



MEDIA RELEASE

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REGULATOR TARGETS NEWCASTLE RESTAURANT FOR LIQUOR LAW BREACHES

Soho on Darby in Newcastle can no longer serve drinks without meals after the NSW Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority (ILGA) found its mode of operation was resulting in anti-social behaviour including alcohol-related violence.

Following an investigation by Liquor & Gaming NSW, ILGA has revoked the restaurant's Primary Service Authorisation which allows alcohol to be served without meals provided the business's primary purpose remains a restaurant.

NSW police reports showed there had been nine assaults and five patrons charged with offensive behaviour at the venue between July 2015 and August 2016.

In its findings, ILGA said NSW Police had observed numerous times that the vast majority of patrons were on the first floor of the venue, with DJ entertainment, no tables and chairs and few if any patrons consuming a meal.

No staff could be seen in the kitchen and staff said only a limited menu was available.

Liquor & Gaming NSW's Director of Compliance Operations, Sean Goodchild, said the case highlighted the need for venues with Primary Service Authorisations to ensure they don't operate as nightclubs or bars.

"We have investigated a number of recent cases where restaurants have effectively morphed into nightclubs or bars which have far higher risks of alcohol-related harms including violence, anti-social behaviour and disturbance," Mr Goodchild said.

"Businesses that fail to run in accordance with their responsible service obligations and licence conditions can expect to be investigated and face serious penalties."

ILGA's decision took effect on 18 December.

The full report on the decision is available here:

<http://www.liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au/Documents/ilga/decisions-of-interest/Soho%20on%20Darby%20-%20Decision%20with%20Reasons%20181217.pdf>

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