

27 May 2010

Looking through Health Department eyes

On 24 May 2010 a Forum was held by the Small Bar Association of WA Inc (SBA) at The Suite in Shenton Park. Ms Naomi Henrickson, Manager Alcohol Programs, Prevention Directorate, Drug and Alcohol Office (a division of the Health Department) addressed the Forum and presented a very interesting insight into the thinking and policies of her office.

Ms Henrickson spoke about several issues of particular importance to her office and engaged in lively discussion on a range of factors relevant to the liquor industry and the attitude taken towards them by the Drug and Alcohol Office.

Ms Henrickson addressed various technical and practical matters from a harm and ill-health perspective that are relevant to applications being lodged at the licensing authority. She also addressed the ongoing conduct of business under a licence and the role her office plays in monitoring existing licensed premises throughout WA. A collaborative approach between the Drug and Alcohol Office and licensees to create drinking environments that invoke a cultural change to the consumption of liquor was welcomed.

It was made clear at the event that the Health Department is not interested in thwarting aspiring applicants or the liquor industry, but is determined to see that potential harm from liquor is minimised and that all stakeholders work together in the interests of achieving this result.

Ms Henrickson spoke positively about the concept of small bars and other licensed venues that focus on more intimate and controllable premises.

Lavan comment: We have seen a steady increase in the importance of harm and ill-health issues and the role of the Health Department to the point where the health aspects now are critical in licensing matters. The SBA event provided a unique and worthwhile opportunity to be taken behind the scenes in terms of the Health Department's attitude and approach. Valuable information about how applicants and licensees should deal with that approach to achieve desired outcomes was supplied.

For any queries or further information, please contact Dan Mossenson, Partner (9288 6769 / dan.mossenson@lavanlegal.com.au) or Jessica Patterson, Senior Associate (9288 6946 / jessica.patterson@lavanlegal.com.au).