



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 6 April 2016

STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO SYDNEY MORNING HERALD ARTICLE

An article in today's Sydney Morning Herald (['Liquor, gaming in 'chaos' before lockout laws review'](#)) did not accurately represent reforms underway in liquor and gaming regulation.

[As announced on 10 October last year](#), the NSW Government is reforming the State's liquor and gaming regulatory structures to better support its policy efforts, increase compliance capacity, clear bottlenecks, remove inefficiencies and resolve community confusion in the previous system.

The new regulator, Liquor & Gaming NSW, replaces the former Office of Liquor, Gaming & Racing and incorporates functions previously undertaken by Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority (ILGA) staff. The regulator has been being given a 20 per cent boost in compliance capacity with a surge force of up to 100 inspectors to undertake checks of licensed venues, including the casino. The refreshment of staff assigned to casino compliance will ensure high and independent standards.

The article made certain statements about ILGA's independence. Under the reforms, ILGA remains independent but has been refocused on higher-risk licence applications, such as new bottle shops or nightclubs. All casino licensing and gaming machine entitlement decisions also remain with ILGA.

Ministerial administrative directions to ILGA are intended to improve the timeliness and transparency of its decision making without encroaching on its independence to grant, suspend or cancel a gaming and liquor licence or deal with disciplinary matters.

The article also referred to three senior executives having resigned in the past few weeks. This is incorrect. One senior executive has resigned to take up a role in Newcastle as he had been commuting to Sydney for over two years. The Chair of ILGA resigned from his part time position in January 2016 (the day before the new arrangements commenced). A second ILGA member's part time appointment lapsed in March, and the member decided not to accept a reappointment. Two new members have been appointed to the ILGA board, Mr Phillip Crawford and Mr Craig Sahlin, for three years until March 2019. A search process is currently underway to recruit a professional, highly skilled Chair to fulfil the role in line with modern regulatory practice.

Decision making in relation to routine licensing proposals, such as low-risk liquor licences for restaurants, has been delegated to Liquor & Gaming NSW. This will help improve processes, provide greater certainty in decision making and reduce administrative delays.

Liquor & Gaming NSW will be fully operational by June 2016 when all roles in the new regulatory agency are expected to be filled.

ENDS

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