



**Central Australian
Aboriginal Congress**
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION | ICN 7823

30 May 2025

Russell Goldflam
Chairperson
Northern Territory Liquor Commission
liquor.commission@nt.gov.au

Dear Mr Goldflam,

Re: Ongoing Safety Concerns Related to Licensed Premises – Rock Bar and Bojangles, Alice Springs

I am writing to express serious concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of young people, families, and staff accessing the headspace Alice Springs service, for which Central Australian Aboriginal Congress is the lead agency. These concerns relate specifically to frequent disruptive and unsafe behaviour occurring in the vicinity of two licensed premises – The Rock Bar and Bojangles – located near our headspace service on Todd Street.

We have received multiple reports from both our clients and staff describing regular disturbances involving individuals who appear intoxicated, shouting, engaging in aggressive behaviour, and at times, physical violence directly outside these venues. These incidents have led to our clients and staff feeling unsafe when entering or leaving the headspace premises. Staff have had to routinely escort young people to or from their vehicles, advise them to wait in their cars, or guide them through alternate exits to avoid volatile situations. In some cases, clients have delayed or cancelled their appointments altogether due to concerns for their personal safety.

One particularly concerning incident occurred in mid-May 2025, when a group of people became involved in a physical altercation just metres from the entrance to our headspace centre. Despite the clear connection between the individuals and the nearby licensed venues, there was no visible security presence from either establishment to intervene or manage the situation. Emergency services were already heavily engaged elsewhere, raising further concerns about the responsiveness of support during peak periods of disruption.

These issues are not isolated. In consultation with our headspace Youth Reference Group in December 2024, young people reported that they often feel unsafe attending the service due to disturbances caused by intoxicated individuals congregating near the centre. These young people have expressed that such environments can be particularly distressing when they are seeking mental health and wellbeing support – services that require a safe, welcoming, and trauma-informed environment.

**Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
Aboriginal Corporation**

ABN 76 210 591 710 | ICN 7823
PO Box 1604, Alice Springs NT 0871
(08) 8951 4400 | www.caac.org.au

**Aboriginal health
in Aboriginal hands.**

As a result of the ongoing incidents and risks, Congress has installed a security gate at the front of the arcade to be able to close where there are incidents in the area, and we have made the difficult decision to close the headspace Alice Springs centre early on Fridays at 3:00pm. While this measure is intended to protect the safety of staff and clients, it has had a direct impact on our capacity to provide support during a crucial time of the week.

We request that the NT Liquor Commission consider the following actions:

1. **Request that NT Licensing increase monitoring and compliance activities** at The Rock Bar and Bojangles during key business hours, particularly late afternoons and early evenings.
2. **Develop a new system** for being able to ask licensing inspectors and police to check blood alcohol levels of people who have left these premises in an intoxicated state using **Point of Care (PoC) technology** which is now very accurate. If people have levels greater than 0.15 then this should lead to the immediate temporary closure of the venue where the person drank. This will ensure that RSA is taken more seriously than it has been up to date.
3. **Review the licensing arrangements** for these venues, with a view to introducing restrictions or conditions that address their responsibility for managing patrons and preventing harm to the surrounding community.
4. **Mandate that these venues provide active, visible security personnel** during trading hours to manage behaviour both inside and in the immediate surroundings of their premises.
5. **Engage with Congress and other stakeholders** to co-develop strategies that ensure our service and the broader area are safe for all community members, particularly young people and families.

The Central Australian Aboriginal Congress is committed to providing culturally safe, accessible, and effective services to the Alice Springs community and we cannot do this effectively while the immediate environment remains unsafe and unstable due to the actions – or inaction – of neighbouring licensed venues.

We are available to meet at your convenience to further discuss these concerns and assist in developing solutions that protect the rights and safety of our clients and staff.

Yours sincerely,

Marah Prior

Ms Marah Prior

General Manager Health Services Division on behalf of the CEO
Central Australian Aboriginal Congress

cc liquorlicensing@nt.gov.au