

## **Update on the new liquor licensing fee structure**

VECCI, VTIC and HMAA recently made a submission on behalf of all tourism and events members in response to the proposed changes to the liquor licensing fee structure. This submission was supported by a variety of media releases and other communications.

It is pleasing to see that our concerns, along with the concerns of the wider industry, have been heard, and that a number of refinements have occurred as a result. We will continue to advocate on behalf of members on this issue.

### Below is a summary of the refinements:

In August 2009 the Victorian Government introduced legislation to Parliament to amend the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 proposing that a risk-based fee structure be applied to liquor licences. The purpose of risk-based fees is to make venues associated with the most harm to the community pay the most, to recover the real cost of regulating and policing the industry and keeping our venues safe.

The government has now refined the fee structure as a result of extensive community and industry consultation and adjusted the fee structure so that large late-night venues will continue to pay the highest fees whilst smaller, earlier closing venues will pay relatively less.

The main changes to the risk-based fee structure as a result of the feedback are as follows:

- Licensed premises with a patron capacity of 200 or below will not pay a loading based on patron numbers
- Licensed premises which close at or before 1am will not pay a loading based on patron numbers unless they have a history of non-compliance
- Licensed premises with sexually explicit entertainment conditions on their licence will pay a flat rate of \$30,000 as the standard fee.
- For the purpose of the venue capacity multiplier, licensees will be able to have patron numbers for accommodation and function areas excluded from the calculations where:
  - the function area closes at or before 1am and this is a condition of the licence
  - the function area will be used exclusively for pre-booked functions and casual or public entry is not allowed, and
  - the licensee is not required to pay compliance history risk fees.

Consumer Affairs Minister Tony Robinson said recently that consultations with the community and industry showed widespread support for a new fee structure that targeted venues that cost more to police and regulate. Mr Robinson said all licensees were on notice that poor compliance histories would increase the cost of liquor licences from 2011. "After next year, breaches of Victoria's liquor laws will add to the cost of a licence, so licensees of poorly managed venues will find themselves paying significantly higher fees," he said.

A letter will be sent to all licensees in the near future outlining further details.

Responsible Alcohol Victoria

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/alcohol>