

Environment and Venue Assessment Tool (EVAT)



This fact sheet describes the Environment and Venue Assessment Tool, which will be implemented across NSW in early 2015.

Background and context

The Office of Liquor Gaming and Racing engaged the Allen Consulting Group to undertake research into the cumulative impact of licensed premises in NSW. The research comprised two phases. Phase 1 investigated the factors that contribute to the cumulative impact of licensed premises and provided the evidentiary base for Phase 2 of the research: the development of a tool to guide liquor licensing decisions.

In Phase 1, the Allen Consulting Group undertook a comprehensive review of the national and international literature, extensive statistical analysis, and a broad ranging consultation process. This consultation process involved NSW Police, local councils, other government agencies, industry groups, liquor accords, business organisations and community groups. The Phase 1 report identifies the economic and social impacts of licence density and outlines the contributing external and market risk and mitigation factors.

The Environment and Venue Assessment Tool (EVAT) is based on the large body of evidence collected under Phase 1. It recognises the broad range of net impacts of liquor licence density, accounts for a wide range of risk factors, and supports risk mitigation.

EVAT provides a consistent and transparent basis on which to make licensing decisions.

EVAT was trialled for new liquor licence applications in the City of Sydney and City of Newcastle local government areas from early 2013 for 12 months.

An evaluation of the EVAT trial found that:

- EVAT had contributed to significant process and communication improvements
- EVAT is broadly supported by the research literature
- inclusion of additional risk factors and other enhancements could be considered
- the Utility of EVAT during the trial was supported by quantitative analysis.

How the EVAT works

Risk Assessment

The EVAT provides risk assessments for individual liquor licence applications based on several risk factors identified by the Phase 1 research.

Risk assessments are either mitigating, low, moderate, high or extreme.

During the EVAT trial, EVAT used the individual risk factor assessments to calculate two overall risk assessments (location and venue risk). Based on the outcomes of the EVAT trial evaluation and the need to emphasise EVAT's informative rather than determinative function, these overall risk assessments will be removed prior to implementation across NSW.

Location Risk Assessment

Location risk is assessed at the suburb level. That is, any application within a particular suburb will receive the same risk ratings for the nine location risk factors.

The location risk factors included in the EVAT are:

- Rate of alcohol-related assaults
- Rate of offensive behaviour
- Presence or absence of late night transport
- Police risk assessment
- Council risk assessment.
- Radial estimate of liquor licence density (i.e. average number of liquor licences within a 1km radius)
- Proportion of high risk venues (i.e. hotel licences)
- Proportion of diversifying venues (e.g. on-premises licences without primary service authorisations)
- Proportion of venues with late night trading.

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Venue Risk Assessment

Venue risk factors are those that are specifically related to an individual liquor licence application.

The venue risk factors included in the EVAT are:

- Licence type
- Patron capacity
- Extended trading
- Liquor accord membership
- Other mitigation strategies.

EVAT Implementation

In early 2015, EVAT will be implemented across NSW for all new applications for ongoing liquor retail businesses and for applications for licence changes which involve alteration to the way a business operates (e.g. applications for ongoing extended trading).

The second stage of implementation will involve detailed scoping and implementation of enhancements to EVAT. This will include consideration of additional EVAT risk factors.

A third stage of implementation will involve investigation of how OLGR can most usefully provide information to potential applicants and local councils regarding EVAT risk ratings.

Decision Making

Importantly, these risk assessments only form part of the decision making process for liquor licence applications.

These risk assessments are only relevant to liquor licence density (i.e. the clustering of licensed premises within a geographic area) and do not provide a definitive response to an application.

Community Impact Statements and submissions are still a critical part of the decision-making process.