

Issue

Rural shows and community events such as rodeos and field days play an essential role in the social calendars of most rural and regional communities throughout NSW, providing a venue for social interaction and networking as well as a whole list of other essential community functions. The NSW Farmers Association (the 'Association') is aware that some communities have been struggling to afford the costs associated with complying with the license terms set out for many rural events and is working to try to ease these regulatory burdens.

Current Policy

A motion was passed at the Association's 2007 Annual Conference *"that the Association call for a review of security arrangements and liquor licences with the intent to reduce the onerous regulations and costs to rural community organisations such as shows and rodeos"*.

Member Concerns

The Association has been fielding member concerns relating to:

- Excessive requirements for security staff and in some instances police presence;
- Lack of understanding at the local level where the licence terms are determined both via the local courts and local police;
- Disparity of requirements placed on different events eg differing levels of security and fencing off requirements for similar events in the same town as well as across the state;
- Excessive administration time requirements for licence approvals; and
- Technical issues relating to licence terms and their interpretation.

Licences

There are currently two main liquor licences available to rural organisations wishing to sell alcohol at functions; these are the Permanent Function Licence and the Temporary Function Licence.

- Permanent Function Licence - this licence allows liquor to be sold at up to 26 functions per year, with no more than one function being held every seven days. The licence has a one-off fee of \$500 (\$50 of which is paid on application for the licence). The licence then remains in force until it is cancelled or surrendered. Detailed information regarding this licence can be found online at http://www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/9_Permanent_Function.pdf
- Temporary Function Licence - this licence can only be granted to a bona fide non-profit organisation (except in the case of trade fair functions). It is limited to a maximum of three functions per year and has an annual application fee of \$50. Detailed information regarding this licence can be found online at http://www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/temp_function_licence.pdf

Work to Date

- The Association has written to the NSW Minister for Police, NSW Minister for Rural Affairs and Chair of Country Labor requesting a review of security arrangements and liquor licenses.
- Association staff have spoken to a number of members from different areas and examined a number of different case studies relating to this issue. The current licence terms particularly relating to the Temporary Function Licence are quite loose and it is left up to the local authorities in most cases to impose actual requirements for licence approval. Analysis of member problems in this area has identified the challenges as highly localised. The process appears to be working well in most areas, but not in others.
- The Association's Rural Affairs Committee has recommended the introduction of a review/appeals process that can be undertaken by community organisations without fear of reprisal. The matter is to be progressed with NSW Police Commissioner directly, as well as through Agricultural and Pastoral Crime Working Party.

Further Information

The Association suggests that any member experiencing problems with licensing requirements from their local authorities contact the Association directly, so that these problems can be followed up on an individual basis. The Association is seeking further information from members regarding this important issue. If you have had red tape issues relating to the alcohol or security licences for your local shows or events please contact Richard Widows on (02) 8251 1808 or email widowsr@nswfarmers.org.au.