NORTHERN TERRITORY LIQUOR COMMISSION

DECISION NOTICE

MATTER:	87 MITCHELL STREET MANAGEMENT PTY LTD APPLICATION FOR LIQUOR LICENCE [2026] NTLiqComm 8
REFERENCE:	**LC2026-004**
APPLICANT:	**87 Mitchell Street Management Pty Ltd**
PREMISES:	**voco Darwin suites, 87 Mitchell Street, Darwin City, NT 0800**
LEGISLATION:	Part 3 Division 4 of the *Liquor Act 2019.*
HEARD BEFORE:	Michaela Malone (Acting Chairperson)
	Stephen Gelding (Health Member)
	Katrina Fong Lim (Community Member)
DATE OF HEARING:	15 April 2026
DATE OF DECISION:	16 April 2026

Decision[1]

1. For the reasons set out below and in accordance with s 48 of the *Liquor Act 2019* (NT) ("the Act") the Northern Territory Liquor Commission ("the Commission") has determined to issue a licence to 87 Mitchell Street Management Pty Ltd ("the applicant").
2. The licence will be issued with a restaurant authority, restaurant bar authority, lodging authority, and a catering authority.
3. The conditions of the licence will be those authority conditions set out in Part 4, Division 1 ("Standard operating conditions"), Part 4, Division 5 ("Catering authority conditions"), Part 4, Division 11 ("Lodging authority conditions"), Part 4, Division 15 ("Restaurant authority conditions") and Part 4, Division 16 ("Restaurant bar authority conditions") of the *Liquor Regulations 2019* ("the Regulations").
4. The licensed premises are situated at 87 Mitchell Street, DARWIN CITY NT 0800 over the area delineated in red, marked on the plan annexed to this notice.

[1] **NOTE: On 23 April 2026 the Commission amended this decision to correct outdated information that was contained in the brief as provided to the Commission. The amendments do not substantially alter or effect the decision.**

5. The licence will be issued immediately following the publication of this Decision Notice.

6. The Commission approves the appointment of Mr Sean Desouza and Mr Sanjaya Karunathilake as licence nominees.

7. Liquor must not be sold under the licence until the Director of Liquor Licensing ("the Director") gives the written approval to do so, following the provision of documentary evidence to the satisfaction of the Director that the applicant has obtained the necessary fire safety and building approvals, including a certificate of occupancy, in respect of the premises.

Reasons

Background

8. The premises is a new hotel called voco Darwin Suites and is located at 87 Mitchell Street, Darwin City, Northern Territory. The premises is leased by 87 Mitchell Street Management Pty Ltd trading as voco Darwin Suites. The hotel was developed through the repurpose of a commercial office building and the premises has recently undergone a substantial refurbishment.

9. The hotel has front-of-house facilities accessible to the public, with restaurant and bar services offered, as well as function and multipurpose meeting spaces. Each guestroom is equipped with a self-contained kitchenette, providing accommodation for both short and extended stay guests. The brand "voco" is a brand owned by IHG Hotels & Resorts (InterContinental Hotels Group), a global hotel company.

10. 87 Mitchell Street Management Pty Ltd was incorporated for the purpose of operating and managing voco Darwin Suites, however forms part of a broader corporate group, the ~~Halikos~~ JH Group[2] ("the Group"). The Group has an established trading history, strong financial capacity, and demonstrated experience in property ownership, development, and hospitality-related operations.

11. The ~~Halikos~~ JH Group holds multiple licences across the Northern Territory, many of which are held through separate corporate entities that may constitute associated entities. For the purposes of this matter, the relevant licensees are Lizards Bar Pty Ltd (Lizards Bar & Restaurant Darwin) and Crab Claw Pty Ltd (Crab Claw Island Resort).

The Application

12. On 12 February 2026, an application was lodged by Ms Elizabeth Halikos (on behalf of 87 Mitchell Street Management Pty Ltd) in the approved form with the Director, seeking a restaurant authority, restaurant bar authority, lodging authority, and a catering authority.

[2] Previously part of the Halikos Group.

13. The application was considered incomplete by the Director, however was "provisionally" accepted on 18 February 2026, with the applicant requested to provide additional documents in order to progress the application. These were subsequently provided by the applicant with it being considered complete on 26 February 2026 and confirmation of a change in directorship being given on 17 March 2026.

Consultation

14. The Commission was informed by the Director that the application was published in the NT News on 21 February 2026 and published on the Director's website the same day. In addition to the online publications, two signs were displayed at the proposed premises for 14 days in accordance with section 57(4) of the Act. The Director was satisfied that the applicant had complied with the requirements to advertise the application.

15. In accordance with s 56 of the Act, notification was given to the Department of Health, Northern Territory Police and The City of Darwin Council. An additional notification was sent to the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Services ("NTFRS"), and the compliance unit of Licensing NT.

16. The Director informed the Commission that there was no objection to the application from the Department of Health or Northern Territory Police. There was a request for information by The City of Darwin Council, but no formal objection was received in relation to the application. There was no objection to the application by NTFRS.

17. On 9 March 2026, email correspondence was received by the Director from a Senior Compliance Office of Liquor and Tobacco at Licencing NT, noting that there was no comment or concern in relation to the application.

18. Following the public consultation, no objections were received.

19. There were two responses from nearby residents that supported the application. One resident noted support for the application and expressed a view that the local community would benefit from the licence being granted as it would increase the amenity of the location and the licence would compliment the hotel facilities. The second resident that submitted a favourable response to the application noted that they did not have concerns about noise, as in recent years this had not been an issue in the area with reference to other similar establishments.

The licensee's record of compliance

20. 87 Mitchell Street Management Pty Ltd has never held a liquor licence in the Northern Territory, however the ~~Halikos~~ JH Group holds multiple licences across the Northern Territory as referred to above.

21. The Director formed the view that there were no compliance concerns in relation to 87 Mitchell Street Management Pty Ltd and noted support for the application.

22. The Commission noted two previous NT Liquor Commission decisions where a licensee within the Halikos Group, that being Halikos Hospitality Pty Ltd, faced disciplinary action by the Commission in relation to the licence held for Lizards Bar & Restaurant Darwin, and specifically the authority relating to takeaway alcohol. The two decisions are:

    a. LC2021/001 – On 18 March 2021, the Commission published a Decision Notice that detailed disciplinary action taken against Halikos Hospitality Pty Ltd who was the licensee of the applicable licence. The Commission was satisfied that between 31 August and 6 September 2020 (inclusive), Halikos Hospitality Pty Ltd (the licensee) or licensee's employee, sold liquor to individuals on twenty-five (25) occasions without correctly using the identification system, contrary to section 130 of the *Liquor Act 2019* (NT). The result of the disciplinary action was both a restriction of takeaway trade (for a period of 8 hours on a specific date), and the licensee was required to place signage in specific places.

    b. LC2018/054 – On 2 July 2018, the Commission published a Decision Notice that detailed disciplinary action taken against Halikos Hospitality Pty Ltd who was the licensee of the applicable licence. The Commission was satisfied that an employee of the licensee had sold liquor to 10 individuals without scanning an approved identification of the individuals with the scanner, contrary to section 31A(5)(a) of the *Liquor Act 2019* (NT) (as applicable at the time). A monetary penalty was imposed as a result of the disciplinary action.

23. The Commission noted the above non-compliance by the licensee Halikos Hospitality Pty Ltd and the relationship between that licensee and the current applicant.

24. The Commission considered the above disciplinary actions as relevant to the consideration and assessment of the current applicant's ability to comply with conditions of licence and statutory obligations in relation to approved licences. However, having considered the material provided as part of the application, having regard to the differing venue and licence types the subject of the above decision notices and that of the current application, and the period of time that has elapsed since those decision notices, the Commission is satisfied that the identified compliance issues do not give rise to concern in this current application.

The referral

25. On 2 April 2026, pursuant to s 59 of the Act, the Director referred this application to the Commission.

26. The Director provided the Commission with a brief, which included the following documents:

    a. Application for liquor licence

b. Affidavit and Declaration of Associates pursuant to s 54 of the Act

c. Certificate of Registration of company

d. ASIC company extract for applicant

e. Probity documents for Mr Sean Desouza and Mr Sanjaya Karunathilake

f. Record of Administrative interest and information and licensed premises voco Darwin suites.

g. Registration of business name

h. Locality Diagram

i. Site plan

j. Smoking Management Plan for Licensed Premises

k. Lease

l. Accountant's letter certifying applicant's financial stability

m. Public Interest and Community Impact Assessment summary pursuant to ss 49 to 52 of the Act

n. Draft public notice of application

o. Consultation and responses

Determination by way of written submissions

27. Section 21 of the Act permits the Commission to determine a matter without conducting a public hearing if the Commission is of the opinion that a public hearing is not appropriate in the circumstances. In this instance, the Commission formed that opinion because it was satisfied that the matter was not controversial and that conducting the hearing in public would not be worthwhile. The Commission determined to hear the matter by way of written submissions only.

28. On 14 April 2026 the applicant provided written submissions to the Commission through the Director. This was received by the Commission from the Director and considered by the Commission as part of the application.

ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICATION

29. In accordance with s 59 of the Act, the Commission has considered:

a. the applicant's affidavit required by s 54;

b. the suitability of the premises to be licensed, having regard to any law of the Territory regulating the sale, supply, service or consumption of liquor or the location, construction or facilities of those premises;

c. the financial stability and business reputation of the applicant;

d. whether the applicant and the nominees designated by the applicant, are

fit and proper persons to hold a licence;

e. whether each associate of the applicant is a fit and proper person to be an associate of a licensee.

30. In accordance with s 49 of the Act, the Commission also considered whether issuing the licence is in the public interest, and whether the licence will have a significant adverse impact on the community.

The applicant

31. The Commission finds that the applicant complies with s 53(1) of the Act, which requires that a body corporate shall not hold a licence unless it is a corporation.

32. The applicant has provided satisfactory documentation regarding its operations, activities, financial circumstances and plans.

The applicant's associates

33. Section 54 of the Act requires applicants to depose an affidavit disclosing whether certain persons may be able to influence the applicant, or expect a benefit from the applicant, if the licence is granted.

34. The Commission is satisfied that no further probity is required to be undertaken and that the applicant and associates are fit and proper.

35. The Commission is also satisfied that the applicant has complied with the disclosure requirements of section 54.

The suitability of the applicant's premises

36. The proposed premises are located at 87 Mitchell Street, Darwin City. The premise is within close proximity to other businesses that operate Late Night Licence Authorities, for example The Cinema Collective and Discovery Darwin.

37. The layout of the premise includes one main entrance into the restaurant from the hotel lobby. The design layout of the premises is not advertised from the street, and patrons must enter through reception before entering the restaurant and bar area. This entrance is secured and monitored 24/7 by hotel and/or the restaurant duty manager. There is also an elevated terrace from the main road, with lockable doors to the main restaurant. The premise has other general hotel facilities such as a reception and lobby, pool and outdoor entertainment areas, a car park and perimeter, and street frontage.

38. Security measures that are planned by the applicant include the use of a security contractor for larger events and general patrolling of the establishment, use of bar fridge locks and strategic lighting, installation of CCTV Surveillance across the establishment, and upgraded external lighting in areas such as the carpark and outdoor seating areas.

39. The Commission is satisfied that the premises are suitable for the supply and consumption of liquor as a licensed restaurant and restraurant bar, as well as for a catering and lodging licence authority.

The financial stability, general reputation and character of the body corporate

40. The Commission assesses the applicant as having a satisfactory business reputation and as being financially stable.

Whether the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a licence

41. The Commission assesses the applicant to be a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

Whether the licensee's nominee is a fit and proper person to hold a licence

42. The applicant has nominated Mr Sean Desouza and Mr Sanjaya Karunathilake as the licence nominees. The Commission has been provided appropriate documentation of their reputation, character, and work histories. The Commission assesses them both to be fit and proper persons to hold the licence.

Public notice and consultation

43. The Commission is satisfied that public notice of the application was given and consultation was undertaken in accordance with ss 56 and 57 of the Act.

Whether issuing the licence is in the public interest

44. To determine whether the issue of the license is in the public interest, the Commission is required to consider how the issue of the licence 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.

45. The Commission has had regard to all of these objectives and, in particular, it considers that:

a. the establishment of an additional licensed restaurant and restaurant bar in an existing commercial, tourism and hospitality precinct carries a low risk of directly increasing the incidence of alcohol-related harm or ill-health to people;

b. the applicant is likely to serve and supply liquor in a responsible manner, noting that the service of alcohol is a complementary service to the primary services of accommodation and meals for the venue;

c. the licensing of the restaurant and restaurant bar will likely provide modest additional recreational, tourism and employment benefits for the local community area, including the activation of a previously closed area of street front;

d. the applicant is unlikely to encourage irresponsible drinking and has plans to adopt similar processes and policies as implemented in their other premises to prevent irresponsible drinking or instances of anti-social behaviour; and

e. the grant of the licence is unlikely to lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour noting that the primary reason for patrons to be at the premise is in connection with accommodation or meals.

46. The Commission is satisfied that it is in the public interest to issue the licence.

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

47. To determine whether it is satisfied that the issue of the licence 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:

(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; and

(j) any other matter prescribed by regulation.

48. The Commission notes there are no such "other" matters prescribed by regulation and there are no guidelines currently in force under s 50.

49. Having particular regard to the fact that the licensed premises are situated within a major commercial, tourism and hospitality precinct, the Commission is satisfied that the issue of the licence and authorities the Commission has determined to issue will not have a significant adverse impact on the community. The Commission considers that this type of venue, offering both food and accommodation facilities and related tourist facilities, is unlikely to have a negative effect on the area and community.

50. Having considered all of these matters, the Commission is satisfied, in accordance with s 49 of the Act, that:

a. the applicant is a fit and proper person; and

b. issuing the licence or authority is in the public interest; and

c. the licence or authority will not have a significant adverse impact on the community.

The objects of the Act

51. Pursuant to section 3(4) of the Act, the Commission has had regard to the primary and secondary purposes of the Act while exercising its power to issue a licence.

52. Among the secondary purposes of the Act in s 3(2) are to regulate the sale, supply, service, promotion and consumption of liquor in a way that:

• contributes to the responsible development of the liquor industry and associated businesses in the Territory; and

- stimulates the tourism and hospitality industries.

53. The Commission considers that it has exercised its power in a manner consistent with the purposes of the Act.

54. For these reasons, the Commission has determined that the application should be granted, and that a licence and authorities be issued on the conditions set out at the commencement of this Decision Notice.

NOTICE OF RIGHTS

55. Section 31(1) read with s 60(3) 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 2014* (NT) provides that an application for review of a reviewable decision must be lodged within 28 days of the date of the decision.

56. In accordance with s 31(2) of the Act, the persons who may apply to NTCAT for a review of this decision are the Director and the applicant.

Michaela Malone
ACTING CHAIRPERSON
NORTHERN TERRITORY LIQUOR COMMISSION
16 April 2026

On behalf of Commissioners Malone, Gelding and Fong Lim

ANNEXURE

