

Liquor (Reduction in Annual Licence Fee for Eligible Events) Guidelines 2025 (No 1)

Disallowable instrument DI2025-130

made under the

Liquor Act 2010, s 32B (Licence – reduction in annual fee)

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Introduction

The *Liquor Act 2010* (the Act) regulates the supply of liquor in the ACT. In 2024, as part of a broader reform package to support and enhance Canberra's night-time economy, amendments were made to the Act via the *Liquor (Night-Time Economy) Amendment Act 2024*. This included a new provision under the Act, section 32B **Licence – reduction in annual fee**.

The policy intent of this provision was to incentivise the support of local and interstate artists by providing eligible licensees holding eligible events a discount on annual liquor licence fees dependent on their occupancy level. In doing so, this incentive would create a circular model that would aid businesses as well as support established and emerging artists.

Additionally, it was intended that the benefit of a liquor annual fee reduction for supporting the arts would nurture a more diverse and lively night-time economy in Canberra by providing more opportunity for Canberrans and visitors to see what Canberra has to offer in the entertainment sector.

Under section 32B (4) of the Act, the Minister with portfolio responsibility for the Act may make guidelines in relation to reducing the annual fee payable for a liquor licence, consistent with the objects of the Act and the harm minimisation and community safety principles.

The guidelines, and this accompanying explanatory statement, are published to assist those liquor licensees seeking to reduce their annual liquor licence fee by supporting and showcasing artists, musicians, and other cultural activities.

Amendments to the Guidelines

Guidelines were originally made effective on 9 July 2024 [DI2024-208]. These have now been amended and the purpose of this Explanatory Statement is to outline these amendments.

The *Who is eligible to apply for a reduction to an annual liquor fee?* section of the guidelines has been updated to reflect that, beginning 1 July 2025, the liquor annual fee reductions will be expanded to eligible licensees with occupancies of 350 people or less. Additionally, the *What will the reduction to the annual liquor licence fee* section has been amended to reflect that eligible licensees with an occupancy over 150 people, but less than or equal to 350 people, can apply for a 50 per cent reduction on their annual liquor licence fee. The existing 80 per cent fee reductions for eligible licensees with an occupancy of 150 people or less remains.

This change ensures the reform benefits a larger number of hospitality businesses and venues that are critical for the strength and diversity of Canberra’s night-time economy, as well as fostering a broader range of venues that are vital to support developing artists.

The *What evidentiary requirements are there?* section of the guidelines has also been updated to revise the types of evidence that applicants can provide to demonstrate that an event has taken place. Amendments will also provide additional clarity around the provision of required information and possible outcomes of assessment.

These amendments have been made to reflect learnings from implementing the guidelines since their introduction in July 2024. The changes will support the consideration and approval process of applications.

The guidelines have also been updated to reflect that applications will be refused if the required information is not provided.

Fees

Section 227 of the Act provides that the Minister may determine fees for the Act. Section 32A of the Act provides that a licensee must pay to the Commissioner the annual fee determined for the licence. Annual fees are calculated based on the type of licence, the occupancy loading for the premises, and the licensed time a licensee is permitted to serve alcohol up to.

The latest version of the Fee Determination Instrument can be found on the ACT Legislation Register [here](#) (click on the “Regulations & Instruments” tab).

Purpose

The guidelines are intended to be a prescriptive manual to assist liquor licensees to:

- understand what is meant by showcasing for the purpose of the reform;
- understand whether they are eligible licensees for the purpose of the reform;
- understand what the reduction to the annual fee will be for eligible licensees;
- understand the criteria an eligible licensee must meet in order to be considered for the fee reduction;
- understand the evidentiary requirements required to support any application for the fee reduction;
- understand how an eligible licensee can apply for the fee reduction;
- understand how the Commissioner for Fair Trading will decide whether an application for the fee reduction is successful, and how the fee reduction will be applied; and
- understand obligations for minimising risk.

Consistency with human rights

The compatibility of the *Liquor (Reduction in Annual Licence Fee for Eligible Events) Guidelines 2025 (No 1)* with the *Human Rights Act 2004* (HR Act) was considered during its development. The declaration does not engage any human rights under the HR Act and therefore is consistent with the Act.