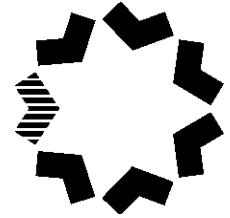


National Competition Council

Level 9/128 Exhibition Street Melbourne Victoria 3000 Australia
GPO Box 250B Melbourne Victoria 3001 Australia

Telephone 03 9285 7474 Facsimile 03 9285 7477



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NSW responds to NCP obligations

New South Wales today announced that it would respond to some outstanding National Competition Policy obligations it agreed to in 1995.

President of the National Competition Council, Dr Wendy Craik, said that the National Competition Council would quickly review the detail of any legislation as soon as it had passed both houses of the NSW Parliament and become law.

“The NCC will examine the final legislation closely, but it appears that NSW intends to move to reduce anti-competitive restrictions on the sale of alcohol, while maintaining controls that are in the public interest,” said Dr Craik.

“After publicly threatening to open up the market in ways that might cause harm, the NSW Government’s proposals appear to be similar to reforms that have been adopted without controversy in other States and Territories that have met their NCP obligations.”

Dr Craik said it was a pity that NSW only moved to meet its obligations after the NCC was forced to recommend financial penalties.

“If NSW had undertaken these reforms before it would likely have avoided penalties. NSW has had nine years to provide an independent review,” she said.

The reforms that the NSW Government has proposed appear to be in line with reforms undertaken elsewhere.

If the NSW legislation is passed, the NCC will assess whether the changes meet NSW’s NCP obligations and what other obligations are still outstanding. This will be done towards the middle of this year.

For further comment contact: Dionne Lew (03) 9285 7497 or 0403 196 672