

Universal Hotels

Three Strikes Review January 2016,

To the OLGR NSW,

Universal Hotels has been an investor in the hotel industry for many decades now and currently owns and operates four licensed venues within the Sydney CBD precinct.

We have watched as more and more regulations have been implemented and each one has had significant impact upon our business operation.

In particular, we are acutely aware of the devastating effects one or more strikes would have on our operation.

We understand the Three Strikes law was introduced to rid the industry of the 'rogue' operators but the reality is it has just been used as a tool for the regulation bodies to threaten and in some cases manipulate owners and licensees to stop promoting or improving patronage to their venues.

There needs to be a clear process and publically-available guidelines that the regulation officers are held accountable to. The inconsistent standards for issuing infringement notices is unacceptable given the penalties for prescribed offences are so catastrophic.

To ensure the scheme works to a fair and just system, hoteliers need to be assured their operations are being regulated by the same standards as the business next door. Further to this, hoteliers should be given the same treatment as all licensed venues – namely registered clubs, where the strike is incurred by the venue's licensee as opposed to the building itself.

When the consequences are so great, it is astounding that the system was not thoroughly worked through before coming into effect. This review needs to consider the weight of the penalties versus the offence – or risk losing the responsible and community-minded operators as well.

Regards,

Jim and Harris Kospetas
Universal Hotels