

Submission Response: Hospitality Sector Review

Submission to the Ministry of Regulations

November 2025



Taituarā — Local Government Professionals Aotearoa ('Taituarā') thanks the Ministry of Regulations for the opportunity to submit in respect of the Hospitality Sector review.

What is Taituarā?

Taituarā is New Zealand's leading network for local government professionals. A few words about us. Taituarā is Aotearoa New Zealand's leading membership network for professionals working in, and for, local government. We have a membership base of 1,019 members drawn from local authority of Chief Executives, managers, and staff across all 78 local authorities. What unites Taituarā members is our commitment to be our own professional best, supporting local government excellence through connection, collaboration, and care for the wellbeing of our communities.

Taituarā strengthens the local government sector by using our members' insights and experience to influence the public policy debate. We submit on legislation and regulations to provide perspectives on what works and how to make policy work.

This submission draws on feedback from members of [Taituarā Regulations and Bylaws Reference Group](#). It reflects practical experiences and recommendations for improving regulatory compliance and support for the hospitality sector. Below is a summary of our survey responses with recommendations.

1. Understanding of Regulatory Requirements

- Larger businesses demonstrate strong understanding and often challenge decisions.
- Smaller businesses, particularly those with owners for whom English is a second language, face challenges.
- Use of agents for alcohol licensing paperwork has improved compliance.
- Councils with initiative-taking licensing officers (e.g., one-on-one meetings) report better outcomes.

Recommendation:

1. Develop translated guidance and culturally appropriate resources for small businesses to improve understanding of regulatory requirements.

2. Common Issues Encountered

- Pushback on licensing conditions (e.g., opening hours, duty manager requirements).
- Excessive paperwork during renewals.
- Inexperienced staff and poor administrative systems.
- Food Act compliance is particularly challenging for small operators.

Recommendation:

1. Streamline paperwork and renewal processes, especially for food licensing. Support councils transitioning to online systems to reduce administrative burden.

3. Enforcement Actions

- Enforcement is led by Police, supported by councils.
- Common actions: license oppositions, written warnings, DLC hearings.
- Breaches include advertising violations, duty manager issues, and food noncompliance.
- Fire safety and building compliance also impact licensing decisions.

Recommendation:

1. Ensure consistent enforcement and clear communication of consequences across alcohol, food, building, and fire safety compliance areas.

4. Appeals and Complaints

- Appeals are rare, but delays in processing are a concern.
- Public opposition has led to license application withdrawals.
- Smaller councils manage tracking manually; larger councils benefit from digital systems.

Recommendation:

1. Improve application tracking systems to reduce delays and ensure transparency. Maintain public participation without compromising efficiency.

5. Causes of Noncompliance

- Lack of knowledge and poor attitudes toward regulation.
- Limited police inspections, especially in rural areas.
- Financial pressures and insufficient staff training.

Recommendation:

1. Increase training opportunities and support for staff. Enhance police inspection capacity, particularly during high-risk periods.

6. Improving Compliance

- Engagement with agents and industry groups (e.g., Hospitality NZ) is effective.
- Smaller operators need tailored support and fairer treatment.

Recommendation:

1. Work with industry groups to identify knowledge gaps and develop training modules for small and medium-sized businesses.

7. Improving the Regulatory System

- Historic perceptions of council hostility persist; positive relationships help.
- Outdated regulations and high compliance costs are barriers for small operators.
- Examples include food trailer licensing and MPI's food compliance levy rollout.

Recommendation:

1. Review outdated rules and reduce compliance costs. Eliminate process duplication (e.g., combining mobile and fixed food business licenses). Ensure meaningful consultation with local government before implementing regulatory changes.



Taituarā — Local Government Professionals Aotearoa

Level 9, 85 The Terrace, Wellington

PO Box 10373, Wellington 6140

T 04 978 1280

W taituara.org.nz

E info@taituara.org.nz