

## What changes are there for the Torres Strait?



The Queensland Government wants to reduce the harm caused by alcohol in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. To support this objective, amendments have been made to the **Liquor Act 1992**. The two major changes to the Act that affect people in the Torres Strait are explained below.

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#### Drinking in public places will be banned

From 1 July 2008 it will be illegal to drink in public places in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as it is in the rest of the state. This ban already exists on Thursday Island and Horn Island, but will include all the islands within the new Torres Strait Island Regional Council from 1 July 2008.

The ban on drinking alcohol in a public place **includes roads, footpaths and parks**. The ban does not include public places where alcohol is consumed at the consent of the owner, such as a BYO restaurant or places covered by a liquor licence or permit. The other exception to the ban is if Council specifies a public area that consumption of alcohol will be allowed, normally for particular occasions (such as a wedding in the park).

**The fine for drinking in a public place is \$75 or \$225 if under the age of 18.** Police Officers and Liquor Licensing Investigators can also issue an on-the-spot fine of \$75. Further information on drinking in public places can be found online at the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing website - [www.liquor.qld.gov.au/Patrons/Drinking+in+public](http://www.liquor.qld.gov.au/Patrons/Drinking+in+public).

#### Council cannot hold a General Liquor Licence

As part of the reforms, no council in Queensland will be able to hold a general liquor licence, therefore Indigenous councils will not be able to run canteens. For Aboriginal and mainland Torres Strait Islander communities, this change commences 1 July 2008. **The Torres Strait Island Regional Council cannot hold a General Liquor Licence from 1 July 2009.**

For further information on canteen divestment (including licence options) please contact Mr Dominic Tennison, Manager Indigenous Liquor Policy Unit, Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing, on telephone 07 3033 0035 or email [dominic.tennison@treasury.qld.gov.au](mailto:dominic.tennison@treasury.qld.gov.au).