

# Licensing balance

■ Emily Morgan

LIQUOR licensing is a contentious issue in Western Australia, with alcohol-fuelled violence, cultural advancement, the development of a strong tourism industry and management of the public interest influencing decisions.

Decisions made by the director of Liquor Licensing WA, Barry Sargeant, over the past two months show how complicated the process can be.

A string of 27 venues were approved for licences across the state, including a club licence.

Restaurant licences were the most common, with nine supported. Six special facilities were approved, including a licence for the Wilderness Lodge at the Kimberley's Mitchell Falls.

The licence decision for the Mitchell Falls premises gives equal weighting to the objectives of the Liquor Licensing Act of developing tourism and minimising harm.

"A special facility licence may be granted for the purpose of allowing the sale of liquor to persons likely to be attracted to, or present at, a place that, in the opinion of the licensing authority, is or will become; an attraction for tourists; or a facility that enhances the state's tourist industry," the decision said.

The only application rejected in April was for a tavern licence for Fremantle's Soho Bar and Kitchen, which runs on a restaurant licence. It was rejected on the basis that the applicants had not outlined how the public interest outweighed the potential for harm.

"As the application is based on assertions not supported by an appropriate level of evidence, and given the evidence of alcohol-relat-



Licence type	May	April
Liquor store	0	3
Small bar	1	1
Hotel	0	0
Hotel restricted	0	0
Tavern	0	2
Nightclub	0	0
Special facilities	4	2
Restaurant	4	5
Producers	1	2
Wholesalers	1	0
Club	1	0
Club restricted	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>

Source: Department of Racing, Gaming and Liquor

ed harm or ill-health to people ... and the anti-social behaviour occurring ... in the locality of the proposed premises, I am not satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the grant of this application for a tavern licence is in the public interest," Mr Sargeant said.

In contrast, the decision was made to approve a liquor store licence for Progressive Super IGA in Halls Head.

Mr Sargeant said the Mandurah area already had higher than average levels of harm but a conclusion was made that the grant of the licence would not significantly add to that.

Notably, a tavern licence was conditionally approved for the City Square Print Hall venue in April, which has been leased by Colonial Leisure Group, the group that runs East Perth's The Royal, the Raffles Hotel in Applecross and Colonial Brewery in Margaret River.

The venue will host up to 1000 people across four floors, which will include a function space, lounge bar and formal restaurant, a more casual-styled bar, dining area and a rooftop bar with informal dining.

A small bar licence was approved for Whos Your Mumma, a new venue in Fremantle at the south end of South Terrace.