



## 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 are pleased to present the third edition of our newsletter, where we explore key developments and priorities in the gambling and liquor industry. As regulators, our focus remains on promoting responsible practices, ensuring compliance, and safeguarding community wellbeing.

This edition arrives after a particularly busy year with no signs of slowing down before the new year.

In this issue, we bring you important updates shaping the gaming and business landscape. The Australian/New Zealand Gaming Machine National Standards (GMNS) have undergone significant revisions, with 20 key areas amended to strengthen consumer protection and harm minimisation. These changes, endorsed by all jurisdictions, set a new benchmark for manufacturers and suppliers, with a six-month grace period ending in March 2026.

We also spotlight Gambling Harm Action Week and the release of a new Language Guide by the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission. This resource encourages respectful, stigma-free conversations about gambling harm and supports venues in creating safer environments for patrons.

Plus, if you're thinking about starting a business on public land, we share how Business Assist can help you navigate approvals and licences with ease.

We have also highlighted important festive season safety measures and compliance reminder information and additional resources for those who may need it as we head into another busy season.

Between Christmas and New Year, certain areas of the ACT government will close for shutdown. This includes Gaming and Liquor Licensing, Gambling Harm

and Prevention and the Business Assist teams. Offices will close 5pm on Wednesday 24 December and reopen on Friday 2 January 2026.

The Environment Protection Authority will respond to amplified noise matters during this period and the Fair-Trading Compliance team may also have a presence to support the safety and wellbeing of the community.

### **Josh Rynehart**

Commissioner for Fair Trading

### **Derise Cubin**

CEO - ACT Gambling and Racing Commission



## **New Language Guide released during Gambling Harm Action Week**

How might your language shape someone's experience of gambling harm?

During Gambling Harm Action Week (20–26 October), the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission released a new Guide for talking about gambling and related harms – a resource designed for everyone involved in conversations about gambling, including individuals, communities, industry and government.

The guide promotes a balanced narrative, recognising that gambling is a risky

activity that can affect anyone, and that reducing harm is a shared responsibility. It also helps readers understand the scope and scale of gambling harm – from financial stress and relationship breakdowns to broader impacts on families and communities.

In the ACT, 1 in 6 people are negatively impacted by gambling. The guide offers practical tips for using person-first language, avoiding stereotypes and including support options in communications. These approaches can help reduce stigma and encourage help-seeking.

For venues, this guide is a useful tool to support staff in having respectful, informed conversations with patrons and others. It also underpins the Commission's Let's change the conversation campaign, which launched during Gambling Harm Action Week and will run until March 2026. The campaign encourages us all to reflect on how language shapes public understanding of gambling harm.

[Read the guide](#) to learn more.

As part of your Gambling Harm Action Week printed packs, gambling venues received an 'Every Conversation Matters' poster with tips for talking about gambling harm. If your venue didn't receive one, you can download and print it from the Commission's Resources for venues webpage.

To request additional posters or support materials, contact the Gambling and Harm Prevention team at [gamblingharmprevention@act.gov.au](mailto:gamblingharmprevention@act.gov.au).

*Let's change the conversation – because open, thoughtful dialogue is better than silence.*

---

## Australian and New Zealand Gaming Machine Standards

The Australian/New Zealand Gaming Machine National Standards (GMNS) is a document prepared and endorsed by all Australian states, territories and also includes New Zealand. The purpose of the GMNS is to provide guidance to

manufacturers for the design of gaming machines, game software and related equipment, and to provide a testable standard to ensure that common regulatory requirements will be met across all jurisdictions.

Changes to the GMNS are developed by the National Standards Working Party (NSWP) as well as a Policy Working Group who collectively develop both the technical aspects as well as the policy of the GMNS. Both working groups report to the Australasian Casino and Gaming Regulators (ACGR) Forum. The forum is made up of representatives from all jurisdictions, members of the forum have the role of endorsing any changes to the GMNS.

The key focus areas for the NSWP were based around enhancing consumer protection, strengthening harm minimisation measures and included re-evaluation of both the physical and psychological measures of the GMNS (11.1) all in all a total of 20 key areas were amended in the new GMNS (12.1)

To allow suppliers and manufacturers to meet the requirements of the new standards, a six-month grace period was included and will conclude in March 2026. From that point onward, all new gaming machine games and peripheral equipment must comply with the revised GMNS (12.1). A copy of the updated standards is available on the [ACT Legislation Register](#).



## Want to start a business on public land?

Thinking about launching a mobile food van or a pop-up business in a public space?

Before you get started, it's important to understand the rules and approvals required. Business Assist can help you figure out your next steps? whether it's understanding land use permissions, applying for licences, or connecting with the right government teams.

### Prefer to talk it through?

Sometimes you just need to speak to someone.

Business Assist offers phone consultations, scheduled appointments, premises site visits and even a weekly drop-in service.

Whether you're stuck on an issue, the licences and approvals needed or just want to talk through ideas for a new proposal, the team is here to help.

**Phone:** 02 6205 4400

**Location:** Thursday from 10-11 am at the Access Canberra Service Centre, Level 3, 21 Bowes Street, Woden

Find free tailored support for your business [through Access Canberra](#).

---

## Are you a hospitality business that serves or sells seafood?

Changes to country of origin labelling for seafood in hospitality settings are here.

Is your business ready?

From 1 July 2026, the new labelling rules will require hospitality businesses to label dishes containing seafood with country-of-origin information.

By implementing the new information standard, consumers will be able to make more informed decisions about the seafood they choose to eat. The new labelling

system is called the AIM model which involves marking each seafood dish as either Australian (A), imported (I) or of mixed origin (M).

It is the simplest method of labelling and minimises any additional work required by businesses. The transition period has started. This allows time for all hospitality businesses to get ready to comply with the new information standard for seafood dishes.

We recommend all businesses start the process to change their labelling now. For detailed guidance on country of origin labelling for seafood in hospitality, [visit business.gov.au](https://www.business.gov.au).



## Festive season compliance reminder

With the festive season upon us, wanted to remind you of your obligations under the [Liquor Act 2010 \(the Act\)](#) to support the safety and wellbeing of patrons and our broader Canberra community through harm minimisation and community safety principles.

**Please be good neighbours, apply your Risk Assessment Management Plan (RAMP) and be aware of the noise emitted from venues. Information about [noise standards](#) is available on the Access Canberra website.**

The supply of alcohol to intoxicated people contributes to anti-social and alcohol related violent behaviours that place our community at risk of harm. It is therefore important that we all work together to ensure that Canberrans and visitors to the ACT have a safe and enjoyable time in our city.

Ensure you and your staff are upholding responsible practices in the sale, supply and promotion of alcohol by:

- supporting responsible alcohol consumption
- assessing alcohol affected patrons
- refusing service where necessary.

To assist in assessing if a patron is affected by alcohol, you and your staff should have read and be following the [Liquor \(Intoxication\) Guidelines 2017 \(No 1\)](#).

Consider:

- monitoring patrons who consume a large number of drinks that were purchased for a group
- listening for verbal cues of intoxication, such as slurred speech
- being aware of aggressive or anti-social behaviour.

The [Responsible Promotion of Liquor Guidelines](#) set clear expectations for the conduct of licensees in relation to responsible advertising.

## Is your alcohol marketing to code?

All licensees must ensure that any advertising of liquor promotions on their websites and social media platforms complies with the [Responsible Promotion of Liquor Guidelines 2022](#) and the [Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code \(ABAC\)](#).

These guidelines ensure that promotions do not target minors, encourage excessive consumption, promote unsafe behaviours or make misleading claims about alcohol. With the long hot summer days, it is important to remember that promotion of alcohol cannot be tied to water based activities an image of people drinking a cocktail in a pool or in Lake Burley Griffin would breach the code.

The [Alcohol and Water Safety Compliance Guide](#) provides more information to ensure your promotions and socials meet the standards.

Regularly reviewing your online content helps maintain compliance and supports the responsible promotion and service of liquor.



## Compliance and enforcement

Access Canberra inspectors and ACT Policing will be conducting compliance checks of venues this festive season to ensure, among other things, that licensees are meeting these obligations under the [Liquor Act 2010](#).

In line with our [Liquor Licensing Compliance Framework](#), our focus will be on the responsible sale and supply of alcohol to patrons.

Remember, it is an offence to supply liquor to an intoxicated person, and penalties may apply for non-compliance.

For further information on your obligations under the Act:

- visit the [Access Canberra website](#)
- email [complianceandinvestigations@act.gov.au](mailto:complianceandinvestigations@act.gov.au)
- read the [Liquor Licensing Compliance Framework](#) for information on complying with your requirements under the liquor laws, including your Risk Assessment Management Plan (RAMP) and licence conditions.

## Mark your calendars: It's event season

On 25 August 2025, more than 40 events were declared as special events by the Head of Access Canberra which automatically extended trading hours for eligible licensed venues without the need to apply, giving businesses greater flexibility to plan ahead and celebrate key cultural and sporting moments with their patrons. The full list can be found on the ACT Legislation Register. It must be noted that

conditions are applicable.

Upcoming events include:

## 2025

<b>Special Event</b>	<b>Date of Event</b>	<b>Date and extended hours for supply of liquor at the premises</b>
Ashes 2nd Test – Australia vs England <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening day</li> </ul>	Thursday 4 December 2025 – Monday 8 December 2025	Thursday 4 December 2025 extended until 2am Friday 5 December 2025
Spilt Milk Canberra	Saturday 13 December	Saturday 13 December 2026 until 2am Sunday 14 December 2025
Ashes 3rd Test – Australia vs England <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening day</li> </ul>	Wednesday 17 December 2025 – Sunday 21 December 2025	Wednesday 17 December 2025 extended until 2am Thursday 18 December 2025
Christmas Eve  Ashes 4th Test – Australia vs England <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening day</li> </ul>	Wednesday 24 December 2025  Friday 26 December 2025 – Tuesday 30 December 2025	Wednesday 24 December 2025 extended until 2am Thursday 25 December 2025  Friday 26 December 2025 extended until 2am Saturday 27 December 2025
New Year's Eve	Wednesday 31 December 2025	Wednesday 31 December 2025 extended until 2am Thursday 1 January 2026

## 2026

Ashes 5th Test – Australia vs England Opening	Sunday 4 January 2026 – Thursday 8 January 2026	Sunday 4 January 2026 extended until 2am Monday 5 January 2026
Australian Tennis Open <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women’s Final</li> <li>• Men’s Final</li> </ul>	Saturday 31 January 2026 – Sunday 1 February 2026	Saturday 31 January 2026 extended until 2am Sunday 1 February 2026 Sunday 1 February 2026 extended until 2am Monday 2 February 2026
FLIGHT: Drone SkyShow & Night Markets	Saturday 24 January 2026 – Monday 26 January 2026	Saturday 24 January 2026 extended until 2am Sunday 25 January 2026 Sunday 25 January 2026 extended until 2am Monday 26 January 2026 Monday 26 January 2026 extended until 2am Tuesday 27 January 2026
National Multicultural Festival	Friday 6 February 2026 – Sunday 8 February 2026	Friday 6 February 2026 extended until 2am Saturday 7 February 2026 Saturday 7 February 2026 extended until 2am Sunday 8 February 2026 Sunday 8 February 2026 extended until 2am Monday 9 February 2026
Olympic Winter Games	Friday 6 February 2026 (Central European Time) and	Saturday 7 February 2026 extended until

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening Ceremony (Italy)</li> <li>• Closing Ceremony (Italy)</li> <li>• Women's T20I Series vs India – Manuka Oval</li> </ul>	<p>Sunday 22 February 2026 (Central European Time)</p> <p>Thursday 19 February 2026</p>	<p>2am Sunday 8 February 2026</p> <p>Monday 23 February 2026 extended until 2am Tuesday 24 February 2026</p> <p>Thursday 19 February 2026 extended until 2am Friday 20 February 2026</p>
<p>25th Anniversary of Belco Bowl Jam</p>	<p>Friday 20 February 2026 – Sunday 22 February 2026</p>	<p>Friday 20 February 2026 extended until 2am Saturday 21 February 2026</p> <p>Saturday 21 February 2026 extended until 2am Sunday 22 February 2026</p> <p>Sunday 22 February 2026 extended until 2am Monday 23 February 2026</p>
<p>Lunar New Year 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First weekend</li> </ul>	<p>Commences Tuesday 17 February 2026</p>	<p>Friday 20 February 2026 extended until 2am Saturday 21 February 2026</p> <p>Saturday 21 February 2026 extended until 2am Sunday 22 February 2026</p> <p>Sunday 22 February 2026 extended until 2am Monday 23 February 2026</p>
<p>Cyclonats Festival of Cycling Culture</p>	<p>Friday 27 February 2026 – Sunday 1 March 2026</p>	<p>Friday 27 February 2026 extended until 2am Saturday 28</p>

		<p>February 2026</p> <p>Saturday 28 February 2026 extended until 2am Sunday 1 March 2026</p> <p>Sunday 1 March 2026 extended until 2am</p> <p>Monday 2 March 2026</p>
<p>Enlighten Festival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening weekend</li> </ul>	<p>Friday 27 February 2026 – Monday 9 March 2026</p>	<p>Friday 27 February 2026 extended until 2am Saturday 28 February 2026</p> <p>Saturday 28 February 2026 extended until 2am Sunday 1 March 2026</p> <p>Sunday 1 March 2026 extended until 2am</p> <p>Monday 2 March 2026</p>
<p>Digi Culture &amp; Music Festival</p>	<p>Saturday 28 February 2026 – Sunday 1 March 2026</p>	<p>Friday 27 February 2026 extended until 2am Saturday 28 February 2026</p> <p>Saturday 28 February 2026 extended until 2am Sunday 1 March 2026</p> <p>Sunday 1 March 2026 extended until 2am</p> <p>Monday 2 March 2026</p>
<p>Enlighten Festival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closing weekend</li> </ul>	<p>Friday 27 February 2026 – Monday 9 March 2026</p>	<p>Friday 6 March 2026 extended until 2am</p> <p>Saturday 7 March 2026</p> <p>Saturday 7 March 2026 extended until 2am</p> <p>Sunday 8 March 2026</p> <p>Sunday 8 March 2026</p>

	extended until 2am Monday 9 March 2026
--	---

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation to support community safety this festive season.

## 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