Class 1

Local Impact Assessment

Old Bar Tavern

Old Bar & Saltwater Rds

Old Bar NSW 2430

Licence Number: LIQH400115415

LGA: Mid – Coast Council

1. Executive Summary

1.1. The applicant submits a Class 1 Local Impact Assessment ("LIA") in support of an application under the *Gaming Machines Act 2001* ("the Act") for a low-range increase to the gaming machine threshold presently 15 comprising 15 gaming machine entitlements with an increase of _8_ gaming machines for the Old Bar Tavern (the "Hotel")

1.2. The threshold increase of _8_ gaming machines would bring the overall total of the threshold to _23_.

1.3. The subject premises is situated at Old Bar & Saltwater Rds, Old Bar NSW 2430.

1.4. The hotel is located within a SA 2 Band 2 area of Old Bar - Manning Point - Red Head within the Local Government Area ("LGA") of Mid-Coast.

1.5. The Act requires the Authority to be satisfied of the following in order to approve the subject gaming machine threshold increase application.

    (a)   The LIA complies with the Act & Regulation requirements;

    (b)   The LIA has demonstrated that gambling activities will be conducted in a responsible manner as referred to in Clause 3.

    (c)   The proposed increase in the gaming machine threshold will provide a positive contribution towards the local community as referred to in Clause 6; and

    (d)   The LIA has adequately addressed any community concerns arising out of the consultation.

It is submitted that the Authority would be so satisfied.

2.   Hotel Background

2.1.   The premises are located at Old Bar & Saltwater Rds, Old Bar NSW 2430, on the mid North Coast on the southern side of the mouth of the Manning River, about 18 kms east of Taree.

2.2.   The primary purpose of the Hotel is for the sale of liquor by retail. The keeping and operation of gaming machines at the Hotel will not detract unduly from the character of the Hotel or from the enjoyment of persons using the Hotel otherwise than for the purpose of gaming. The Hotel currently operates 15 gaming machines, with 15 entitlements.

2.3.   The Hotel provides a full range of facilities for its patrons including a public bar, TAB and Keno with multiple screens and a Bistro with seating for 78 internally and 40 externally. A copy of the menu is attachment 'A' for 12-2:30pm and 5:30-8:30pm seven days per week. There is an outdoor Beer Garden with heating for winter, the Gaming Room, a partly covered outdoor Children's Play Area, a Bottle Shop and 2 courtesy buses are available. A range of function packages are available. Photos of the premises are attachment 'B'. There are 100 car spaces (with overflow area for a further 200) and 2 bays for courtesy buses.

The Hotel is authorised to trade 5am to midnight Monday to Thursday, 5am to 3am Friday and Saturday and 10am to 10pm Sunday for the whole of the premises excluding the Beer Garden and TAB extension, otherwise standard hours.

However current trading hours are Monday to Thursday 10am to midnight, Friday and Saturday 10am to 3am and Sunday 10am to 10pm.

2.4.   The Hotel's current internal floor space is 1045 sqm and that of the gaming room is 97 sqm.

2.5.   Attachment 'C' depicts the existing floor plan with the proposed layout of the additional machines inserted.

2.6.   The Hotel has some 37 staff of which 8 are full time, and most are "locals". They are supported by management staff including a gaming supervisor.

3.   Responsible Gaming and Harm Minimisation

3.1.   The Hotel's management and staff will be supportive of and encourage responsible gaming practices. All members of staff engaged in the operation of gaming machines have completed the prescribed *Responsible Conduct of Gambling Course*. A register of the RCG certificates and competency cards of all staff will be maintained at the Hotel.

3.2.   The Hotel currently has 15 gaming machines. All gaming machines will be located within a gaming room as prescribed by Clause 9 of the Gaming Machines Regulation 2002, in that:-

(a)   The gaming room is located in a bar area of the Hotel,

(b)   The gaming room is physically separated from the general bar area by walls and doors,

(c)   Patrons are not compelled to pass through the gaming room in order to enter or leave the Hotel or in order to gain access to another part of the Hotel,

(d)   Entry to the gaming room is free of charge,

(e)   The machines cannot be seen from any place outside the Hotel that is used by the public or to which the public has access,

(f)   All gaming machines are suitably spaced in order to facilitate access,

(g)   The gaming room is supervised at all times by way of electronic means and physical presence of the licensee or an employee,

(h)   The gaming room has an entrance that provides reasonable access to and from the gaming room to at least one operating bar and at least one toilet for each gender without the need for patrons to go on a public street, or to any area not forming part of the Hotel when moving from the gaming room to other facilities, and

(i)   The gaming room cannot be accessed directly from a public street.

3.3.   The Hotel gaming shutdown period is 4am to 10am daily.

3.4.   The Hotel will maintain an active membership of the Australian Hotels Association (AHA) New South Wales and will continue to support its practices and procedures for gaming harm minimisation.

3.5.   Patrons of the Hotel will be made aware of the AHA's counselling services and of the government funded "gambling HELP" counselling service.

3.6.   Patrons will be made aware of the chances of winning and the problems associated with excessive gambling through prescribed signage required to be located on each gaming machine and throughout the gaming room by way of the prescribed notices on display.

3.7.   The ATMs located within the Hotel also display the appropriate signage to notify patrons of the problems associated with gambling.

3.8.   The Hotel does not offer prizes associated with the use of its gaming machines and the Hotel has a policy of not cashing cheques.

3.9.   The Hotel will comply with advertising requirements in respect to gaming:-

(a)   The Hotel will not use the word "casino" in any description or promotion of the Hotel,

(b)   The Hotel will not permit gaming related advertising material to be displayed on the exterior of the premises,

(c)   The Hotel will not promote irresponsible gaming or gaming practices,

(d)   The Hotel will display a clock, that is set to, or within 10 minutes of, the correct time and is in view of patrons in the gaming room,

(e)   The Hotel will not publish the details of any person who has won a prize in excess of $1,000, and

(f)   The Hotel will display the prescribed signage in the gaming room, on all gaming machines, and on the ATM or any EFTPOS facilities.

3.10.   The Hotel provides gaming related help line pamphlets and has signage located throughout the hotel.

3.11.   The Hotel managers are highly trained to watch for problem gamblers and talk regularly to patrons, assisting patrons when required.

3.12.   The Hotel implements the AHA's Game Care problem gaming counselling and self exclusion scheme and gaming code of conduct and is a member of the Local Liquor Accord.

3.13.   There has been only one "self exclusion" direct from these premises since 2019.

3.14.   Responsible service of alcohol is of prime importance as noted in the Hotel Plan of Management (HPOM).

3.15.   Security guards (RSA Marshalls) are present as referred to in Part 11 of the HPOM.

3.16.   Senior staff of the hotel attend the monthly Liquor Accord Meetings to discuss RSA and RCG issues within the wider community and how to address such issues. Senior staff pass on information discussed at the meeting to other staff of the hotel, verbally via email or facebook. Every staff member that works behind the bar has RSA and/or RCG certification (see Part 12 of the HPOM).

4.   Local Community

4.1.   The current client profile is a slightly older demographic over 35. It has a large proportion of trades people, working class, older couples/groups and young families. For instance Sunday is "family fun" day.

Most patrons are looking for everyday value in a comfortable "come as you are" relaxed environment.

During daytime, seniors often represent 50% of numbers.

Patrons aged 18-35 would be the smallest segment.

Although Old Bar is not a tourist destination compared to Forster or Port Macquarie, it does enjoy and increase in patronage over summer.

4.2.   For the purpose of the application, the local community has been identified as the Old Bar state suburb. The Hotel is the beating heart and a regular gathering point for families, groups and seniors in the local community, and an emergency gathering point. It plays an important part with its offering of services and amenities.

4.3. The Hotel hosts about 125 nights of live entertainment annually and was awarded a government grant in June 2021 for "Live Music Australia" to support and promote local musicians.

Most performers come from within 100 kms. The Hotel has entertainment every Friday & Saturday nights, and weather dependant, on a Sunday, ranging from soloists, duos, bands and international artists. It holds a music festival twice per year "Salty Sounds" which features local acts and local authorities and residents are notified in advance.

Also featured are periodic comedy, trivia, bingo, art shows/classes and children's entertainment. Entertainment is targeted to over 35's and their families, and that for younger groups is avoided. Entertainment is booked 6 weeks in advance and promoted on social media.

4.4. The Hotel assists in the hosting of large community events and in raising funds for Pre-school Family Fun Day, Ride Thru the Bar (on behalf of the local Ulysses Chapter Fund for disabled children), the Kombi Festival and car shows for local and nearby enthusiasts.

4.5. The Hotel has provided cash sponsorship and "in kind" support to the value of $65,000 in financial year 2021 to the following; The Old Bar Rugby Union Club - The Clams, The Barbarians – Old Bar Football Club, The Old Bar Cricket Club, The Old Bar Tavern Fishing Club, The Old Bar Tavern Social Golf Club, Taree-Old Bar Pigeon Racing Club and Old Bar-Taree Surf Life Saving Club.

The following organisations have raffles at the hotel; Old Bar Sub Branch RSL, Banyula Village Retirement Home – Old Bar, Old Bar Tavern Fishing Club, Old Bar Rugby Union Club, Old Bar Football Club, Saltwater Board Riders, Oxley Island Pony Club, Old Bar Community Pre-school, Ronald McDonald House and Old Bar Rural Fire Service.

Local organisations that use the hotel for meetings; The Old Bar CTC (Communication, Technology Centre), Old Bar Manning Point Community & Business Association, Old Bar Sub Branch RSL and Saltwater Board Riders.

The Hotel uses a range of local suppliers for the food operations such as; Mother Fungus Courbet Mushrooms (Old Bar), Townhead Fruit and Vegetable Wholesalers (Taree), Baines Oysters (Manning Point), Old Bar Gourmet Meats (Old Bar), Saxby Drury Distribution – Wholesalers (Taree), PFD (Taree Branch), Monin Seafood (Tuncurry) and AJ Wilson Wholesale (Forster).

5.   Demography

5.1   The population of the state suburb of Old Bar was 4389 (2016 census) and of Old Bar - Manning Point – Red Head SA2 Area 10,537. Annexure 1 is a table of key demographics information in relation to the Old Bar State Suburb, Old Bar SA2 Area and Mid-Coast LGA.

The population characteristics of Old Bar are generally unfavourable to state averages as are those of Mid-Coast local government area, although commensurate with rural NSW. Of interest is the very high population of people over 55 and over 65, which may influence the data.

However the Old Bar Tavern is Old Bar's de facto community centre and the social centre for Old Bar and the adjoining suburbs, providing the community with a safe, comfortable place where residents can meet and mingle, form friendships, share troubles and enjoy free entertainment and good food at reasonable prices as well as having a flutter on the pokies and TAB. This is a place where community meetings are held and is one of the few facilities which can bring the people of the area together as a community. It is the social hub for Old Bar and the adjoining areas.

The hotel is well managed and well regarded by local community groups and subsidises a range of social clubs.

The increase in threshold is being sought to enable the applicant to maintain and improve the hotel and the service it provides to the community.

The density of hotel gaming machines in the SA2 is well below NSW as a whole and will continue to be so if the application is granted.

5.2   There are only two hotels and three clubs located in the Old Bar – Manning Point – Red Head SA2 Band 2 area (see attached LIA Banding map and banding map of surrounding areas). As well as these premises, there is Hallidays Point Tavern at 551 Blackhead Rd, Hallidays Point (a distance of 28 kms from these premises) with 14 GMEs, Black Head Bowling Club in Main St, Hallidays Point (28 kms away) with 21 GMEs, Manning Point Bowling Club, Manning St, Manning Point (19.1 kms away) with 25 GMEs, and Club Old Bar, 1 Belford St, Old Bar with 55 GMEs. There is currently a total of 130 poker machine entitlements in that Band 2 area.

5.3   The population of Old Bar – Manning Point – Red Head SA2 area as of 2016 census was 10,537, with 29 gaming machines in two hotels, an average of 363 person per gaming machine. The population of Old Bar state suburb as at 2016 census was 4,389, with 15 gaming machines in one hotel, an average of 292 person per machine.

5.4   For the period 1/7/2020 to 31/12/2020 these premises were ranked 606 in NSW for gaming machine net profit and 523 for net profit per machine and respectively 9th and 6th of 20 within the LGA.

5.5   Using the Authority gaming machine data report for the period from 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020 the net profit per machine for hotels in the Mid – Coast LGA was $41,918.00 and that for these premises was $ 49,384.00.

5.6   To the north west of the SA2 is the Band 3 SA2 Taree, to the north & part south is the Band 2, Taree Region and to part south is the SA2 Band 2 Forster Tuncurry.

6.   Positive Contribution to the Local Community

6.1   The applicant proposes to make a donation per threshold increase to the Responsible Gaming Fund of $7284.38 per annum over a 5-year period ($36,421.90) which equates to 15% of the average gaming profit per entitlement (in total $58,275.09 per annum and $291,375.45 over 5 years).

6.2   In addition the hotel will continue to support the local community as mentioned in paragraph 4.

6.3   The operators of the hotel continually undertake staff training to provide staff with the ability to maintain enhanced skills in dealing with clientele and gaming clients in addition to the harm minimisation protocols referred to in clause 3.

6.4   The positive contribution will benefit the local community and the operators will continue to review and implement new responsible gaming and harm minimisation strategies in order to negate any negative impacts on the local community.

7.   Conclusion

7.1.   It is submitted that the foregoing information complies with the guidelines for a Class 1 Local Impact Assessment attaching to an application for an increase in the gaming machine threshold of the Hotel by addressing the responsible gaming and harm minimisation measures taken by the Hotel; identifies the local community of the Hotel; and provides information to show that a positive contribution will be made to the local community if the LIA and increase application are approved.

7.2.   Approval of the gaming machines threshold to 23 will result in a direct positive impact by way of financial support and contributions to local and/or charitable organisations and a total of $ 291,375.45 to the RGT over a 5-year period.

7.3.   Based on the foregoing information and as the Hotel is located in a Band 2 SA 2 and the application is for a low-range increase in the gaming machine threshold, we submit that there are more positive impacts for the community if the threshold application is approved than any negative impact by the installation of an additional 8 gaming machines.