



Troy Grant
Deputy Premier of NSW
Minister for Racing

MEDIA RELEASE

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IMPERIAL HOTEL SHUT DOWN FOR SECOND TIME

The Imperial Hotel at Erskineville has been shut down for the second time in a little over a month due to serious ongoing licence breaches, including having drug dealing occur on premises.

The hotel has been ordered to close from 7pm on Friday 24 July until 7pm on Monday 27 July after Office of Liquor, Gaming & Racing and NSW Police Force inspections during the past two weeks detected ongoing drug dealing and illicit drug use, multiple intoxicated patrons, and staff serving alcohol to intoxicated patrons.

The short term closure order by the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority followed an application by OLGR.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Justice and Police Troy Grant said licensed venues doing the wrong thing will have the book thrown at them.

"Operating a licensed venue in NSW is a privilege, not a right, and those abusing it will face the consequences," Mr Grant said.

"I make no apologies for this Government taking strong and necessary action to protect the community, which we are doing on several fronts including lockout laws and three strikes. Liquor laws in NSW have never been stronger."

The second closure of the Imperial Hotel follows a number of serious actions taken by the NSW Government this year to combat licensed venues openly flouting the law. These include closing the Royal Hotel in Temora for 28 days after alcohol was served to a minor – the first 28-day closure in NSW – and banning two former Kings Cross bar operators from holding liquor licences for life – also a first for NSW.

Issues detected at the Imperial Hotel at Erskineville over the past fortnight which resulted in the second shutdown include:

- Open drug dealing, including a male patron approached by multiple people next to the dance floor to exchange money for white powder. The man was seen taking a small spoon from his necklace, dipping it into a container of white powder, and holding it to a woman's face to snort prior to the woman handing over cash. In another instance, an undercover inspector was approached and asked if he knew where drugs could be purchased.

- Bar staff serving alcohol to intoxicated patrons, including a man presenting at the bar unsteady on his feet and with a spilt drink covering his shirt, and a woman with a blank expression swaying from side to side.
- Numerous intoxicated patrons, including patrons falling asleep in chairs, slumped against walls, stumbling on the dance floor, and having to be helped to stand or walk.
- Poor engagement by staff in dealing with intoxication. One male patron was observed licking a spilt drink off the hotel floor as a Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) marshal watched and laughed without taking action.
- A continuing pattern of intoxicated patrons becoming aggressive to security and police after being asked to leave, creating a risk of alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour.
- Lax security standards, including inconsistent checks of patrons entering the premises. Guards were observed checking IDs of only female patrons, scanning only the pockets of male patrons, and using a venue drug detection dog inconsistently. A female patron assaulted a security guard but it was not reported to police.

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