SECURITY AND STAFFING INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLE

Report on Discussion

30 June 2022

www.liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

On 30 June, CEO Hospitality and Racing, Mr Anthony Keon, hosted a half-day roundtable, which brought together high-level stakeholders including peak hospitality and security industry bodies, police, local government, training providers, large-scale and music festival event organisers. A list of roundtable attendees is at the back of this report.

The Roundtable was held to generate ideas and solutions to address the growing concern about a lack of capable or available staff and security personnel.

Attendees noted that skill shortages were being across multiple sectors, and not just the hospitality sector, and that there was no 'silver bullet' solution to the issues. However, by working collaboratively, a range of initiatives and solutions may be able to be implemented to provide some relief to the issue.

Attendees shared issues and concerns they are experiencing in their own industry, and where support and attention could help including:

- discussions around the roles and responsibilities of security guards and venue staff,
- current security ratios, and
- training and professional development opportunities.

Other ideas raised focused on:

- attracting new workers to the industry,
- reducing red tape and associated costs, and
- looking to build a more sustainable industry.

An action plan will be developed and Hospitality and Racing will continue to work with industry and government agencies to address the issues discussed.

This report captures the discussions and suggestions that were put forward at the Roundtable. The report does not seek to provide analysis or comment on the merits of the suggestions put forward, and we note that for some suggestions there were conflicting views.

The report seeks to objectively report on the full range of matters put forward.

2 | THE ISSUE

Background

At the May 2022 Liquor Accord Governance Advisory Committee (LAG) meeting attended by Liquor & Gaming NSW, NSW Police, and peak industry stakeholders, the lack of capable staff and security personnel was noted as a considerable concern for the hospitality industry. Those concerns are being consistently raised across industry sectors.

It was proposed to hold a Roundtable to discuss relevant issues and develop a plan of action, with practical solutions, to support a safe and sustainable industry recovery.

Following industry reopening after COVID-19 security and hospitality staff have not returned to the industry in full capacity leading to gaps in staffing number and experience.

These concerns are being heard consistently by Hospitality and Racing executives, frontline staff and through the Liquor Accord network.

Staff and security shortages

The hospitality industry is facing significant shortages of both venue staff and security guards. This has a direct impact on the ability for businesses to run effectively, safely and to provide a high level of service to patrons.

Venue operators reported that this lack of staff is estimated to be a 20-30% reduction of required security, in some areas this percentage is greater.

Some venues are unable to open all areas or floors due to lack of security on the premises. Likewise, large events and festivals are struggling to roster on the number of security guards needed, some requiring workers to travel interstate at increasing costs to organisers.

There are many causes to the lack of available staff, the most significant being the impacts of COVID-19 on the industry through multiple lockdowns, restrictions and in some cases venue closures.

Analysis of the RSA competency training data reveals that the number of eligible RSA holders are down from previous pre-pandemic years – see graph below. This reflects the exit of many workers from the industry, reduction of work hours, and venue closures as a result of COVID-19. This led to many staff seeking alternative employment in other sectors.

RSA classroom and RSA online training
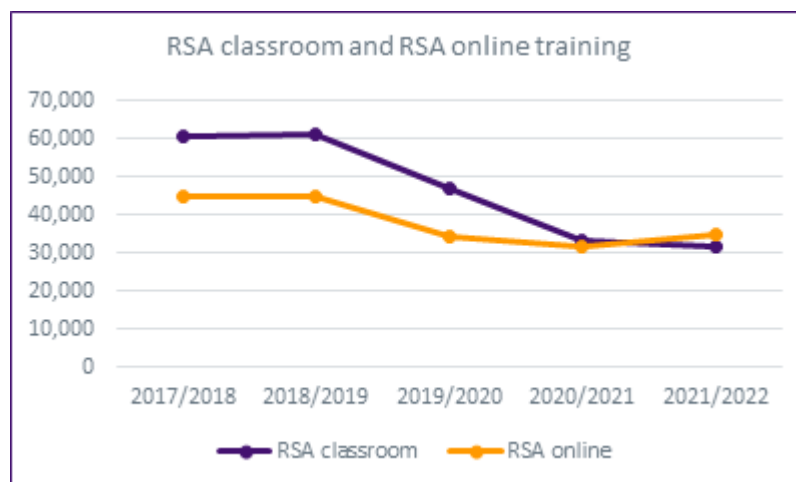
Currently there are over 63,000 issued security licences in NSW, an increase since pre-pandemic levels in 2019. However, the number of security licences available is not translating to people fulfilling positions within the industry, with job vacancies persisting throughout the sector and venues finding it a challenge to employ suitably experienced guards.

NSW licensed crowd controllers' data as provided by the Security Licensing & Enforcement Directorate (SLED):

23/12/2017	31/12/2019	29/06/2022
40,837	42,703	43,562

* figures for 2020 and 2021 are not available

3 | ROUNDTABLE

Roundtable

On 30 June 2022 Liquor & Gaming NSW within the Hospitality and Racing group, brought together industry stakeholders and representatives from key government agencies to discuss concerns about the lack of capable staff and security guards and work towards practical solutions.

Roundtable discussions and key issues raised

The following key issues were raised by attendees throughout the day.

Roles and responsibilities of security guards and venue staff

A review of the roles and responsibilities of security and venue staff is needed to ensure the most efficient utilisation of staff. Industry has discussed the creation of new roles that take on some low-risk security responsibilities without needing a security licence. This would then free up licensed security guards to be available for more complex or high-risk roles within the venue. Greater discussion is needed around the roles of assistant managers, managers, and licensees with regard to what role they should play in venue security on a regular basis.

It was noted that all staff have a part to play in general security and overall positive hospitality experience for patrons, by ensuring responsible service of alcohol standards and good communication.

Ratios of required Security Staff

The industry standard ratio of 1:100 came up regularly in discussion as being inflexible to the needs of businesses. Industry identified that the ratio should include a risk matrix and should be able to include all other venue staff within the ratio. For example, bar staff, licensees and managers could be counted as staff for the purpose of the ratio. This would ease pressure on venues trying to fill the security positions as required by the ratio.

The ratio should also be supported by other measures undertaken at the venue to reduce harm such as the use of body-worn cameras, the availability of CCTV on the premises, if the venue is included in the Barred from One, Barred from All (BFOBFA) scheme, fail to quit procedures and the support from Police in and around the premises. Discussions around security at venues should also take into account the compliance history of the individual venue. Local Licensing Agreements are another possible solution to create greater flexibility to trial alternative arrangement to the ratios specified in conditions in consultation with police.

Previous licence conditions were put in place in some cases many years ago and have not been reviewed since. Consumers and patrons are now more aware of their responsibilities when entering licensed venues, and industry has transitioned with high levels of consumer intelligence around intoxication. Therefore, certain licence conditions should be reviewed and if deemed unnecessary then should be removed or amended.

Greater flexibility around these ratios is also needed for larger events and music festival licences and better transparency around the event planning. In some cases, promoters struggle to make up the number for the ratio, so they must fly in security workers from WA, VIC and QLD at a cost which is passed onto patrons.

Review of current planning and licensing requirements

Industry participants and government identified that conditions imposed under Development Applications (DA) also need to be reviewed in the context of security guard

requirements. Some licensed premises are required by their local council to adhere to ratios, or a defined number of security guards as listed on their DA. Consideration is needed to address both liquor licensing and DA conditions that relate to security requirements. The requirements should also have a greater focus on risk.

Security licensing process and training

One barrier raised by industry is the length of time it takes to undertake the training and apply for a security licence in NSW. This does not assist in attracting new staff to the industry as applicants need to take time off work to undertake the training course and go through the application process. The length of time, on average to process a new licence is 7.5 weeks. This relies on the applicant to attend a ServiceNSW centre to be photographed and undertake fingerprinting at a Police station which can add more time to the process if delayed. However, it is noted that some parts of this process can occur concurrently with the training (i.e the training does not have to be completed to commence the application process for the security licence).

The security licensing course is based on a national framework, recently implemented in 2020 and takes about 3 weeks. The entry level qualification, Certificate II in Security Operations has 12 core units. The level of face-to-face training is determined by each training organisation with virtual options available for students. Participants indicated that some training is ineffective as applicants are not successful at self-paced learning. Alternative ways to train staff should be looked at including more on the job training options. In house approved training providers, such as large venues with their own Approved Training Provider (ATP), have reduced the costs to the business and have good retention levels of security staff.

Consultation is underway regarding the introduction of a pre-licence knowledge test, similar to a learner drivers test before the granting of a licence. Industry are welcome to provide more feedback in this area.

Costs, fees, and waivers

Participants acknowledged that the fee free RSA courses were significant in bringing workers back into the industry and making the process easier for staff. Hospitality and Racing is interested to explore further discussions about how to further promote these free courses. It was suggested by industry that considerations be made into fee waivers or subsidies for the cost of new and renewed security licences.

Public liability insurance for security providers is very difficult to obtain, and attendees reported that premiums have increased approximately 600-700%. Smaller operators struggle to cover the costs associated. Work is needed in this area to better support the hospitality sector.

Quality, capability and professional development

The capability of staff is also of concern to both industry and government. The standard of both RSA marshals and security guards in some areas are poor, with police reporting a high number of fines being issued to security officers in recent times. These roles require people with good communication skills and the ability to de-escalate situations. People with those

skill sets are finding better paid employment elsewhere. Friday and Saturday night shifts are hard to fill with quality guards, anecdotal feedback from guards stating that the money is not worth it. Participants suggested that having at least one security guard or manager per venue with body worn video can help with issues around quality of security – as it promotes communication rather than physical interventions.

It was also raised that the knowledge-based learning system does not accurately prepare security guards for work environments in the areas of physical restraint or removals or the demands of checking false identification. Therefore, on the job training and greater exposure to the industry is needed to gain the skills necessary to be an effective security guard.

Liquor & Gaming NSW can provide RSA on the Frontline training to bar staff which is based around more practical skills in the workplace, but work is needed to extend that program out to more areas. Attendees agreed that on the job training for venue staff was most valuable.

Micro-credentials or smaller training courses may be more suited to what applicants and businesses need for their staff. A more customisable approach to training could provide greater incentive for workers to join the industry. Training Services NSW encouraged people to contact their local Skills Broker and connect with training provides that have a *Smart & Skilled* contract to discuss custom programs. Training providers can work with businesses to develop a plan to get skilled staff. However, accessing training in regional areas can be difficult. Virtual and online learning options are needed to reach regional workers.

Attracting new staff to the industry

Due to the demands faced with the pandemic, hospitality venues are still struggling to recruit and retain venue staff. Certain liquor licence conditions can exacerbate this through strict requirements on catering staff, and rules related to minor's areas and boundaries in

licensed premises that can reduce the ability of younger staff members to assist with food service.

Women and older workers are being overlooked for the inclusion in the security industry. Female participation in security roles is stalled at around 10% and in some licence classes this remains at a much lower rate. Industry needs to come up with a way to promote roles for underutilised cohorts.

Sustainability of the industry

Government participants identified that sustainability of the hospitality sector relies on patrons getting back into venues and enjoying a safe night life. This requires changing the narrative around night-time activities and influencing consumer habits, for example through the promotion of more family friendly events, live music, arts and cultural attractions that bring people into different areas across NSW. Post COVID trends indicate that suburban areas have seen significant growth and patrons are gathering in areas closer to their homes.

Another key aspect to the development of a sustainable hospitality sector is making it an exciting place to work. Collective messaging is needed to greater promote hospitality as a long-term career and promote the benefits of the workplace culture. Industry does need to look at what it can offer workers that differs from other sectors and how to best attract new workers. Initiatives such as pre-employment training, apprenticeships, virtual work experience and engaging school leavers across the regions were flagged as possible solutions to build up the profile of the industry. Pathways are needed to upskill staff to lead to job progression in the industry.

Mutual recognition

A significant number of licence applications (approximately 15%) fall under the mutual recognition scheme, mostly from Queensland. Some applicants from NSW go through QLD to obtain licences as there are fewer regulations in other States. Industry identified this area as a concern as the quality of security guards from other states is poor.

Commonwealth support

Hospitality and Racing notified attendees that Minister Anderson has expressed interest in receiving feedback on Federal level levers that can assist the industry.

Industry identified that Federal tax reform permitting older workers to be employed for more hours could assist in getting retirees back into the workforce. Likewise, removing the secondary employment tax would encourage more people to work within the industry. More work is needed at the Federal level to permit and encourage backpackers, skilled migrants and visa holders to come back to work in Australia.

Workshop activity

Roundtable attendees participated in a group activity to discuss and map out priorities, possible solutions or supports to address staffing and security shortages.

Participants recorded these points on butchers paper, which are listed below. These priorities reflect discussions that occurred during the roundtable, summarised earlier in this report.

Group activity suggestions:

Roles and responsibilities of security guards and venue staff

- Need clear roles and responsibilities regarding objectives, venue manager should be responsible for asking patrons to leave not security guards

- Security Accreditation

  - hierarchy based on experience
  - customer safety and compliance, risk management approach
  - succession planning, career path
  - holistic approach to venue management
  - security integrated into hospitality staff model
  - clear roles and responsibilities e.g., security vs venue staff
  - provisional, traineeship model supported by government subsidy
  - mandating units prior to On The Job, benefit of 'OTJ' training vs classroom

- Security Industry Act 1997:
  - reallocating responsibility of tasks to other functions e.g., checking bags you have to be a crowd controller
  - redefine what is considered a security activity
  - licence expansions

- Create an additional role (Safety/Risk Marshal) directly employed by a liquor licensee that operates under the Liquor Act and includes amongst their duties the screening upon entry, checking for intoxication and requests for patrons to leave. This role would sit somewhere above an RSA Marshal/ not requiring Class 1AC (Crowd Controller) Security Licence with RSA/RCG/First Aid and probity assessment/National Names Check

Ratios of required security staff / Review of planning and licensing

- Re-defining security ratio (1:100) as a risk management overlay, have risk assessment when you have lower risk events in the same venue and have a risk based licencing model for security quotas

- 43,000 individuals are currently licensed, how many are currently active?

- Consider venue risk assessment – based on compliance, incentive on efforts re proactive measure to address risk, to reconsider security ratios
- Set a timeframe for such reviews/apps
- Conditions on liquor licence (L&G) + Development Application (Council) need to address both
- State-wide calendar/database so all types of events can be better managed, in particular risk mitigations, could be managed by 24Hr Commissioner
- Stakeholders to look interstate for ideas on how events are managed
- Stocktake security related conditions and request review amendment (security numbers, ratios, etc)

Security licensing process and training

- Casuals/part-time

  - 3 weeks training, how to attract and retain
  - Police secondary employment

- Training recognised prior learning (RPL) – Assessment pathway based on previous skills and knowledge
  - Easier pathway
  - Review of types of experience that can be considered RPL, what are the skills, capability and experience that are relevant e.g., Licensee has a relevant skill set recognised under RPL, duty manager of the hotel?
  - Probity as a first step then a training type pathway. Options to manage pervious issues with supervision

- Letter from L&GNSW to Commissioner of Police requesting Police be permitted to be employed as security guards as secondary employment

Costs, fees and waivers

- Renew licence, extension or fee-free options, for expired licences consider refresher rather than full training
- Public Liability costs are an issue
  - dancefloors
- Improving communication on what the government is doing to support the industry – streamline communication

Quality, capability and professional development

- Upskilling existing staff – communication skills, government funding to upskill existing security
- Provisional trainee model – there should be some sort of scholarship to train them in base skills, on the job training needed and get big organisations to do this on a rotation basis, e.g., 2 months at each venue to provide younger staff with experience, could be pathway for Indigenous groups

Attracting new staff to the industry

- Specific Groups (eg. women, older people) being considered for government subsidy, e.g., person employed with wage $80,000 with govt subsidising $20,000
- Advertising campaign to invite current licensed holders to re-join the industry
- Marketing through TV ads and media to promote the security industry - targeting women and the younger population
- Reframe image/narrative about security industry
  - negative image 'bouncers', night-time work, dangerous work, low pay
  - real life examples of positive role models in enticing roles for women, older Australians
  - change titles of roles but require security licence? 'security officer' vs bouncer
  - security service (customer service, public safety, risk management) vs guard (enforcement, danger, confrontation)
  - government recognition of importance of security to the economy
  - promote good news/work of security, CCTV of security averting the problem vs security guard punching a patron
  - regulators promoting good work
  - perks (event security, food, transport)

Sustainability of the industry

- Collaborating with industry and government for training initiatives
  - industry creating opportunities for other relevant employment during training course
  - incentivising additional training/experience
  - industry feedback to RTOs
  - subsidise RTOs re more innovative/flexible delivery
  - funding of pathways to security promotion
  - treat as industry/profession/career, hospitality + security = industry
- Make it more attractive, marketing/promotion to retain staff (awareness campaign at universities)
- Lacking formalised succession plans for industry – require a more formal arrangement
- Portable long-term service leave (i.e. construction) company funded by union reps (loyalty may be an issue as they work across licences).

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CURRENT INITIATIVES

Current initiatives to address staffing and security needs in the industry

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NSW Government has implemented a range of initiatives to help the hospitality industry recover, which include:

Training Services NSW initiatives

- Training Services NSW (TSNSW) is developing a workforce strategy to promote the pathway from entry into the hospitality industry through to a sustainable career. The training that will sit under this strategy is being developed and funded from existing *Smart and Skilled* and *JobTrainer* programs.

- Hospitality focussed training programs are being introduced progressively to offer skilling pathways to attract, employ and retain a skilled workforce:

    - **RSA strategy 7 Feb – 30 June 2022**
      As of 22 June 2022, there have been 10,415 (6,653 TAFE) enrolments, 10,085 commencements and 7,778 course completions.

    - **Winter/Summer skills April – August 2022**
      A Job Trainer initiative to address skill shortages across winter/summer tourism hotspots. This focuses on hospitality, tourism and accommodation skills for 16-24 year old students.

    - **Hospitality career for young people August 2022**
      Year 13 proposal a youth pilot strategy to connect young people in schools with the hospitality industry to promote hospitality as a viable career by offering training opportunities.

    - **School Holiday Skills (1 July 2022)**
      To be offered to 1,000 school students (16+yrs) and include a range of hospitality, food safety and customer service skills including the RSA and RCG.

Further information about Training Services NSW, including training programs, becoming a Smart & Skilled training provider and how to access its local offices across NSW, is available at https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/department-of-education/training-services-nsw or by calling 13 28 11.

Liquor & Gaming NSW Initiatives

- **Fee free refresher training and extensions of period required to undertake full RSA and RCG courses**
  Those with an expired RSA were encouraged to return to industry by completing free RSA and RCG refresher training. This applied to those with RSA, or RSA and RCG competency cards expired or expiring between 1 February 2020 and 30 June 2022. This allowed them to complete short online refreshers instead of a full RSA/RCG course delivered by approved training providers and gave additional time until 30 June 2022 to complete the refreshers.

- **Extension of fee free refresher training**
  Fee free refresher training has now been further extended until the end of Summer (February 2023). Since 3 February 2022, 16,346 people have completed the free

RSA/RCG refreshers. Emails were sent to over 240,000 competency card holders to alert them to the extension.

- **Free RSA training**
  5,000 fee-free RSAs were funded under Training Services NSW's *Smart & Skilled* program to encourage new entrants to join the hospitality industry. Due to high demand, an additional 5,000 free RSAs were funded in March 2022.

- **Automatic Mutual Recognition - JobPass Program**
  The JobPass program makes it easier to employ interstate workers through automatic mutual recognition (AMR) of their RSA certifications. The AMR scheme was introduced for the RSA on 1 July 2021 and all other jurisdictions other than Queensland are participating.

24-Hour Economy Initiatives

To support the recovery and growth of the night-time economy sectors, the Government has released a 24 Hour Economy Strategy. The Strategy supports growth of the 24-hour economy through implementation of 39 actions. Key initiatives in the Strategy relating to the liquor industry include:

- **Liquor licences and development approvals**
  Further streamlining liquor licensing to support venues by aligning approvals processes for licensing and planning applications.

- **Pop up and cultural events**
  Simplifying requirements and improving affordability for creating pop-up and cultural events after a L&GNSW review of the pop-up liquor licence and reforms on 15 October 2020.

- **Inspections**
  Streamlining safety and inspection measures within night-time hubs– including developing coordinated approaches to safety by inspecting authorities from NSW Government agencies (L&GNSW/Police) and councils.

- **Alfresco Dining**
  Due to the success of the Alfresco Dining trial, the Government has amended the *Liquor Act 2007* and *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008 (SEPP)* to make the measures offered during the Trial ongoing for businesses.

Attendees

Roundtable participants

Industry
Australian Festival Association
Australian Hotels Association (AHA)
Australian Security Industry Association Ltd (ASIAL)
ClubsNSW
Crown Sydney
ISEC Security
Merivale Group
PRIME Security Group
Restaurant & Caterers Association
The Star
Venues Live

Government
24 Hour Economy Commissioner
City of Sydney Council
Liquor & Gaming NSW
NSW Police Force
Office of the Minister for Hospitality and Racing
Security Licensing & Enforcement Directorate (SLED), NSW Police
TAFE NSW
Training Services NSW

Liquor & Gaming NSW

Hospitality and Racing

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