

**NORTHERN TERRITORY LIQUOR COMMISSION**  
**DECISION NOTICE**

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**MATTER:** APPLICATION FOR GENERAL RESTRICTED AREAS OVER ELLIOTT NORTH CAMP AND ELLIOTT SOUTH CAMP [2026] NTLiqComm 3

**FILE NO.:** LC2025/049

**APPLICANTS:** Residents of Elliott North Camp and Elliott South Camp

**AREA:** Elliott North Camp  
224 Stuart Highway  
Pamayu  
NT 0862

Elliott South Camp  
5 Stuart Highway  
Elliott  
NT 0862

**LEGISLATION:** Part 8 Division 3 of the *Liquor Act 2019* (NT)

**HEARD BEFORE:** Mr Russell Goldflam (Chairperson)

Ms Ebony Abbott-McCormack (Health Member)

Professor Phillip Carson (Health Member)

**DATE OF HEARING:** 21 January 2026

**DATE OF DECISION:** 23 January 2026

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**Decision**

1. For the reasons set out below and in accordance with s 177 of the *Liquor Act 2019* (NT) (**the Act**) the Northern Territory Liquor Commission (**the Commission**) has determined to declare general restricted areas (**GRAs**) over:
  - a. Elliott North Camp within the Gurungu Aboriginal Land Trust; and
  - b. Elliott South Camp, a Special Purpose Lease within the Town of Elliott.
2. In accordance with s 172 of the Act, the Commission will declare two GRAs by *Gazette* notice specifying that:

- a. The boundary of the Elliott North Camp GRA is the area bounded in yellow on Northern Territory Land Information System Plan survey plan S2023/081.<sup>1</sup>
- b. The boundary of the Elliott South Camp GRA is the area bounded in yellow on Northern Territory Land Information System Plan survey plan S2023/082.<sup>2</sup>
- c. Other than in accordance with a permit issued under s 201 of the Act (**a liquor permit**) that has not been revoked or suspended, the following are prohibited in the GRAs:
  - i. The bringing of liquor into the area;
  - ii. The possession of liquor in the area;
  - iii. The consumption of liquor in the area; and
  - iv. The sale, supply and service of liquor in the area.
- d. The Director of Liquor Licensing (**the Director**) must consult with the Elliott Alcohol Management Group (**the EAMG**) and have regard to the Elliott North Camp and Elliott South Camp Community Alcohol Management Plan (**the Elliott CAMP**) approved by the community on 14 October 2025, and as may be varied from time to time<sup>3</sup> when considering:
  - i. an application for a liquor permit;
  - ii. the conditions of a liquor permit, including the places at which, the quantities of and the types of liquor that may be possessed and consumed by the permit holder;
  - iii. suspension of a permit; or
  - iv. revocation of a permit.
- e. The Director may on their own initiative, provided they have taken reasonable steps to consult with the EAMG, suspend a liquor permit of a resident of the GRA for a period of up to six months with immediate effect.
- f. The declaration of the GRAs expires in 99 years.

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<sup>1</sup> Accessed at <https://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/hpa-services/surveyplans?planname=S2023/081>

<sup>2</sup> Accessed at <https://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/hpa-services/surveyplans?planname=S2023/082>

<sup>3</sup> Exhibit One, pp 34 to 53

3. By way of compliance with s 178 of the Act, the Commission has determined to publish information about the GRAs by posting this decision notice on the Commission's website, and by sending a copy of this decision notice to:
  - a. Gurungu Aboriginal Land Trust
  - b. NT Commissioner of Consumer Affairs
  - c. Northern Land Council
  - d. NT Police
  - e. NT Attorney-General and Minister for Tourism and Hospitality
  - f. NT Minister for Alcohol Policy
  - g. Alcohol Policy, Northern Territory Department of Health
  - h. Office of Aboriginal Affairs, Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
  - i. Community Led Harm Reduction Unit (**CLHRU**), Northern Territory Department of Health
  - j. National Indigenous Australians Agency
4. The declaration of the GRAs will take effect on the date of publication of the *Gazette* notice referred to above.
5. The Commission requests the Director, the Director of the CLHRU and the residents of the GRAs to take reasonable steps to erect signs where a road or other customary route enters the GRAs warning the public of the GRA, in accordance with s 181(2)(a) and (b) of the Act.
6. The Commission requests the Northern Territory government to allocate resources and arrange for an appropriate Elliott-based officer of a government service provider or non-government organisation to provide support services to the Elliott Alcohol Management Group (**EAMG**), so as to ensure that the EAMG has sufficient administrative support to enable it to operate effectively.

## **Reasons**

### **Introduction**

7. The predominantly Aboriginal town of Elliott lies on the Stuart Highway, about halfway between Darwin and Alice Springs. Many of its approximately 430 residents live in two town camps, Elliott North Camp and Elliott South Camp. Elliott North Camp (Gurungu), on the northern edge of the town, is an Interim Alcohol Protected Area (**IAPA**) situated within the Gurungu Aboriginal Land Trust. Elliott South Camp (Wilyugu), on the southern outskirts of the town, is an IAPA situated within a Special Purpose Lease that was formerly held by the Wilyugoo Association Incorporation. Since the dissolution of this Association

on 12 March 2003, the lease has been vested in a Northern Territory government entity, currently the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs.

8. The relevant history, circumstances and legal issues pertaining to this matter are similar to those set out in the decision of the Commission dated 19 June 2024 to declare a GRA for Itchy Koo Park.<sup>4</sup> It is unnecessary to now repeat the detailed consideration of those matters set out in that decision.

### **The Application**

9. On 19 November 2025, Mr Matthew Ah Mat, Principal Alcohol Action Officer, CLHRU, Department of Health, submitted an application on behalf of the residents of Elliott North Camp and Elliott South Camp, for a declaration that Elliott North Camp and Elliott South Camp be declared GRAs. The application was endorsed and signed by Ms Annette Kingston (North Camp), Ms Beverley Wilson (South Camp), Ms Cassariah Kenny (North Camp), Ms Heather Wilson (South Camp), Ms Jody Nish (North Camp) and Mr Harold Dalywaters (South Camp) as traditional owners, elders and residents of the areas.

### **Consultation**

10. Section 175 of the Act requires the Director to give notice of a proposed GRA to various persons. The Director notified:
  - The Northern Land Council
  - The Barkly Regional Council
  - Northern Territory Police
  - Barkly Regional Alcohol & Drug Abuse Advisory Group
  - Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation
  - The licensee for the Elliott Hotel and the Elliott Store
  - Commissioner of Consumer Affairs
11. None of these stakeholders raised concerns about the application. The Commission is satisfied that the Director has complied with the requirements to notify stakeholders.
12. Section 175 also requires the Director to take reasonable steps to consult with the people who reside in the area. The Elliott CAMP was developed over a period of 18 months, during which the CLHRU conducted five consultation visits to Elliott. The Commission is satisfied that the community members are well aware of the circumstances of the application, and support it.

### **Director's Report**

13. In accordance with s 176 of the Act, on 1 December 2025, the Director provided the Commission with a report (**the Director's report**) comprising:
  - a. Application for GRAs dated 14 October 2025

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<sup>4</sup> *Application for General Restricted Area over Itchy Koo Park* [2024] NTLiqComm 25

- b. Record of Administrative Interests and Information for Elliott North Camp
- c. Record of Administrative Interests and Information for Elliott South Camp
- d. NT Licensing Commission reasons for decision: Review of Alcohol Supply Measures in the Elliott Region, 10 August 2009
- e. Director's decision to approve liquor permit scheme for Elliott, 6 October 2021
- f. Elliott CAMP, 24 October 2025
- g. Residents' petition in support of the application and the Elliott CAMP dated 31 October 2025
- h. Plan of Elliott North Camp IAPA
- i. Plan of Elliott South Camp IAPA
- j. Correspondence with stakeholders
- k. "BUSHTEL" community profile for Elliott North Camp
- l. "BUSHTEL" community profile for Elliott South Camp

### **The hearing**

14. On 21 January 2026, the applications proceeded as a public hearing. Ms Jody Nish, Ms Heather Wilson and Ms Annette Kingston appeared for the applicant. Ms Da Costa appeared for the Director, assisted by Mr Wood. Also present were Mr Ah Mat and Ms Surinder Crichton, from the CLHRU. The Commission thanks them all for their attendance and assistance. The Director's report was received into evidence by the Commission without objection. The Director and the CLHRU supported the application.

### **A lengthy history**

15. The Director's report records that liquor restrictions have been in force in Elliott since at least the 1980s. Ms Wilson gave evidence at the hearing that restrictions in Elliott date back even further, to the 1970s, and expressed frustration that despite efforts over decades by the Elliott community to address grog problems, government responses have been largely ineffective and often confusing. Ms Wilson urged that this lengthy history be properly documented, and showed the Commission a copy of Jackie Wolfe's 2019 book *Crossed tracks on Ngurra Mala: Ownership and dispossession, requests and resilience at the centre of the Northern Territory of Australia*.
16. As will be seen later in these reasons, the Commission shares the concern implicit in Ms Wilson's submissions that if administrators and decision-makers do not learn from history, past failures are likely to be repeated. Two samples

of that history are extracted at the conclusion of this decision notice.<sup>5</sup> To illustrate and support Ms Wilson’s point, these brief extracts demonstrate that the specific concerns, issues and strategies identified by research conducted in Elliott in 1991 and 2008 remain current: they are remarkably similar to the concerns, issues and strategies Ms Wilson and Ms Nish spoke about in the evidence they gave to the Commission at this 2026 hearing. It is no wonder that the applicants feel frustrated.

17. The Director’s report included the 2009 decision by a predecessor of the Commission, the Northern Territory Licensing Commission, to impose a limit on takeaway sales to residents of Elliott and Marlinja of six cans of beer per person per day.<sup>6</sup> This decision reinforced similar restrictions made at the request of the Gurungu Council,<sup>7</sup> and in force since 1993. In its decision, which was made after extensive community consultation, the Licensing Commission made the following salient observations:

Prior to the Commonwealth intervention in 2006, the local community had found a workable solution for managing public drinking and inter-family issues in Elliott. The policy was to encourage residents to drink responsibly at home both within the town camps and in other residential areas in Elliott. The premise was that if a small amount of beer was able to be purchased locally and consumed at home, then there was more chance that inter-family disputes would be avoided, children would be fed and supervised and the drinking would take place in a secure environment where there were family members present to exert some control and to manage any issues arising. Whilst such a solution would not be effective in all communities, the feedback from all involved is that it was working in Elliott and that it had the support of police, health and community members.

The Commonwealth Intervention lead to the dismantling of this initiative when the decision was made to include the Elliott town camps in the reform package and to declare them as “prescribed”. This has meant that residents of the town camps can no longer drink in their own homes. Regrettably, apart from a house or two within the township where the residents are

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<sup>5</sup> See Peter d’Abbs, Nicole Hewlett, *Learning from 50 Years of Aboriginal Alcohol Programs: Beating the Grog in Australia* (Menzies School of Health Research 2023) (Annexure One); and Maggie Brady, “On- and off-premise drinking choices among Indigenous Australians: The influence of socio-spatial factors” (Annexure Two).

<sup>6</sup> Accessed at [https://dth.nt.gov.au/media/docs/publications/racing-gaming-and-licensing/dob-databases/liquor/2009/pdf/090810\\_Elliott\\_Review.pdf](https://dth.nt.gov.au/media/docs/publications/racing-gaming-and-licensing/dob-databases/liquor/2009/pdf/090810_Elliott_Review.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Clifford, S., Smith, J.A., Livingston, M. *et al.* A historical overview of legislated alcohol policy in the Northern Territory of Australia: 1979–2021. *BMC Public Health* 21, 1921 (2021), p. 11, accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11957-5>. See also: Bennett M, Plummer C, Lea T. *Impact of alcohol limitations in Elliott- a review* (Northern Territory Government: Darwin, 1996)

inundated with guests who want to drink, there is nowhere else for town camp residents to drink safely as the township is subject to the 2km rule (and this appears to be respected) meaning that people cannot drink in any public places in the town area. The reality is that town camp residents now drink in informal drinking areas on the side of the Stuart Highway just outside the 2km boundaries. These are not safe places to congregate and the current situation does not assist the community in protecting the welfare and safety of their children-particularly as they sometimes cross the Highway to reach their parents.

18. In 2012, as part of the Elliott Alcohol Management Plan,<sup>8</sup> the 6 can limit was modified. The 6 cans of full-strength beer per person per day limit was retained, but residents were now permitted to instead purchase 8 cans of mid-strength beer, 12 cans of light beer, or 6 cans of RTD mixed spirits. Those limits are included in the current conditions of the two liquor licences in Elliott, the Elliott Store and the Elliott Hotel. However, the problem identified above by the Licensing Commission in its 2012 decision remained: for residents of Elliott North Camp and Elliott South Camp, they were still not allowed to drink the takeaway alcohol they had lawfully purchased in their own homes.
19. In March 2016, the Commonwealth Government returned the power to issue liquor permits to the Northern Territory, a measure that was welcomed at the time by Ms Wilson.<sup>9</sup> However, it took another five and a half years before a liquor permit system was actually established for Elliott, and, as will be seen, that scheme soon failed.
20. On 6 October 2021 the Director of Liquor Licensing approved the establishment of a scheme under which residents of Elliott North Camp and Elliott South Camp<sup>10</sup> could apply for liquor permits to the Director via the Northern Barkly Permit Committee (**NBPC**), which included representation from both the communities involved and local service providers, including police, the clinic, the school, the Elliott safe house and the Barkly Regional Council. Licensing NT published the NBPC Terms of Reference, an Application for Liquor Permit and a Fact Sheet to assist Elliott permit applicants.
21. The Director's report contained no evidence regarding the operation of the NBPC after 6 October 2021. At the hearing, the Commission asked the applicants what had happened to the NBPC. Ms Nish's instructive response is summarised as follows:

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<sup>8</sup> The Commission has not been provided with, and has been unable to find a copy of the 2012 Elliott Alcohol Management Plan.

<sup>9</sup> Jane Bardon, "Federal Government hands back intervention-era alcohol powers to Northern Territory" (ABC News online, 9 March 2016), accessed at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-09/commonwealth-government-hands-back-intervention-era-powers-to-nt/7231488>

<sup>10</sup> The Director also approved the issue of permits to residents of Marlinja, a community 20 km north of Elliott.

I was on the Permit Committee. When people applied for a permit, it was given to the Licensing office, and then sent to the sergeant, and the committee got some of the applications, but not all of them. The committee has long been dissolved. Any permits given have expired. No information was given about what the permit meant. There was a lot of confusion and frustration. It wasn't explained properly. I had a permit. I was given conflicting information about what would happen to my permit if someone came to my house and drank.

22. The Director's report stated that there are currently no liquor permit holders in Elliott.

### **A new Elliott Alcohol Management Plan**

23. Following a consultation process that commenced in April 2024, in October 2025 the Elliott North Camp and Elliott South Camp Community Alcohol Management Plan (**the Elliott CAMP**) was completed and endorsed by the community. The Elliott CAMP does not mention either the 2012 Elliott Alcohol Management Plan or the 2021 NBPC. The Elliott CAMP states that a new committee, the Elliott Alcohol Management Group (**EAMG**), has been established, comprising five residents from Elliott North Camp, five from Elliott South Camp and five from the Elliott township, meeting monthly to monitor the implementation of the Elliott CAMP and to respond to issues or problems that come up in the community.
24. Given the apparent extinction of the 2012 Elliott Alcohol Management Plan, the Commission is concerned about the viability of its successor, the Elliott CAMP. Similarly, given the failure of the NBPC to survive, the Commission is concerned about the viability of its successor, the EAMG. For this reason, the Commission requests the Northern Territory government to allocate resources and arrange for an appropriate Elliott-based officer of a government service provider or non-government organisation to provide support services to the EAMG, so as to ensure that the EAMG has sufficient administrative support to enable it to operate effectively.
25. The fact that there are currently no liquor permit holders in Elliott may be in large part because, notwithstanding the Director's 2021 decision, there is an apparently widespread belief across the Territory that unlike residents of GRAs, residents of IAPAs can not apply for or be issued with a liquor permit. That was certainly the case until March 2016. Section 170A(5) of the Act, which in its current form came into force on 16 February 2023, expressly and clearly provides that the liquor permit scheme for GRAs is also available for IAPAs.
26. The Commission has recently written to NT Police, the CLHRU and other agencies who deliver services to the bush take steps to correct this misconception: whether a community is on an IAPA or a GRA, its members are entitled to apply to the Director for a liquor permit.

27. The Elliott CAMP prominently includes plans to relax the current volume restrictions on takeaway purchases. That can only be achieved if the Commission varies the conditions of the Elliott Store and Elliott Hotel liquor licences, either in response to an application by the licensee (the two venues have the same licensee) or after an own initiative inquiry by the Commission. The permitted takeaway trading hours for both licences are from midday to 7 pm. However, apparently the licensee currently only operates for a shorter period. The applicants are concerned that as a result, more of the community's drinkers drive to other outlets in the region to purchase alcohol, which in turn elevates the risk of road accidents and the incidence of illegal secondary supply of alcohol. However, licensees are not required to remain open for the entirety of the period during which they are authorised to sell alcohol. It is up to the licensee to decide when to trade, within the permitted hours.
28. The detailed Elliott CAMP was carefully prepared after extensive community consultation. However, the Commission notes that the Elliott CAMP:
- a. appears to have been premised on the misconception that Elliott North Camp and Elliott South Camp residents can not currently apply for liquor permits;
  - b. does not refer to and does not appear to have had regard to the establishment in 2021 and subsequent demise of the Northern Barkly Permit Committee; and
  - c. does not refer to and does not appear to have had regard to the establishment in 2012 and subsequent demise of the Elliott Alcohol Management Plan.
29. The Elliott CAMP, as a plan should be, is a forward-looking document. The Commission is concerned, however, that like the Elliott community's previous initiatives to address alcohol-related harm, this plan too may fall by the wayside. The applicant's representatives expressed similar concerns at the hearing. In response to this, the Commission has taken the course of describing some of those past initiatives in detail in order to reduce the risk that the lessons of history will not be repeated this time around.

## **ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICATION**

30. Section 177 of the Act requires the Commission to consider:
- a. the application;
  - b. the Director's report; and
  - c. the public interest and community impact requirements.

## The application

31. The Commission finds that the application complies with the requirements for applicants set out at s 174 of the Act. Section 3 of the application (“Consent of the registered owner of the area”) is signed by six persons who the Commission accepts are traditional owners and residents of Elliott North Camp and Elliott South Camp. As the registered owner of Elliott North Camp is the Gurungu Aboriginal Land Trust, and the registered owner of Elliott South Camp is deemed to be the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs, the application is in this respect irregular. A similar issue arose in similar circumstances when the Commission considered an application for a GRA over Itchy Koo Park. For the reasons given at paragraphs [41] to [54] of [2024] NTLiqComm 25 in that matter, the Commission now finds that despite these irregularities, the application now under consideration is valid.
32. The Commission now turns to consider the substance of the application.
33. In addition to requiring that an application be in the approved form, s 174 provides that it must include:
  - a. a detailed explanation of the restriction being proposed;
  - b. a detailed description of the proposed general restricted area;
  - c. the reasons for the proposed restriction; and
  - d. a copy of a community alcohol plan, if any.
34. The Commission is satisfied that the applicant has provided sufficient detail of the restrictions it proposes, and, noting that they are supported by the Director, the Commission considers that those restrictions are appropriate, as reflected in this decision.
35. The Commission notes that its determination of the boundaries it has specified is solely for the limited purpose of declaring the GRAs. The Commission does not intend or purport to determine, declare or affect the property rights of Elliott traditional owners vis a vis the property rights of traditional owners of any neighbouring community areas, or of any other person.
36. The Commission is satisfied with the applicant’s reasons for imposing the restrictions that have been proposed.
37. The applicant has prepared and provided a community alcohol plan. GRA applicants are not required to develop a community alcohol plan, but the Commission commends the applicant for having done so, and strongly encourages any future applicants to do so. The Commission accepts the submissions of the applicants, the Director and the CLHRU that the Elliott CAMP has been developed by the community, has the support of the community, and is strong. The Commission notes that the plan is compliant with regulation 111B(2) of the *Liquor Regulations*, which prescribes that a community alcohol plan must include measures aimed at:

- a. managing the supply of alcohol in the community;
  - b. reducing demand for alcohol in the community; and
  - c. reducing harm or risks of harm that may be caused the consumption of alcohol in the community.
38. The Commission finds that the Elliott CAMP is fit for purpose and thoughtfully formulated.

**Whether issuing the licence is in the public interest**

39. To determine whether the declaration of the GRAs is in the public interest, the Commission is required to consider how the making of the declaration would advance the following objectives set out in s 49(2) of the Act:
- (a) minimising the harm or ill-health caused to people, or a group of people, by the consumption of liquor;
  - (b) ensuring liquor is sold, supplied, served and consumed on or in licensed premises in a responsible manner;
  - (c) safeguarding public order and safety, particularly when large numbers of people would be attracted to licensed premises or an area adjacent to those premises;
  - (d) protecting the safety, health and welfare of people who use licensed premises;
  - (e) increasing cultural, recreational, employment or tourism benefits for the local community area;
  - (f) promoting compliance with this Act and other relevant laws of the Territory;
  - (g) ensuring each person involved in the business conducted at licensed premises receives training suitable to the person's role in the business;
  - (h) preventing the giving of credit in sales of liquor to people;
  - (i) preventing practices that encourage irresponsible drinking;
  - (j) reducing or limiting increases in anti-social behaviour.
40. Having considered each of these objectives, and having particular regard to the contents of the Elliott CAMP, the Commission is comfortably satisfied that it is in the public interest to declare the GRAs.

## **Whether the issue of the licence will have a significant adverse impact on the community**

41. To determine whether it is satisfied that the declaration of the GRA will not have a significant adverse impact on the community, the Commission must consider the matters set out at s 49(3) of the Act, which are:
- (a) the risk of undue offence, annoyance, disturbance or inconvenience to persons who reside or work in the vicinity of the proposed licensed premises or who are using, or travelling to or from, a place of public worship, a hospital or a school;
  - (b) the geographic area that would be affected;
  - (c) the risk of harm from the excessive or inappropriate consumption of liquor;
  - (d) the people or community who would be affected;
  - (e) the effect on culture, recreation, employment and tourism;
  - (f) the effect on social amenities and public health;
  - (g) the ratio of existing liquor licences and authorities in the community to the population of the community;
  - (h) the effect of the volume of liquor sales on the community;
  - (i) the community impact assessment guidelines issued under s 50;<sup>11</sup>
  - (j) any other matter prescribed by regulation.<sup>12</sup>
42. The Commission is satisfied that the declaration of the GRAs will have a modestly beneficial impact on the community, having particular regard to the s 49(3)(d) and (e) matters. If the declaration were not made, the interim alcohol protected area would continue, and the Elliott traditional owners and other residents would justifiably feel frustrated and disempowered. Conversely, issuing the GRA is a gesture of respect and acknowledgement to the Elliott community. Noting that the regulation of liquor on Aboriginal land in the Northern Territory has in recent years been subject to various statutory changes, the Commission considers that the declaration of the GRA will provide a measure of certainty to the community regarding the management of alcohol into the future.

## **The liquor permit scheme**

43. Part 8 Division 6 of the Act establishes a permit scheme administered by the Director, who determines applications by persons to bring liquor into a GRA,

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<sup>11</sup> In the view of the Commission, no such guidelines are currently in force.

<sup>12</sup> There are no such "other" matters prescribed by regulation.

possess or control liquor in a GRA, and consume liquor in a GRA. The Director also has the power to revoke a liquor permit, and pursuant to this decision, will also have the power to suspend a liquor permit for up to six months.

44. This decision requires the Director to administer the permit scheme for the GRAs in consultation with the EAMG and in accordance with the Elliott CAMP.
45. The Commission notes that the Act provides that permit holders can entertain invited guests who do not live in the GRA, and supply them with liquor, which they can drink. However, the only people allowed to bring liquor into a GRA are people with a liquor permit for that GRA. So, if, for example, a permit holder in Elliott North Camp hosts a birthday party, they can invite guests who live outside the camp, and give them alcohol to drink. However, those guests must not bring alcohol with them into the GRA. And if there are guests at the party who live in the GRA, they can only drink if they have their own liquor permit. The Commission has not made these rules. They are rules that parliament made when it enacted s 204 of the *Liquor Act* in 2019.
46. The Commission has considered whether to include a condition that permit holders only be allowed to bring a particular quantity or type of liquor onto the GRA. The Commission thinks it is unnecessary to include this type of condition, because the current restrictions on the quantity and type of liquor Elliott residents are allowed to buy locally are already regulated by the licence conditions of the Elliott Store and the Elliott Hotel. In addition, the Commission considers that the particular conditions of a particular liquor permit should be worked out by the Director in consultation with the EAMG.

### **Expiry**

47. Section 172(3)(c) of the Act provides that the declaration of a GRA must specify when the declaration expires. If the law clearly authorised the Commission to decline to fix an expiry date for a GRA declaration, the Commission would not have fixed an expiry date in this matter. The Commission has specified an expiry date in the distant future.

### **Other issues**

48. Ms Wilson requested the Commission to visit Elliott “and tell us what is actually happening”. The Commission does not have the resources to visit all of the many remote communities that have applied for GRA declarations, and therefore declines this request. In 2018, in the course of the inquiry the Commission was then conducting into liquor licence conditions in the Barkly region, members of the Commission, including the current chairperson, met with several Elliott community members in Tennant Creek. The Commission welcomes Mr Ah Mat’s undertaking given at the meeting to produce a fact sheet for the community setting out the “rules” for permits.
49. In accordance with the applicants’ preference stated at the hearing, the Commission has made provision for:

- a. the Director to suspend a liquor permit; and
- b. for warning signs to be placed at entrances to both GRAs.

### **The objects of the Act**

50. Section 3(4) of the Act provides that in performing its functions, the Commission must have regard to the primary and secondary purposes of the Act. The Commission considers that making the GRA declarations together with the conditions it has determined to impose, is consistent with the purposes of the Act.

### **NOTICE OF RIGHTS**

51. Section 31(1) read with s 177(2) of the Act provide that the decision set out in this decision notice is reviewable by the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal (**NTCAT**). Section 94(3) of the *NTCAT Act* provides that an application for review of a reviewable decision must be lodged within 28 days of the date of the decision.
52. In accordance with section 31(2) of the Act, the persons who may apply to NTCAT for a review of this decision are the applicant, the Director and the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Health.



Russell Goldflam

CHAIRPERSON  
NORTHERN TERRITORY LIQUOR COMMISSION  
23 January 2026

On behalf of Commissioners Goldflam, Abbott-McCormack, Carson

# Annexure One

**Peter d’Abbs, Nicole Hewlett, *Learning from 50 Years of Aboriginal Alcohol Programs: Beating the Grog in Australia* (Menzies School of Health Research 2023)<sup>13</sup>**

Page 65:

The initiative took place in the small town of Elliott, located 700 km north of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory, in 1991 (Walley and Trindall 1994). At the time, Gwen Walley and Darrin Trindall were Aboriginal Health Promotion Officers stationed in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek in the NT, respectively. They were already known in Elliott as a result of having taken part in several health promotion activities indirectly related to alcohol issues, including working with a women’s centre, support for a recreation officer and health education in schools.

At the time of Walley and Trindall’s intervention, Elliott had a population of around 400 Aboriginal and 100 non-Aboriginal people. Employment was provided mainly by pastoral properties and government agencies. Recreational facilities were limited, and many middle-aged and older people—both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal—pursued a lifestyle that often involved heavy drinking (Walley and Trindall 1994). Many people in the community, including Health Centre staff, recognised alcohol misuse as a major problem, but lacked confidence in addressing it.

Aboriginal Health Workers at the Elliott Health Centre asked for help in developing their community development skills to work with the wider community. In collaboration with the local Gurungu Council, the two Aboriginal Health Promotion Officers encouraged community members to voice their concerns and consider possible solutions. The extract below, taken from a paper by Walley and Trindall, begins with the results of this process.

## **Strengthening Community Action in the Northern Territory**

Extract from Walley and Trindall (1994: 60–61)<sup>14</sup>

Priority was given to short-term strategies that could be put in place almost immediately. These strategies were dependent on support from the Liquor Commission of the Northern Territory. Strategies included:

- limitations on ‘take-aways’
- having only one liquor outlet
- a reduction in trading hours, e.g. no take-away on Sundays
- not allowing children in the public bar
- refusing to sell liquor to those considered intoxicated.

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<sup>13</sup> Accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-0401-3>

<sup>14</sup> Walley, G., and D. Trindall. 1994. Strengthening community action in the Northern Territory. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia* 4: 60–61

The Gurungu Council requested that the Liquor Commissioner ratify these areas of concern. The Commissioner responded by attending a community meeting to discuss these concerns and to explain the function of the Liquor Commission.

Although community members said they supported these strategies, they did not attend the meeting because of fear of possible repercussions. Therefore, ratification of these strategies did not occur.

As a result, Gurungu Council requested that the Health Promotion Team from Tennant Creek conduct a survey to determine community support of these strategies.

The purpose, process and methodology for the survey and how the results would be used were decided after a group discussion involving the Health Promotion Team and Gurungu Council representatives. Although the community identified five priority areas, it was decided that the survey should focus on three basic issues:

- the limits on take-away alcohol
- children being allowed in the public bar
- whether take-away on Sundays should cease.

As Elliott is only a small town, two members of the Health Promotion Team were able to conduct the survey. They walked around the community, explaining to people what the survey was about. A simple ballot-type paper was used and community members marked appropriate boxes. This was considered to be the simplest method to collect the data. Analysis of the data was under-taken by people elected by the community and included members from all sections of the community.

Participation in the survey was by choice, but it did cover a very broad section of the community and included known drinkers as well as non-drinkers. According to the electoral roll, 188 out of a possible 287 adults (65%) participated in the survey. The results are shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1** Responses to survey Question

Question	Answer	Number	(%)
Permissible take-away amount preferred	6 pack	91	49
	1 dozen	52	28
	No change	44	24
Kids in the bar	Yes	45	24
	No	143	76
Take-away sales on Sunday	Yes	56	30
	No	128	70

After the survey data was analysed, another meeting with the Liquor Commissioner was arranged to report the results and discuss the appropriate

strategies. With community support, the three strategies were ratified and are now formally in place and apply to all, including people passing through town.

## **Conclusion**

The people of Elliott have set a precedent in the Northern Territory by implementing these strategies, and they are proud of the way they confronted the alcohol issue.

The community members pursued something they believed in and achieved the outcome they desired. The confidence they have gained through this process will place them in a strong position to further address alcohol and other drug issues in the future.

Strengthening community action is dependent on community members identifying the issues and implementing appropriate strategies to achieve their desired outcomes.

## Annexure Two

**Maggie Brady, “On- and off-premise drinking choices among Indigenous Australians: The influence of socio-spatial factors” *Drug and Alcohol Review* (2010) DOI: 10.1111/j.1465-3362.2009.00144.x<sup>15</sup>**

Elliott (pop 658) is a small town on the main highway north of Tennant Creek, with a long history of local Aboriginal activism around alcohol issues. Despite the existence of a licensed public hotel in the town, during my research there the (majority) Aboriginal population preferred to make their own drinking arrangements with their self-imposed takeaway ration of two six-packs of full strength beer.

In an unusual example of home-based consumption that appeared to work well (unlike the reports from Bourke, and with the assistance of local police), the Aboriginal residents of the two ‘town camps’ just north and south of the town chose to drink in the (fenced and gated) backyards of their houses. Drinkers reported that in this setting they drank only with invited guests and were able to dissuade others from joining in.

One resident explained, ‘If you’re at home [there is] no humbugging, they share. They tell friends they can share. If they were not invited, they wouldn’t bother’. It was sensible, said one woman, to drink with people in situations where ‘you trust them and they trust you’. Another resident explained that drinking within the fenced area at home provided some protection from troublesome others (‘We keep to ourself. If we mix in, there’s trouble there already’), including those who came ‘loafing for grog’. Food and water were available at home, some non drinkers were present, and children were monitored. Significantly, when this arrangement became illegal as a result of new Prescribed Areas legislation imposed by the Australian Government in September 2007, drinkers did not choose to reconvene on-premise at the Elliott Hotel, but took their takeaway ration and promptly attempted to recreate their chosen drinking groups by setting up small drinking spots out in the scrub beyond the town boundaries.

These were less comfortable physical circumstances, and with no fences or boundaries people had difficulty in maintaining the exclusivity of their groups. The research highlighted the determination of Elliott community members to differentiate themselves into select groups when drinking, in order to pre-empt conflict by exerting what control they could over who was included or excluded (i.e. not ‘mixing in’). As was the case in Bourke, it was takeaway alcohol that made these strategies possible, whereas drinking at the cramped and single hotel bar in Elliott did not. In the past, there had been two bars, giving people greater choice. In both Elliott and in Bourke, community members perceived the hotels to be pricey, racially segregated or frankly racist, and to offer limited choices of space within which to arrange themselves. Hotels in Alice Springs for example, that once had big rooms, beer gardens and ‘plenty room’ to move around, are now perceived by Aboriginal people to be ‘closed in’. ‘You might not want to meet someone’ observed a long-term resident.

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<sup>15</sup> Accessed at <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/server/api/core/bitstreams/2db7d009-f04c-4b29-94ee-802ecb84830d/content>