

LIQUOR AND GAMBLING REGULATION STRATEGY



Queensland
Government

**Our people work
with you and your people
to keep your venues
enjoyable, healthy and
safe for everyone.**

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

The *Liquor and Gambling Regulation Strategy* outlines the steps we are taking to become a more modern, transparent, visible and accountable regulator.

As the liquor and gambling regulator, we contribute to safe and more responsible liquor and gambling environments that minimise alcohol and gambling harm, build community confidence and support industry development.

Our transparent approach to regulation drives shared accountability and common goals of community safety. By creating a level playing field, we are helping to ensure fair, efficient and responsible markets.

We developed this strategy in line with best practice theory and approaches around Australia and internationally, and with input from industry stakeholders through focus groups.

Four key pillars guide our actions in this strategy:

- A modern regulatory approach
- Outstanding service experience
- Sharing the way forward
- Connected team, positive impact.

My thanks to the industry associations and services, community groups, government agencies, local councils and licensees who helped us to understand their views of the Queensland environment, community expectations, our strengths and weaknesses, and the steps we need to take to become a more modern regulator.

I am looking forward to continuing our partnership with you.

Victoria Thomson

*Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming
Deputy Director-General for Liquor,
Gaming and Fair Trading*



LIQUOR AND GAMBLING IN QUEENSLAND

About OLGR

We are part of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and have just over 200 staff in Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba, Hervey Bay, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville and Cairns.

Our staff are unique among other state regulators with specific expertise including law, policy, gambling technology, auditing and mathematics.

We regulate the liquor and gambling industries, including clubs and hotels, casinos, wagering, lottery, Keno and charitable non-profit sectors to ensure the best possible outcomes for industry, community and government.

About the industry

The liquor and gambling industries in Queensland are diversified, vibrant and dynamic, with businesses constantly reshaping and innovating to stay viable and competitive.

COVID-19 presented unique challenges of lockdowns, density restrictions and staff shortages. Recovery is ongoing.

Technology is also bringing complexity and risk of new products and ways of doing business outpacing regulatory systems.

The vast majority of licensed venues are well-run, safe and positively contribute to their communities' cultural fabric. They contribute to local economies as business and employers, and they enrich Queensland's entertainment culture.



The five goals of the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation (OLGR)

1

**Safe and
empowered
communities**

2

**Fair and
responsible
markets**

3

**Reduced harm
from alcohol
and gambling**

4

**Socially responsible
licensees in a dynamic
and growing industry**

5

**Contemporary,
effective and trusted
regulatory system**

LIQUOR AND GAMBLING IN QUEENSLAND



APPROX.
10,000
LIQUOR LICENSEES



APPROX.
3,400
LIQUOR PERMITS



APPROX.
20,000
OCCUPATIONAL LICENCES



27
ADULT ENTERTAINMENT
PERMITS



4
CASINO LICENCES



APPROX.
1,100
LICENSED CLUBS
AND HOTELS



APPROX.
40,000
OPERATIONAL ELECTRONIC
GAMBLING MACHINES IN
CLUBS AND PUBS



64%
OF LICENSEES ARE
IN SE QUEENSLAND



59
ACTIVE LIQUOR
ACCORDS



15
SAFE NIGHT
PRECINCTS

MINIMISING HARM

The liquor and gambling industry has a social responsibility to keep its customers and communities safe, including Queensland's ageing, culturally and socially diverse communities.

Minimising harm is also good for business. It keeps licensed premises free of violence and protects their long-term reputation as a venue, a local business and as an employer.

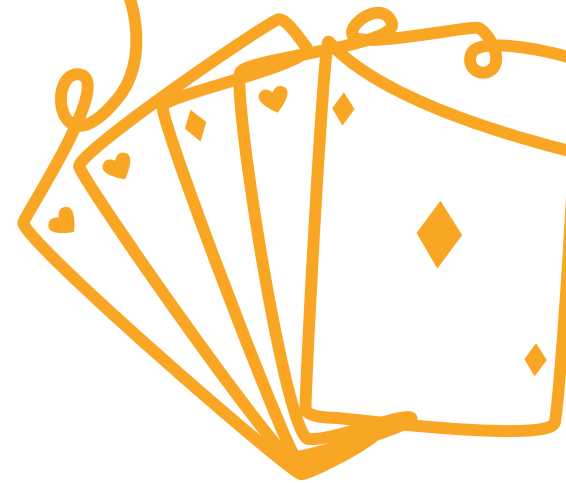
What does harm look like?

Alcohol consumption and gambling both have wide-ranging potential for causing harm.

Liquor-related harms include dangerous consumption, addiction and violence. Public drunkenness affects local businesses, including tourism, and limits community confidence.

Flow-on effects from gambling can include addiction and debt, which leads to criminal behaviours like theft and fraud.

Ultimately, liquor and gambling abuse harms communities. They can lead to unemployment, homelessness, irreparable damage to families, mental illness, suicide and death.



Initiatives to reduce gambling harm

Queensland's four-year Gambling Harm Minimisation Plan is delivering a number of initiatives to help the sector to reduce harm.

These include improving the effectiveness of the Responsible Gambling Network (RGNET) and reviewing the industry led and developed customer care framework and revamping Queensland's Responsible Gambling Code of Practice.

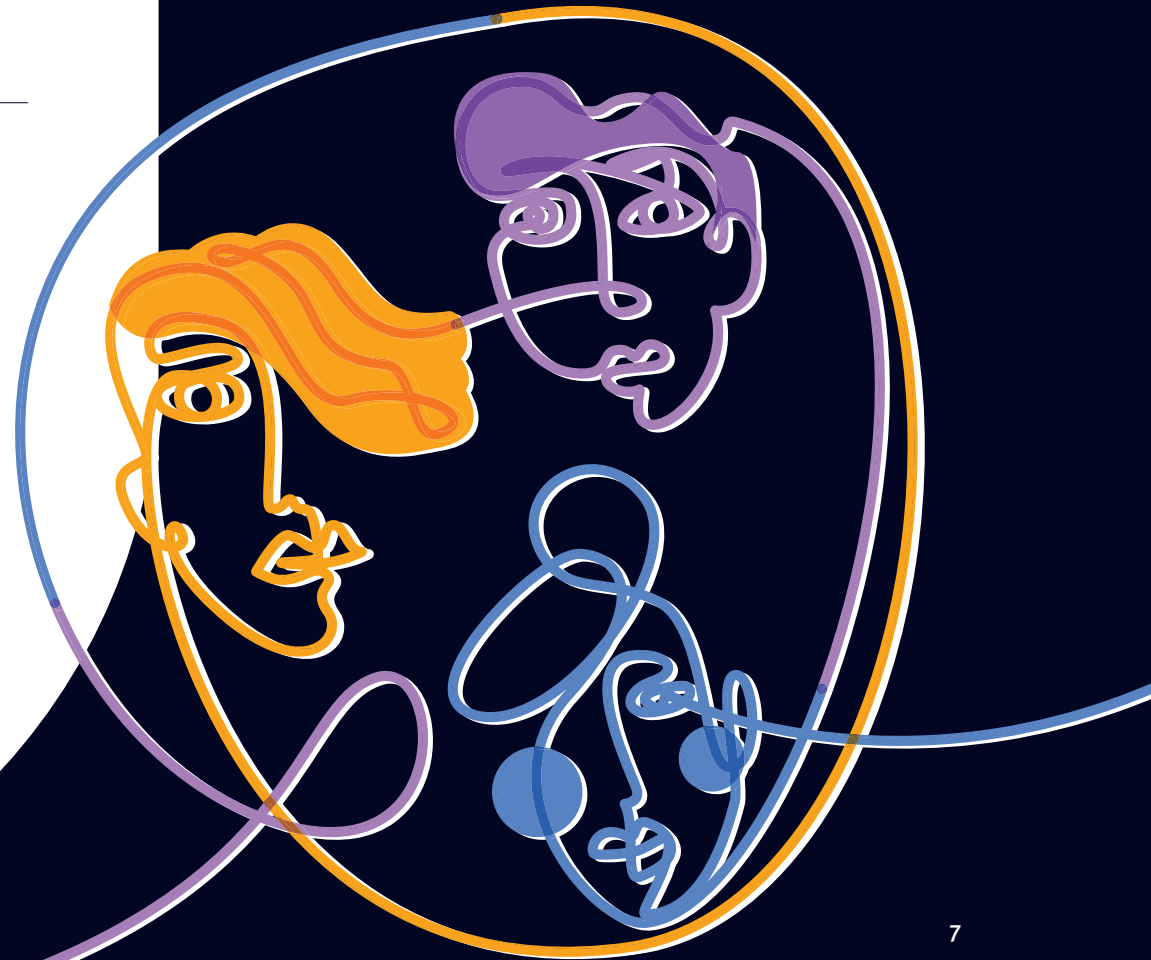
GOOD REGULATION KEEPS COMMUNITIES SAFE

Our balanced and fair approach to regulation reduces harm by targeting high-risk licensee behaviours without imposing unfair regulations.

Good regulation creates public value. It promotes trust, brings stability and creates environments where communities and businesses thrive.

Regulating Queensland's complex and rapidly changing environment requires a wise and careful balance. We:

- maintain the integrity of the liquor and gambling sectors
- create shared accountability for community safety
- target high-risk behaviours
- strengthen trust in the industry and OLGR's policies and practices.



PARTNERING WITH INDUSTRY

Our balanced, fair and transparent regulatory approach allows liquor and gambling businesses to operate effectively.

We actively support the industry to be sustainable and prosperous by minimising red tape, partnering widely to trial new ideas, and encouraging licensees to move beyond compliance to best practice.

More broadly, we maintain co-regulatory partnerships at local, state and national levels to ensure our approach is agile and we can predict and respond to emerging risks.

We will continue to leverage partnerships with industry and other agencies to build a robust evidence base, and to better understand local and regional pressures.

New reference group supports progress

A key part of the new strategy is establishing the Liquor and Gambling Reference Group.

The group, which began in mid-2022, brings together government, key stakeholders, community members and liquor and gambling industry partners in a collaborative forum.

Members will:

- provide industry feedback to help develop, update, implement and evaluate policies and programs
- share information on current and emerging challenges, including insight on potential regulatory and non-regulatory solutions
- advance a public health approach to minimising gambling- and liquor- related harm.

OUR REGULATORY APPROACH

Maintaining integrity and reducing harm are central to everything we do.

We listen carefully to the industry and the community and consider their views and passions.

Our evidence- and risk-based approach shapes how we make decisions, set priorities and allocate resources, which leads to best practice regulation and community safety.

We use a range of regulatory tools, including:

- checklists and tools to support self-compliance
- an ever-increasing range of education and training supports
- a strong regulatory approach, including applying tailored conditions if warranted
- both proactive and responsive compliance and investigation programs.

Responding proactively

We focus on safety as well as illegality and we are agile in how we prioritise and manage harm.

Our regulatory framework is not fixed in time—it changes to meet emerging risks.

A core set of principles underpins our approach.

- **Transparency:** We share our priorities, decisions and performance.
- **Proportionality:** Our action considers differing levels of risk.
- **Fairness and consistency:** We act with integrity and do what we say we'll do.
- **Respect:** We value and invite the insights of our partners and industry.
- **Excellence:** We work with passion, pride and purpose, taking accountability for our actions.

How we approach regulation

Inform licensees: Educate and engage with licensees to ensure a shared understanding of roles and obligations and drive a culture of ethical business practices

Set standards: Develop legislation, guidelines and codes of practice for industry

Licence and authorise: Assess and approve licences and suitability, set licence conditions, approve gambling rules, equipment and control systems

Promote compliance: Advise and inform licensees on compliance and harm minimisation

Compliance monitoring: Deliver robust compliance campaigns, assessing risk and responding to incidents and complaints

Enforce compliance: Address non-compliance using a range of enforcement tools and formal action

Encourage sustained compliance: Encourage industry leadership in delivering best and better practice

ASSESSING AND RESPONDING TO RISK

We focus our efforts on risks and compliance failures where we can make the biggest difference to the community.

How do we assess risk?

Risk assessment is complex. It can include a range of factors, including a licensee's compliance history, complaints, incident reports, legislative obligations and government commitments, and evidence including local knowledge and research.

We work with licensees to encourage compliance through education and advice, setting clear expectations and promoting best-practice management.

However, where licensees are unwilling or unable to meet their obligations or there is significant risk of harm, we will act and hold them to account.

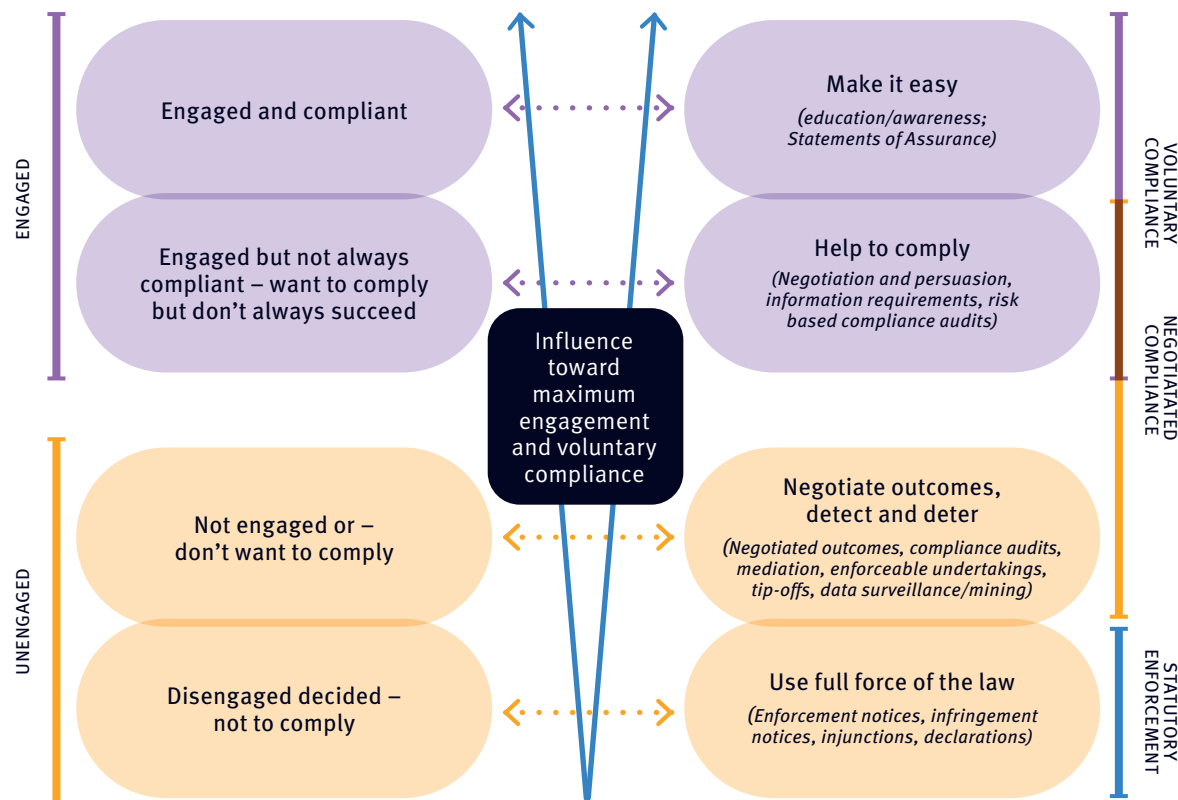
Using evidence to analyse gambling risk

We consider socio-economic, age, education and other demographic data to determine the level of potential risk posed by a venue's application to introduce or expand gambling.

Working with industry, we will develop a policy on how this data will support conditioning licences for gambling.

Escalation model

Our escalation enforcement model reinforces our balanced risk-based approach.



STRATEGIC PLAN

OLGR is committed to a transparent regulatory approach with clear, shared priorities and accountability. Each year, we will report on our progress against the following four strategic pillars.

1. A modern regulatory approach

The world around us is changing at a rapid rate. We need to understand industry trends, innovations and advancements, and how they interact with markets, communities and consumers.

We seek to act based on evidence, including up-to-date information, data-driven insights, technical know-how, and policy expertise.

Our aim is to deliver a contemporary outcomes-driven, flexible and practical regulatory framework.

Strategies to get there

- Evolve legislation in line with government priorities and community expectations.
- Adopt non-regulatory intervention if desired outcomes can be achieved.
- Be analytical and intelligence-driven with a focus on high-harm, high-potential risks.
- Think broadly and creatively about solutions.
- Build collective expertise with other liquor and gambling regulators, co-regulators and law enforcement agencies.

Tackling venue violence

Part of being a modern regulator is identifying where the greatest risks are and using data to inform practice.

Using Queensland Police Service data, we can identify reports of violence, such as assaults against women.

We are now working with affected venues to put in place long-term plans that embed sustainable change.

Key actions by the end of 2023

Review the efficacy of online and express delivery of alcohol regulation

The Queensland Government has committed to reviewing the efficacy of this regulation. Similar reviews in other states have seen the introduction of tougher restrictions to ensure under-18 or problem drinkers can't order excessive amounts of alcohol.

Investigate practical changes to extended hour permit provisions

To reduce red tape and approval delays, we will look for ways to make it easier for licensees to apply for short-term extended hour permits, such as for New Year's Eve or local special events.

Undertake product and equipment testing

We will refine our frameworks to introduce controlled testing environments for new products. The priority will be cashless gambling that minimises community harm. Testing may be within OLGR, using our specialist staff, as well as within parts of industry.

Information sharing with Queensland Police Service

Queensland Police and OLGR both have responsibilities for licensed venues.

Stakeholder feedback is clear that visits from both Queensland Police and our inspectors on the one night are challenging for venues to manage.

We are committed to better information-sharing with police as well as better differentiating our services.

Review of Safe Night Precincts

We will establish a framework for the triennial review of Queensland's Safe Night Precincts to ensure they continue to achieve their intended purpose.

Enabling better business

OLGR is working with the Queensland wine industry to understand existing policy constraints.

Wine producers have reported that the present licensing framework is too restrictive and does not allow sufficient flexibility to extend their markets.

We are committed to working with the wine industry to lift these constraints to enable better business.

2. Outstanding service experience

Regulated industries rely on timely, efficient and streamlined services.

Our responsive and proactive regulatory services ensure we create a safe and fair society that balances public need and harm minimisation with industry development.

Strategies to get there

- Move towards a 'digital first' approach to provide easy access, simplified pathways and 24/7 accessibility.
- Deliver excellent and integrated services that respond to stakeholders' needs with consistency and reliability and improve their experience with us.
- Take a user-centred approach to how we design our compliance monitoring programs and licensing and authorisation processes.
- Support small businesses to recover and embrace new business opportunities that drive jobs growth.
- Modernise processes and prioritise interventions without compromising regulatory objectives and community safety.

Key actions by the end of 2023

Enhance online occupational licence portal

Already, customers can lodge online occupational licences. In the next phase of work, we will extend our portal to allow customers to also update and track their applications.

Continue to review liquor licensing through customer experience testing

By continuing these reviews, we will further streamline our application processes for premises licences. Streamlining will help us to remove unnecessary burdens, improve timeliness and maximise the public benefit of community impact statements.

Update regulatory advice materials

We will improve our advisory materials, including the self-assessment tools on our website as well as other digital products. This will help businesses to navigate, understand and comply with regulatory requirements.

Focus OLGR compliance activity on harm minimisation during peak trading periods

While peak trading times are when patrons face greatest risk, industry has given us clear feedback that our inspections during these times affect their business operations.

Some visits will always take place during peak hours. However, we will refine our checklists to focus only on safety during peak hours and systems compliance outside of peak hours.

Refresh content

We will develop more online content for industry and community stakeholders. These will include responsible service of alcohol and gambling materials and information on venue safety.

Funding for IT improvement

OLGR, with the Office of Fair Trading, has received \$22 million to invest in new information technology.

Early-stage projects will concentrate on improving internal processes, including replacing outdated systems.

Later improvements will see the range of services available to licensees expanded and offered through 24/7 delivery.

3. Sharing the way forward

In order to meet community expectations, OLGR and industry must share effort, accountability and commitment to socially responsible licensees and ethical business models.

We will adopt a partnership approach to ensure strong and sustainable industries and to motivate all licensees to move from minimum compliance towards better and best practice.

Strategies to get there

- Engage industry, business and community sector leaders to drive cultural change around harmful alcohol and gambling consumption.
- Embed within both industry and the regulator a community perspective to better understand harms and peoples' lived experiences.
- Partner with industry leaders to better understand and respond to emerging and uncertain risks, such as disruptive technologies, and online wagering and cashless gambling.
- Contribute to relevant Queensland Government priorities, including COVID-19 economic recovery, preventing violence against women and children, and building financial resilience.
- Enhance local government engagement and partnerships.

Key actions by the end of 2023

Establish the Liquor and Gambling Reference Group

The group, which began in mid-2022, discusses challenges and opportunities, and provides input to help design, implement and evaluate policies and programs.

An open and collaborative forum, the reference group will lead to better information-sharing and create a stronger evidence base for future policies.

Introduce a structured approach to industry partnerships

OLGR and industry enjoy many positive formal partnerships, including through the liquor accords, safe night precinct boards and gambling help service provider networks.

Creating better structure to these partnerships will enable greater industry input into policy and procedure development.

Showcase best practice in gambling harm minimisation

Our gambling harm audits are right sized to fit the size and scope of the individual licence holders.

To enable more productive dialogues on how venues can improve their harm minimisation approaches, we will begin showcasing best practice examples.

Oversee casino operators to ensure gambling integrity

We take seriously community concerns around the integrity of gambling in casinos. We will strongly regulate and educate casino operators, both in the new Queens Wharf precinct and in existing casinos around Queensland.

Our casino reform and oversight work is a priority, including implementing agreed actions which arise from the review of The Star.

Introduce safe cashless gambling

We will develop guidelines in consultation with industry and community to ensure a safe transition to cashless gambling.

4. Connected team, positive impact

Organisational design and culture are critical to our effectiveness, our credibility and the community's confidence and trust in our work.

We will continue to nurture an organisation that fosters innovation, is diverse and inclusive, and values the unique circumstances of regional and rural Queensland.

At the heart and soul of our organisation are our people.

We will provide professional development pathways that align with our strategic direction and maximise the return on public investment.

Strategies to get there

- Be confident about our regulatory purpose and objectives.
- Be anticipatory and forward-looking.
- Be a transparent and visible regulator.
- Complement our considerable technical expertise with new skills, knowledge and experience.
- Take measured risks and learn from experience to maximise future success.

Key actions by the end of 2023

Publish annual compliance plans and report findings

We are committed to greater visibility. Through annual compliance plans, we will share priorities with industry to help us become more agile in how we deliver public value and minimise harm. At the end of each year, we will report back on progress.

Optimise our workforce leadership, capacity, capability and diversity

A rapidly changing industry needs a contemporary regulator. We will pursue attraction and retention strategies that enhance the skills and professionalism of our workforce, helping us to keep pace with international and national industry changes.

Stronger OLGR team benefits industry and community

Good regulation is always good for business.

To keep pace with the rapidly shifting liquor and gambling industry, we need to continually invest in our capability, leadership and knowledge.

Our training investment will enable our staff to keep pace with the contemporary industry environment.

This will mean better regulation, which will in turn benefit the Queensland industry.



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