



## Industry Newsletter: Gambling and Liquor

An update from ACT Gambling and Racing Commission and the ACT Commissioner for Fair Trading

The ACT Gambling and Racing Commission (the Commission) and ACT Commissioner for Fair Trading welcome the inaugural edition of our newsletter, where we delve into the critical matters surrounding the gambling and liquor industry. As regulators of these industries, we strive to foster responsible practices, ensure compliance, and safeguard community wellbeing.

In this first issue, you'll find updates on regulatory changes and insights into best practices. Our commitment remains steadfast – to balance industry needs with responsible behaviour, and to provide transparency in all our actions.

We're excited to share knowledge, spark conversations, and work together toward a future where gambling and liquor industries thrive responsibly.

### **Derise Cubin**

Commissioner for Fair Trading

### **Giuseppe Mangeruca**

CEO - ACT Gambling and Racing Commission

**Night-time economy - extending licences and reducing fees for liquor licensees**

There are several initiatives available to liquor licensees to support businesses and encourage patronage. This includes:

- Offering live performances and events – eligible licensees can receive an **80% discount on their liquor licence fee**. For eligibility, please visit: [Reduction in Annual Licence Fee for Eligible Events](#)
- Applying for **extended trading hours and extended floor plans** for special events in your venue – eligible licensees can apply for extensions up to 10 times per year. For eligibility, please visit: [Licensee Events and Special Events Guidelines](#)
- Free loading zone permits for musicians – musicians performing in your venues can apply for a **free 30-minute loading zone permit** to help with their set-ups. Please refer your musicians to apply at: [Free loading zone permits for musicians](#)

Applying for these initiatives is free and easy! For further information and access to application forms, please visit: [Access Canberra Liquor Licences](#) and choose your topic from the list at the top of the page.

## Easter liquor inspections

Access Canberra Inspectors will be out and about during the Easter long weekend to check compliance with liquor licensing requirements. We will be keeping an eye on staff and crowd behaviour and ensuring that responsible service of alcohol is followed. Inspectors will also check that staff are adhering to the requirements set out in your approved Risk Assessment Management Plans (if you have one).



## **Anzac Day - extended trading hours for liquor licensees**

On 21 February 2025, the Head of Access Canberra made a declaration of a special event under the Liquor Act 2010 for Anzac Day.

Any business with an On, Club, General or Special Class liquor licence may choose to commence trading at 6 am (rather than 7 am) on Anzac Day, 25 April 2025.

You do not need to lodge an application to participate, you can just open early!

This is restricted to liquor sold for consumption on-premises and not off-premises sales.

Any eligible business choosing to trade from 6 am must still comply with their

Risk-Assessment Management Plan (if applicable) and any other conditions of their licence.

To view the declaration, please visit: [Liquor \(Special Event\) Declaration 2025 \(No 2\)](#)

**Note:** This declaration provided for extended hours is for alcohol supply only. Licensees that also hold a gaming machine licence must not operate gaming machines prior to 9 am in accordance with the [Gambling and Racing Control \(Code of Practice\) Regulation 2002](#). This does not affect the hours in which two-up may be played, as permitted by the [Unlawful Gambling Act 2009](#).



## Two-up

On Anzac Day, games of two-up are allowed to be played under the following conditions:

- the owner/person in charge of the premises must give permission
- only people aged 18 years or older may conduct the game
- only people aged 18 years or older may participate in the game
- if there is a prize pool, you cannot deduct any charges, fees or commission from the pool
- people are allowed to watch or participate in the game for free unless:
  - the owner/person in charge of the premises gives permission to charge a fee
  - people paying the fee are told why it is being sought
  - all payments and benefits for the fee are given to an entity for a charitable purpose.

- the game is conducted in accordance with any condition prescribed by regulation.

Further information is available at [Unlawful Gambling Act 2009](#).



## **Poker machines - voluntary and compulsory surrender of gaming machines**

### **Voluntary Surrender Scheme**

In March 2024, the Voluntary Surrender Scheme was announced with financial incentives for gaming machine licensees (licensees) to voluntarily surrender gaming machine authorisations (authorisations) by 1 May 2025.

The financial incentives are:

- \$15,000 (excluding GST) per surrendered authorisation voluntarily surrendered

- an addition \$5,000 (excluding GST) per authorisation voluntarily surrendered should the licensee decide to surrender the venue authorisation certificate and go 'pokie-free'.

Licensees wishing to participate in the Voluntary Surrender Scheme are required to submit a completed [Application for Incentives form](#).

If the licensee is seeking deferred surrender, the licensee will also be required to enter into a binding agreement with the Territory.

Fully completed forms will be accepted until **11.59 pm on 1 May 2025**. Late forms and forms that are not fully complete may not be accepted.

It is the responsibility of licensees to ensure a fully completed form is submitted on time prior to the above deadline. It is **strongly recommend** allowing sufficient time ahead of the deadline to complete the form to ensure any issues that may arise can be addressed, such as:

- errors or omissions in the form that need to be corrected
- failure of internet connections
- multiple document uploads and long transmission times
- postal times and potential for delays
- if the licensee is seeking deferred surrender, filling out and signing of the binding agreement.

### **Compulsory Surrender Scheme**

In September 2024, the Compulsory Surrender Scheme was announced. If the surrender target of 3,500 authorisations is not met through the Voluntary Surrender Scheme, the Compulsory Surrender Scheme will commence on 1 July 2025.

The compulsory surrender of authorisations will be based on how many authorisations are held by a venue on 1 April 2024. Consideration will be given to how many authorisations were voluntarily surrendered.

For more information on Voluntary and Compulsory Surrender Scheme

## Community Contributions Compliance Program

It has been almost 5 years since the reforms were made to the Community Contributions Scheme. Access Canberra, on behalf of the Commission, will soon be undertaking compliance activities in relation to the scheme including reviewing the current level of community contributions reporting by gaming machine licensees.

- Are you up to date with your lodgements?
- Are you submitting all required information?

Authorised Officers may contact your venue if details are missing. Part of the program will also include the opportunity for licensees to provide feedback on the scheme and any suggestions for improvement or red-tape reduction.

### Harm Minimisation Program

Access Canberra, on behalf of the Commission, is engaging with gaming machines licensees in the ACT to see what steps are being taken by licensees in response to identified signs of gambling harm. The program involves collection of information from all venues via surveys. The QR codes for the surveys will be provided to each venue through posters and business cards.



## Gambling Contact Officer training sessions

In order to maintain appointment as a Gambling Contract Officer (GCO), industry staff must complete an approved GCO training session in every year of appointment.

During 2025, [Lifeline Canberra](#) and [Access Recognised Training](#) will be providing approved yearly training sessions. Information and registration are available on their websites.

**In recognition of the long-term experience of many GCOs, the Commission has approved expanded training options for GCOs with more than 5-years' experience.**

Industry staff with more than 5-years' experience as a GCO will be able to apply to the Commission for approval to attend a different professional development session to meet the legislated training requirements for their ongoing appointment. Where approval is given, the approach provides experienced GCOs with alternate professional development options to the Lifeline Canberra and Access Recognised Training's sessions.

Professional development sessions must be directly related to gambling harm prevention but might include:

- online or face-to face conferences
- forums
- seminars
- workshops
- senior GCO working groups
- courses or lectures.

The Commission recognises and appreciates the invaluable role GCOs play in preventing and reducing gambling harm in the Canberra community.

For more information visit the [training page](#) on the Commission's website.

Enquiries should be emailed to [gamblingharmprevention@act.gov.au](mailto:gamblingharmprevention@act.gov.au).



## Gambling Contact Officer Training Sessions

Gambling harm prevention training is important for preventing and reducing gambling harm in the ACT. **GCOs** who complete the training will gain skills and knowledge to empower them to support their patrons.



### Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

You have received this email from the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission and the Commissioner for Fair Trading, as our records indicate you hold a current gaming machine and/or liquor licence. If you do not hold a current licence, or believe you have received this email in error,

please email us at: [GamblingandRacing@act.gov.au](mailto:GamblingandRacing@act.gov.au) to be [unsubscribed](#) from future communications

