally. There is cause for concern in some suburbs, city centres and regional towns around Australia with the trend towards using private homes and apartments for short stay accommodation. Many of these dwellings are being leased under the pretence of

bona fide accommodation properties to unsuspecting visitors. However these properties are not approved for commercial short stay use and rarely meet the expectations of today's traveller as they do not provide standard visitor accommodation amenities such as reception facilities, disabled access, after-hours security, adequate waste collection and parking facilities.

When operated appropriately short stay accommodation adds to the overall accommodation market and enhances a destination. The core issue is the inconsistency that exists between each municipality in dealing with these properties and a general failure to implement adequate safeguards to ensure compliance with local government planning requirements; many of these properties are zoned residential and therefore amenities are unsuitable for transient visitors.

These de facto accommodation properties are not just leased to individuals or couples, some are being used to house backpackers with one "three-bedroom apartment in a central Sydney residential complex that reportedly had a total occupancy of nineteen (19) people (twelve (12) in beds and seven (7) people sleeping on the floor)". This is not an isolated case with a report from Aegis Consulting documenting "at least 150 residential premises in Sydney alone operating as commercial backpacker accommodation". ¹

The operators who work outside of the framework of recognised holiday/visitor accommodation properties "jeopardise the safety of visitors, unfairly impact on local communities and tarnish reputable... operations. The adverse impacts of this form of accommodation ... (includes) occupant safety; loss of tax revenue; compromised reputation as a tourist destination; and unfair competition." ²

The increase in the prevalence of this type of accommodation has arisen from the over supply of apartments created by a disproportionate number of development projects versus demand. The AHA anticipates this activity to rise with the increase in interest rates bringing additional pressure on those property investors who are unable to attract long term tenants. We urge local councils to work with the AHA branches in their state to ensure there is no further erosion of the work done to date to ensure the quality of destination experiences for visitors.

¹ Backpackers Working Group NSW – Draft Report 2006

² Ibid Backpackers Working Group NSW





THE HOTEL INDUSTRY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

oteliers around the world are recognising that responsible environmental and social practices translate into benefits for business, the environment and the local community. From providing cost savings and reputation benefits to ensuring the long-term appeal of a destination to travellers, good environmental and social practices make good business sense.¹

Individually, members of the tourism industry are no more able to solve the world's problems than members of any other business sector. However the industry has significant potential to address issues and achieve positive outcomes for communities and the environment. Much of the success in this area will come from 'cross-sector' partnerships including local government.²

There is already a solid international movement towards sustainable tourism with global accommodation chains including the Hilton International, Starwood Hotels&Resorts, and Marriott International supporting, and embracing, green initiatives within their own organisations and in the broader community.

GREEN GLOBE

n Australia the AHA is working with Green Globe, the worldwide benchmarking and certification programme for the travel and tourism industry. The Green Globe brand signifies better environmental performance, improved community interactions, savings through using fewer resources and greater yields from increased consumer demand.

Green Globe provides a performance system that responds directly to the major environmental problems facing the planet, including the greenhouse effect, overuse of freshwater resources, destruction of biodiversity, production of solid and biological waste and social issues.³ Green Globe 21 has the exclusive licence for the distribution and management of the International Ecotourism Standard.

The International Ecotourism Standard has been developed by Ecotourism Australia in conjunction with the Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism of Australia. The International Ecotourism Standard is based on the highly successful Australian Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP), Agenda 21, and the guiding principles for sound ecotourism certification based on the Mohonk Agreement (Mohonk

Mountain, New York State, USA in November 2001). ⁴ Other organisations working with Green Globe in Australia include Pacific Asia Travel Association, Aboriginal Tourism Australia and Conservation Volunteers.

This year, the Saville Hotel Group, a division of Stockland, signed up all of its 11 Australian properties to participate in the Green Globe Environmental Benchmarking and Certification Program. Properties in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin and Brisbane will be involved in measuring both their environmental and social performance.⁵

WHERE TO START?

he immediate focus in the hotel sector is to reduce energy and water consumption and waste disposal. Hotels use significant amounts of energy for daily operations and recreational activities. In many facilities, energy costs are the second-highest operational costs after payroll. This high demand for energy is often due to the use of energy-intensive technology to provide modern comforts and conveniences, such as air conditioning, to large numbers of guests. Improvements in housekeeping and efficiency measures and use of renewable energy can decrease dependency on energy produced through fossil fuels.⁶

The AHA is working with its members to provide them with the tools to move forward and develop their own environmental policies applicable to the individual property. These policies may address:

- waste re-use and recycling;
- energy conservation and management;
- water conservation;
- waste-water management;
- reduction of hazardous substances;
- transport options;
- sustainable property planning and management;
- stakeholder communication with staff, customers, local community;
- implementation of sustainable practices;
- environmental audits;
- development of partnerships.
- 1. www.toinitiative.org/supply_chain/HotelGuideEnglish.pdf
- 2. www.greenhotelier.org/downloads/press%20release
- 3. www.greenglobe.org
- 4. www.tourismaustralia.com.au
- 5. www.greenglobe.org
- 6. www.toinitiative.org/supply chain/HotelGuideEnglish.pdf

THE NEW SMOKING **LEGISLATION**

he catalyst for the introduction of indoor smoking bans, in hospitality venues in Australia, were two landmark passive smoking cases in which the plaintiffs were found to have contracted cancer as a result of working in an enclosed smoking environment over an extended period; both worked in bars.

The success of these cases brought to light the Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) ramifications and prompted the creation of new smokefree workplace legislation.

The hotel industry in Australia, which is the largest commercial sector to be impacted by this new legislation, is taking a proactive stance to accommodate these changes and at the same time protect the substantial investments made by Australian hoteliers.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

any of those hotels with adequate resources and suitable buildings will undertake significant capital works to create designated areas by opening up venues to the outside air within the stipulated guidelines of State government legislation.

Applications for renovations that meet new legislative requirements are being put to local governments around Australia, and hotels need your support.

It has been reported that legal advice given to the NSW Local Government Association has clarified that State Departments of Health, and not the councils are the regulator of smokefree environment laws¹. This should allay fears by any council about any health-related

The AHA would prefer to avoid a situation for its members where refusals are individually appealed by hoteliers to the Land and Environment Court, and is keen to see local government pass development applications that conform to State legislation.





SMOKING OUTDOORS

ot all hoteliers will be able to accommodate their smoking customers in non enclosed areas within the footprint of the property. Some will need to utilise footpath areas if they are to retain patronage. These hoteliers deserve the same consideration from local government as is extended to those who are able to make building renovations to comply with the new legislation.

Banning smoking outside venues would only serve to undermine fragile acceptance of indoor bans, and furthermore, there is no scientific evidence to support a ban on outdoor smoking based on OH&S.2

Footpath, building entrance, and alfresco dining restrictions are inconsistent with and counterproductive to State government approaches to addressing passive smoking concerns. Former NSW Premier Bob Carr has said:

"We're not going to turn New South Wales into a dictatorship run by thought police. If someone wants to smoke on the street, they're not projecting their smoke into my lungs or the lungs of other non-smokers, so let's lay off the cause for a while and give them ample space to, with a bit of assistance to move away from the habit."3

In a poll conducted in September 2006 by Crosby Textor, 81% of Australians (smokers and non-smokers) said given that indoor smoking bans are being phased in around Australia, people should be allowed to continue to smoke outdoors.

Cr Lorraine Wearne said she would vote against any proposal to ban smoking outdoors.

'I'm a smoker, so I'm prejudiced, but banning smoking is not a sensible idea,' Cr Wearne told the Advertiser on Monday.

"We're already being seen as Big Brother

because of parking meters. "If we want to complete the appearance of Big Brother then tell people they can't smoke on the streets of Parramatta.

"See what that does to business."

Parramatta Advertiser, Wednesday 26/4/2006 "Smoking ban may widen"

State governments are rightly concerned about footpath smoking bans introduced by only 4 of Australia's 675 councils over the past 2 years (and all in NSW). These are only legal if councils erect signs at every smokefree zone in the local government area. Beyond the creation





THE NEW SMOKING LEGISLATION

of individual smoke free zones, the NSW Local Government Minister has indicated he would intervene if there is a "provable threat to personal liberty, including attempts to 'blanket ban' smoking from all public roads and places"⁴.

LISA CAPOZZI

KU-RING-GAI Council has supported a smoking ban Within 10m of children's play areas, and around within 10m of children's play areas, and around within 10m of children's play areas, and around within 10m of children's play areas, and issent council playing fields and sporting grounds.

The \$400,000 move was met with dissent from some councillors, but was passed 7/3. Costs from some councillors, but was passed 7/3. Costs would include \$200,000 in signs and the employment of two extra staff at about \$100,000 a year.

North Shore Times, Friday 22/10/2004 "Gouncil Smoke Screen"

Most Australians would see smoking bans in places like children's play grounds as reasonable. Of Australia's 675 local governments, over 40 have now introduced park, playground and beach smoking bans. Better yet, around 50 have opted to focus on education, bin installation and littering fines. Most councils have read public sentiment well and have taken a reasonable approach.

The president of the Local Government Association,
Genia McCaffery, said smoking bans were a vexed issue, but she could understand councils wanting to
protect children, "It is a difficult thing to manage,"

protect children, "It is a difficult thing to manage,"

"On the one hand we know passive smoking is an issue but it's a legal substance, and where are you going to allow people to go to participate in this substance?"

Sydney Morning Herald, Wednesday 22/3/2006 "Smoking in the park stubbed out"





Rather than implement smoke free zones throughout their areas, the AHA endorses an approach of enforcing the littering laws that already exist. Most councils that have held public meetings about proposed bans have come to recognise that banning smoking outdoors, against the community's wishes, would result in the loss of revenue derived from alfresco licenses, and would severely impact alfresco dining businesses.

"We had a really good response to the public consultation process with many small business and cafe owners attending the meeting," Cr McCaffery said.

"The feeling was that the impact on business could not be justified on any current health evidence but the council will look at discouraging it (smoking) in parks and open spaces, but not in outdoor dining areas.

Mosman Daily, Thursday 24/2/2005 "No ban in North Sydney"

In regard to the problems associated with driving hotel patrons onto the footpath to smoke, the hotel industry is being proactive by introducing a best practice model for managing non-enclosed space. This guide aims to address problems of fair sharing of outdoor space, eating in outdoor areas, signage, litter, public liability and traffic, drinking on footpaths, training, noise abatement, neighbourhood amenity, security and control.

LITTERING

hereas cigarette butts are the single "most common" form of litter, by weight they constitute less than 1% of litter from all sources. There is a politically motivated focus on butts and relatively scant attention paid to take-away food packs and other disposable containers – for example there are not similar demands to prevent people eating take away food on footpaths or, or drinking a take-away coffee!

THE NEW SMOKING I FGISLATION





Nonetheless, in CrosbylTextor's research study in September 2006 among retailers and hoteliers, a very high 86% believe cleaning up butt litter is an important issue. The research also shows that there is majority support in the community for fining people who drop butts.

Therefore, the AHA feels that a sensible approach is to continue to educate the community about responsible disposal, provide an adequate number of ashtrays and bins, and enforce littering laws that are already in place. Education programmes are proven to work. Where councils have engaged with Australia's Butt Littering Trust to educate smokers about responsible disposal, local governments have seen an average 29% decline in butt litter.

NO BUTTS OVER NEW BIN IDEA

New stainless steel cigarette butt bins with advertising space are soon to appear in Port Stephens.

At least 100 of the bins will be installed around high profile, known smoking areas such as bus stops, hotels, clubs and shopping centres.

The plan, supported by councillors this week, is aimed at reducing litter and stormwater pollution created by cigarette butts.

It would be financed by leasing advertising space on the front of each bin.

Newcastle Herald, Thursday 6/4/2006 "No butts over new bin idea"

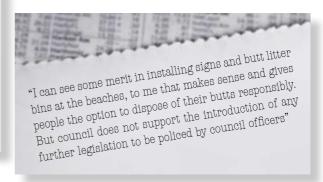
Hoteliers are committed to ensuring that every measure possible is taken to educate their customers through signage, and increased litter receptacles.

WHAT LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAN DO TO HELP

he hotel industry is actively working to comply with the new legislation. It is therefore of paramount importance that local government work with hotels to ensure their attempts to comply with the new legislation are successful.

Your local pub and its patrons need Councils' support to fast track development applications, in keeping with the State governments' enclosed area smoking bans. Local government can support hotels' compliance with the new legislation through passing development applications.

The hotel industry is committed to working with councils to educate the community about responsible disposal, provide adequate ashtrays and bins on footpaths, and supports councils in enforcing littering laws that are already in place.



Cairns Post, Wednesday 20/10/2004 "Gestapo style smoke banks not on: Byrne"

- 1. "Lawyers tell councils to lift ban on outdoor smoking areas in pubs", Sydney Morning Herald (3 October 2006)
- Restaurant and Catering NSW, letter to Lord Mayor of Newcastle, 14 November 2005 quotes Australia's leading anti-tobacco advocate, Professor Simon Chapman, who asserts that bans on smoking in outdoor places are seldom ethically or scientifically justifiable as such proposals risk undermining support for other tobacco control policies, and aren't evidence-based.
- 3. Premier Bob Carr commenting on proposed outdoor bans, radio 2GB Sydney, 3pm on 13 October 2004
- NSW Local Government Minister Kerry Hickey, letter to AHA NSW, 16 August 2006.
- ALGA on-line newsletter 15 September 2006: http://australianlocalgovernmentassociation.cmail1.com/ .aspx/e/92979/5003470/
- 6. www.buttlitteringtrust.org



RESPONSIBLE DRINKING

he National Alcohol Strategy 2006-2009 was endorsed by the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy in May this year. Developed through collaboration between government, non-government and industry partners including the alcohol beverage and hospitality industry, and the broader community, the Strategy is in response to the patterns of high risk alcohol consumption that are prevalent in Australia.

The goal of the Strategy is to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm to individuals, families and communities in the context of developing safer and healthy drinking cultures in Australia.¹

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL

he AHA, together with industry partners, is focused on educating the community around the responsible consumption of alcohol through various forums including DrinkWise Australia, an industry initiative founded and funded by the liquor industry.

Established as an early response to the NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse held in 2003, DrinkWise has emerged from a committed group of alcohol industry personnel called 'Action on Alcohol' to become an independent, self governing organisation with a focus on promoting a more responsible drinking culture in Australia. The AHA, as the key provider of beverage and hospitality services, is proud to be part of this groundbreaking enterprise.

Funded by the major producers of alcohol in Australia with support from key industry associations including the AHA, the Australian Liquor Stores Association, the Distilled Spirits Industry Council and Australian Associated Brewers, DrinkWise recently received a grant of \$5 million from the Federal Government as part of a Government partnership approach.

DrinkWise Australia's approach involves pursuing an effective means of addressing irresponsible drinking while maximising the positive health and social impacts of responsible drinking. This approach will be underpinned by the application of evidence-based

policies necessary to influence both adverse patterns of drinking and the harm caused by chronic excessive alcohol intake.

RESPONSIBLE SERVICE OF ALCOHOL

he AHA is also committed to supporting its members in meeting their obligations with regard to the responsible service of alcohol. Training programmes are available in each State to provide supervisors and staff with the knowledge and tools with which to manage the Responsible Service of Alcohol.

Responsible Service of Alcohol programmes incorporate information on the legal requirements of the sale and service of alcohol in each state; harm minimisation and duty of care; how to manage problematic customers; how to assess and monitor levels of intoxication and; standard drinks education. The courses also focus on the impact of alcohol abuse on individuals and the community; alcohol and health; awareness of drink driving prevention and the responsible promotion of liquor products.

There are significant penalties for the breach of responsible service obligations under various state licensing laws and the State branches of the AHA work closely with members to ensure they are informed and up-to-date with respect to their legal obligations.

It is only in licensed premises that drinking behaviour can be monitored. Any increase in off premise drinking (in private homes) may impact society's ability to change the drinking culture in this country.

^{1.} National Alcohol Strategy 2006-2009 www.alcohol.gov.au

RESPONSIBLE DRINKING





LIQUOR ACCORDS – COMMUNITIES WORKING TOGETHER

iquor Accords are another area in which the AHA is active. Liquor Accords have proven they can lead the change to a more responsible drinking culture in communities to the benefit of local councils, police, government, businesses and residents.

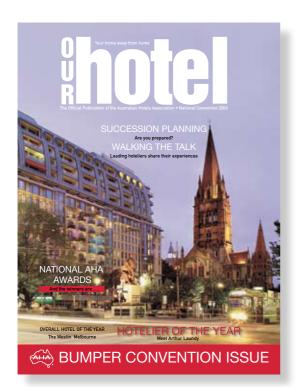
The list of successful Liquor Accords continues to grow with many regions adopting innovative stances that are being picked up around the country. In Albury, NSW, for example, the Albury Liquor Accord developed the innovative fail to leave patron education programme "No Excuse". This was executed through television, radio and in-house advertising telling customers of the penalties if they fail to leave when asked. The programme has now been adopted by at least eight Liquor Accords in other areas. Another example is the seven Liquor Accords on the North Coast of NSW from Forster to Grafton where the "Enough is Enough" patron education scheme, again communicated through mediums used in Albury, promoted the message "Too many drinks equals too many problems".

In Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory licensees are working with the local AHA branch, the NT Police, Racing, Gaming and Licensing and the Office of Alcohol Policy and Co-ordination to create the town's first Liquor Accord. The Accord is founded on a Patron Code of Conduct communicating the message "No More It's the Law". The intention of this Accord is to educate patrons regarding responsibilities under the Liquor Act guiding them towards acceptable behaviour on licensed premises.

The success of Liquor Accords across the country has resulted in the decrease in vandalism and other street offences. There are no set models for the creation of a Liquor Accord enabling communities to address issues that are specific to their own needs. However, there are benchmarks which can assist a community in taking the first step towards responsible alcohol consumption and management - local solutions for local problems

For further information please contact your State branch of the AHA details of which are documented at the end of this booklet





IN SUMMARY



of OURHotel informative and enlightening. The pub in Australia is not only a central focus for its local community, but also for the thousands of visitors to our shores every year. When sporting events such as the Rugby World Cup and the Ashes are played out in Australia, where do most people catch the action? At their local. Many hotels have helped their customers celebrate weddings and 21st birthdays. They have shared the good times and the bad helping communities through black moments, after bushfires and other diasters, and celebrating victories. The pub has and will always play a vital role in rejuvenating the human spirit through bringing people together.

Whereas pubs project a colloquial Australian persona, the hospitality industry, of which the hotel sector is a major player, is big business; the AHA estimates over 300,000 people are dependent on hotels for employment with the industry making a substantial contribution to the national economy.

As we face the challenges ahead, we look to local Councils with the view of working together to build stronger, more cohesive communities well into the future of our great Nation.

THE PUB – A GREAT AUSTRALIAN TRADITION

Australia wouldn't be the nation it is today if it wasn't for the existence of hotels. Pubs are as much a part of Australian culture as the Sydney Harbour Bridge, going to the footy at the MCG on a Saturday, kangaroos and meat pies.

Almost right from the day our nation was settled in 1788, pubs have been central meeting places in communities across the country and primary sources of entertainment. This is still very much the case in 2006 with pubs having evolved to meet the changing needs of their customers providing a broad cross section of the community with a "home away from home".

All Australians can be proud of the hotel industry in this nation. We can rightly claim to have some of the best pubs in the world. And the best part about our pubs is they cater for all tastes; men, women and especially families. If you are not sure about what to do tonight, head down to your local for a drink and a meal.

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