

Hon. Simon O'Brien MLC
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000



Dear Chairperson

Petition No. 131 – Oppose location of the liquor store in South Hedland Shopping Centre

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on behalf of the Hedland Community and the 191 petitioners, I represent.

This issue was not raised with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative investigations (Ombudsman).

I am advocating this change to help everyone in the community to raise awareness of alcohol and the effect it is having on locals and in particular indigenous families in the Pilbara. I think more attention is needed to restrict alcohol and educate families on changing these problematic behaviours as alcohol is too much of a main focus in too many lives.

I am strongly opposed to the liquor stores current location because I believe the shopping centre is a hub for this country town and a place for families to gather; shop; greet; socialise and due to the unpleasant behaviour outside the shopping centre doors, it has become a place that a lot of locals don't want to go to anymore.

The loitering outside the doors allows harassment for money, loud abusive language; physical fighting; spitting and urination in public; vandalism; theft; litter and a total disrespect for the shopping centre and their patrons passing by. If the liquor store was removed I believe these antisocial problems will not be in the centre of the town outside the shopping centre anymore.

The liquor store's location encourages the consumption of alcohol with the taxi drop off area and the automatic teller machine and all within 2 metres of walking inside the store to buy the alcohol, walk across the road to the park area to drink it, throw it on the ground and rest when you have finished.

The liquor store does not have security or restrictions on who is sold alcohol like the neighbouring liquor outlets do. When intoxicated patrons are refused service, they simply ask locals to buy the alcohol for them; which they do, or taxi drivers are known for picking up customers and buy the alcohol on the behalf of the customer and then drive them back to their location all within payment of service.

It is a known fact that a lot of these loiters are indigenous members of dry communities close to Hedland. They want to come to Hedland because they don't have services, housing or work in their communities. Build up these communities with these missing services and copy the successful planning and organisation of existing communities like Yandeyarra, Jigalong and Bidyadanga.

I have attached several recent media articles that have outlined problems associated with alcohol.

I hope that the above mentioned concerns have clarified the petitions request and the importance of changing a culture affecting the Hedland community and many indigenous families.

Yours Sincerely

Phillip Wright