

NSW Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority

Our ref: DF26/031989

Mr Luke Nicolson and Ms Sophie Atkinson
Jenkins Legal & Advisory

9 July 2026

Dear Mr Nicolson and Ms Atkinson

Application No.	APP-0016155755
Applicant	WILLIAMS RIVER STEEL INVESTMENTS PTY. LIMITED
Application for	New hotel (general bar) licence and minors' functions authorisation
Application date	16 March 2026
Decision date	17 June 2026
Proposed licence name	Bar 1801
Proposed trading hours	Monday to Saturday 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM Sunday 12:00 PM – 10:00 PM
Proposed premises	29 Grey Street Clarence Town NSW 2321
Legislation	Sections 3, 16, 40, 44, 45 and 72I of the <i>Liquor Act 2007</i>

Decision of the Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority

Application for a new hotel (general bar) licence and minors' functions authorisation – Bar 1801

We **refuse** the application above under section 45 and 72I of the *Liquor Act 2007* (**the Act**).

Statement of reasons

We are not satisfied that the overall impact of approving the application will not be detrimental to the wellbeing of the local or broader community, or that it would be consistent with the objects of the Act.

Our main findings

The local community for the purposes of this decision is the suburb of Clarence Town. The broader community is the Local Government Area (**LGA**) of Dungog Shire.

The applicant sought approval to operate a new hotel (general bar), yet to be constructed, in Clarence Town, with a minors' functions authorisation. The proposed venue includes a beer garden, public bar, restaurant and function space. Consistent with its classification as a general bar, no gaming machines or takeaway liquor would be offered. Trading hours were proposed to align with the development consent, including a 10pm closure from Monday to Wednesday.

While NSW Police raised no objection and identified potential community benefits, the application attracted 14 community objections and a petition with nearly a hundred signatures. The submissions raised issues of road safety, a lack of public transport and the cumulative impact of an additional licensed venue in a non-tourist area with alcohol readily available from nearby licensed premises.

While there are no hotel (general bar) licences in the suburb, there is a higher saturation of liquor outlets in the LGA compared to NSW generally. Recent national and international research shows a positive correlation between high liquor outlet density and alcohol-related harm. We are concerned that the rates of alcohol-related domestic violence in the suburb and LGA are already higher than the NSW rate, and that, once constructed, the venue would be in a medium density crime hotspot for domestic assault.¹

We are also concerned about the higher alcohol-attributed hospitalisations and deaths in the LGA compared to the state, and the number of alcohol-related vehicle crashes resulting in casualties in the past few years in the LGA compared to the state.

We were not satisfied that the application would be consistent with community expectations or that it would be in the public interest. We were also not satisfied that the proposed hotel would not detract from community amenity.

Social impacts

We considered the following factors which may partially or fully mitigate some of the risks:

- no objections were received from government agencies
- there are no crime hotspots in the suburb for non-domestic assault, malicious damage to property, or alcohol-related assault
- the incidence of alcohol-related non-domestic assault and alcohol-related disorderly conduct is lower in the suburb and LGA than in NSW, and there were no incidents of either in the suburb in the year to December 2025
- the saturation rate of hotel (general bar) licences in the suburb is lower than the rate for NSW
- no gaming machines or takeaway liquor would be permitted
- a courtesy bus would be available from Thursday evenings to Sunday evenings.

As noted above, we considered objections from the community, including:

- particular concerns about trading after 10pm
- a perceived high number and saturation of liquor licences in the community
- concerns about proximity to residential housing and a church
- limited availability of public transport options and associated pedestrian safety risks

¹ High levels of outlet-density have been shown to be positively associated with higher levels of alcohol-related harm, including alcohol-related domestic and non-domestic assaults (Livingston, M., Wilkinson, C., & Room, R. (2016). Community impact of liquor licences: An Evidence Check rapid review brokered by the Sax Institute for the NSW Ministry of Health. <https://www.saxinstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Community-impact-of-liquor-licences-1.pdf> and Jiang, H., Riordan, B., Laslett, A., Livingston, M., Lee, K., James, D., Stearne, A., & Room, R. (2023). Association of liquor outlet density with domestic and non-domestic assault in New South Wales. NSW Government Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority, Sydney, NSW.

- claims that the Statement of Risk and Potential Effects (**SoRPE**) was not properly completed
- a petition objecting to the proposal (lodged prior to development consent)
- concerns regarding youth-related impacts, including underage drinking.

We had regard to the applicant's response to the objections from the community, which noted:

- operating hours and patron capacity would align with the development consent, and no gaming machines or accommodation would be provided
- while acknowledging other local licences, these are not general bars
- measures would be implemented to manage patron behaviour and departures, supported by approved lighting and surveillance
- a courtesy bus would operate on specified days
- the SoRPE had been corrected following an extended notification period
- the Liquor Plan of Management outlines measures to address key operational risks
- the petition relates to the development consent rather than this liquor licence application
- the applicant expressed a willingness to continue engaging with the community after opening.

Notwithstanding the mitigating factors, we found that approval of the proposal could result in an increase in alcohol-related harm in the local and broader community because:

- there is a medium-density crime hotspot in the suburb for domestic assault
- the incidence of alcohol-related domestic assault is higher in the suburb and LGA than the rates for NSW and the incidence of malicious damage to property is higher in the suburb than the rates for NSW
- the saturation of hotel (general bar) licences in the LGA is higher than the rate for NSW²
- the alcohol-attributed hospitalisations in the LGA are higher than the rate for NSW
- there is a high proportion of residents who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (**ATSI**) in both the suburb and the LGA.

While we acknowledge the merits of the application and the applicant's objectives, we determined that granting the licence would not be consistent with the statutory objectives of harm minimisation and the need to ensure that the sale, supply and consumption of liquor does not detract from the amenity of community life.

On the basis of the application and the material before us, we were not satisfied that approval would facilitate the balanced development of the industry in the public interest because, on balance, it would not increase, and could detract from, the amenity of community life.

The material we considered

We considered the following material when making our decision:

- the application material — including evidence that stakeholders and the community were notified about the application
- the legislation
- the certificate of advertising

² High levels of hotel outlet-density, and highly concentrated clusters of hotels in an area, have been shown to be positively associated with higher rates of alcohol-related non-domestic assault (Livingston, 2008a, 2008b; Jiang et al., 2023).

- the Statement of Risks and Potential Effects
- the plan of the licensed premises and any authorisations
- the plan of management for the licensed business
- the development consent for the premises
- statistics from Liquor & Gaming NSW, Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, NSW Health and Australian Bureau of Statistics on the socio-economic status, liquor licence density, alcohol-related crimes rates and health issues in the local and broader communities
- L&GNSW compliance materials
- stakeholder submissions and the applicant's response to them.

We also considered [Guideline 6](#) to assess the likely overall impact to the local and broader community.

This decision will be published in accordance with section 36C of the *Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007*.

Opportunity for review

The applicant and anyone who was notified of the application and made a submission, may apply to [NCAT](#) for a review of the decision.

An application for review must be made no later than 28 days after the decision is published on the website. There is a fee to lodge the application.

For more information, please contact the NCAT Registry at Level 10 John Maddison Tower, 86-90 Goulburn Street Sydney or visit the NCAT website.

If you have any questions

Please contact Liquor & Gaming NSW at: new.applications@liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely



Caroline Lamb

Chairperson

NSW Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority