

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- **Dan Mossenson** - Chairman of Partners at Lavan Legal and Secretary of the Small Bar Association of W.A. Inc.;
- **Kate Lamont** - Tourism WA Board;
- **Jim Freemantle** - Chairperson Liquor Commission;
- **Partners of Lavan Legal;**
- Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good evening. Today marks an important milestone in the development of Perth's fledgling and thriving small bar culture, and I'm delighted to officially launch the Small Bar Association of WA Inc. This initiative was established in December 2008, but to get it off the ground to where we are today, Lavan Legal and particularly, Dan deserves commendation for all the vision and hard work it has taken.

The Small Bar Association brings together a host of different industry players all with a common aim to promote Perth and Western Australia's social drinking culture as one of intimate hospitality, diversity, uniqueness and vibrancy. I'd say these qualities match the growing identity we are developing in our capital as a buzzing city

on the upward move; an interesting city developing its own complex culture, and which offers social spaces for everyone.

Small bars are not about giving people more of the same. That is, more large watering holes with sometimes unruly crowds drinking *en mass* and eating from predictable menus: Instead, small bars offer different, creative and personalised meeting places which bring people together to socialise, enjoy a nice drink with or without food, and discuss things without shouting over loud noise

We've got so much going for us here in Perth and it's a great thing we're doing more to maximise our best assets, such as our warm weather and friendly people, so enjoying a drink outside in alfresco areas without having to order a meal is made possible with the new liquor reforms. The intent of the small bar category licence is about the supply of alcohol as its predominant activity and alcohol service is not as ancillary to other activities such as food service or entertainment provision. If we can enjoy a coffee, tea or non-alcoholic drink over conversation with a little or no food at cafés, there's no reason why that same intimate beverage service culture can't mean enjoying a nice wine or other alcoholic drink at a small bar.

I note that other larger cities such as Sydney are noticing what we're doing over here and following our lead. For example, the Parliament of New South Wales introduced an amending Bill* in December 2007, to cover small bars and restaurants in similar fashion to WA's small bar licenses and their application to small, low-impact venues.

In the nearly 2 years we have had the liquor reforms, 18 small bars have opened in WA, 6 are to open soon, and 7 applications are currently before the Director of Liquor Licensing.

But the experience of small bar businesses has often been fraught with expense, delay, frustration and uncertainty and the Small Bar Association will help new players in this regard by streamlining the processes.

And it's well known that having a supportive Council makes all the difference. With the bulk of applications coming from small bars wanting to open in the City of Perth, we've strongly supported the new liquor reforms from the outset. We see that the new interesting venues opening up will breathe new life into our CBD.

*Liquor Amendment (Small Bars and Restaurants) Bill 2007

The City of Perth is proactively encouraging more small licensed venues to open in the heart of the city and examples include:

- amending our policies and regulations to make it easier for new operators to establish themselves and without unnecessary approval delays; and
- taking several prospective bar operators on tours of the city to look at potential premises such as sites activating the city's laneways, previously neglected spaces, such as Wolf Lane and Howard Lane.

The City of Perth recognises that small bars add to the sense of attractiveness, amenity and diversity of a vibrant happening place. We're drawn to the invigorating welcoming energy we feel part of when we walk around the streets of a city with that buzz or 'it' factor. Small bars do much to add to a diverse urban culture, and this makes the city a welcome place for bright and creative communities to interact, relax, meet and contribute.

In closing, I'd like to quote our own Phil Simpson, Chief Executive of the new BID – named Perth City Focus. Phil said in a recent West Australian article on reviving the city's heartbeat, that:

“A city is much more than just the central heart, it is the front door to the whole metropolitan area, it is an expression of the culture of a place.”

I want to echo those sentiments on behalf of our people and the City of Perth; Here's to a bright future for small bars and the Small Bar Association of WA's contribution to this happening for all of us. I wish you much success and good luck Thank you.