

Small Bar Association WA Inc Launch

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by Dan Mossenson

Four years ago a comprehensive review of the operations of the Liquor Licensing Act was conducted under the chairmanship of Mr Jim Freemantle.

The committee recommended moving towards:

- a restaurant/café culture,
- encouraging consumption in a more moderating climate, and
- greater flexibility in meeting needs of the general public and tourists.

Comprehensive legislation to promote innovation and diversity followed.

Two of the major reforms introduced were the small bar licence and greater flexibility for restaurants.

In introducing the bill the Minister stated ‘*If anyone believes that WA is “dullsville” then these reforms will end that perception.*’

To put that sentiment into context and evaluate how long the process might take I refer to three factual scenarios.

- 1 Forty years ago the comprehensive Adams’ inquiry into the liquor industry resulted in a new form of liquor licence. The tavern

licence was created to facilitate a variety of circumstances including small local drinking establishments in the suburbs and intimate bars in the city. Despite decades since then very few taverns operating today are much different from the traditional large vertical drinking establishments.

- 2 In Victoria Dr John Nieuwenhuysen 1986 blue print for the Victorian government's overhaul of its Liquor Act took at least a good decade to flourish.
- 3 The experience of the two years since the local reforms reflects the process will take a long time. There are plenty of obstacles and barriers to transforming the drinking scene in this state. It will take many years before there are facilities available in sufficient numbers and community's awareness is elevated for it to be said that reforms have ended Dullsville.

Consequently I resolved to set up the Small Bar Association of W.A. for both small bar licensees and equivalent distinctly different premises with special tourism appeal to be a networking and lobbying group.

Unlike the traditional associations of licensees which have for years resisted a change and have steadfastly opposed new licences, the Small Bar Association is a conduit to facilitating change and assisting aspirants to enter the industry. It will raise public awareness, create vibrancy and help increase visitation to the City of Perth.

To assist the Association a number of professional, industry and sponsor members have been invited to join.

The response has been most enthusiastic. We have already achieved a significant membership base and a solid starting platform to take off from.

To officially launch the new organisation I call on:

- The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi;
- Mr Jim Freemantle, Chairman of the Liquor Commission of WA;
- Ms Kate Lamont, Chairperson of Tourism WA, one of the first persons who was asked and agreed to join.

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- 3 WA Beverage Wholesalers (Vince Salpietro)
- 4 Gage Roads Brewing Company (Nick Hayler)
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