

22 September 2026

The Honourable Attorney-General
Queensland Government

Re: Request to Review Anzac Day Liquor Restrictions for Brisbane Veterans and Unit Reunions

Dear Attorney-General,

I am writing to respectfully request that the Queensland Government review the restrictions applying to the service of alcohol before 1.00 pm on Anzac Day, particularly as they affect serving and former members of the Australian Defence Force participating in the Brisbane Anzac Day March.

I fully appreciate the importance of responsible service of alcohol and of preserving the dignity and significance of Anzac Day. I am not suggesting unrestricted morning trading by licensed premises.

Rather, I ask the Government to consider a limited and practical variation that recognises the unique circumstances surrounding the Brisbane Anzac Day March and the reunions of serving personnel and veterans that immediately follow it.

For many participants, the Brisbane Anzac Day March is much more than a parade. It is one of the most important reunions of the year for former and serving members of the Australian Defence Force.

Participants march with their respective units, associations and former comrades. Many then gather following the march to renew friendships, remember those who are no longer with us and share a drink with people with whom they served. For some veterans, Anzac Day may be the only occasion during the year on which they see former members of their unit.

This reunion and fellowship are an important part of the Anzac Day tradition.

The difficulty in Brisbane is one of capacity.

The number of serving and former Defence personnel participating in the Brisbane Anzac Day March, together with their unit and association reunions, is far greater than can reasonably be accommodated within the Brisbane RSL and available Services Club facilities.

Consequently, many units and veteran groups need to arrange their post-march reunions at licensed hotels, clubs and other venues throughout the Brisbane CBD and surrounding inner-city areas.

Under the existing arrangements, however, most ordinary licensed venues cannot serve alcohol before 1.00 pm on Anzac Day unless it is served in association with a meal. For large unit reunions, this requirement can make otherwise suitable venues impractical or unavailable.

The issue is not simply the cost of purchasing a meal. Many venues do not have the dining or kitchen capacity to simultaneously provide substantial meals to the large numbers of veterans leaving the march. Nor are these gatherings principally dining functions. They are reunions of serving and former Defence personnel following the Anzac Day March.

Importantly, Queensland's existing liquor legislation already recognises that circumstances exist where an ordinary licensed venue should be permitted to host an Anzac Day event before 1.00 pm without requiring meals.

Section 103H of the *Liquor Act 1992* provides a mechanism under which an extended-hours permit may be granted for a licensed venue to sell liquor between 5.00 am and 1.00 pm on Anzac Day where the licensee has entered into an agreement with an RSL or Services Club for an Anzac Day event.

I therefore respectfully suggest that the Government does not need to abandon the existing safeguards surrounding Anzac Day trading. Instead, it could **broaden the existing mechanism so that it expressly recognises bona fide Defence unit and veteran reunions associated with the Brisbane Anzac Day March.**

For example, an eligible licensed venue could be permitted to serve alcohol without the meal requirement where the venue is hosting a pre-booked Anzac Day reunion organised by a recognised Defence unit, unit association, ex-service organisation, veteran association or other appropriately recognised group.

Such approval could remain subject to the normal responsible service of alcohol requirements and any additional conditions considered appropriate by the Commissioner.

There is also an existing precedent for permitting controlled Anzac Day activities at licensed premises outside traditional RSL facilities. Queensland already provides for two-up to be conducted at certain licensed premises as part of an official Anzac Day function, subject to appropriate authorisation and conditions.

This demonstrates that a controlled mechanism can distinguish a genuine Anzac Day function from ordinary commercial trading. A similar principle could be applied to bona fide Defence unit and veteran reunions.

I also ask that consideration be given to introducing the proposed variation initially as a limited Brisbane Anzac Day pilot.

Rather than applying throughout Queensland, the pilot could be confined to the Brisbane CBD and specified surrounding inner-city areas in which post-march reunions would reasonably be expected to occur. These might include the **Brisbane CBD, Spring Hill, Fortitude Valley, South Brisbane and Kangaroo Point**, or another clearly defined geographic area considered appropriate by the Government.

Defining the area would ensure that the exemption remained directly connected with the Brisbane Anzac Day March rather than becoming a general relaxation of Anzac Day liquor trading throughout Brisbane or Queensland.

There are sound practical reasons for such an approach. A very large number of serving personnel, veterans, unit associations and descendants assemble in central Brisbane for the march and then disperse into surrounding venues at approximately the same time.

The existing RSL and Services Club facilities simply cannot accommodate all of these people and their respective reunions.

A geographically limited pilot would allow the Government and the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation to assess the operation of the arrangement in practice before considering whether any permanent or wider change was warranted.

The purpose of this proposal is therefore not to provide hotels and bars with unrestricted early trading on Anzac Day. It is to allow legitimate unit and veteran reunions arising directly from the Brisbane Anzac Day March to use the licensed venue capacity that already exists within the city.

A sensible approval process could require:

- the function to be a genuine Anzac Day reunion connected with a Defence unit, unit association, ex-service organisation or recognised veteran group;
- the function to be pre-arranged with the licensed venue;
- the venue to obtain the appropriate approval or permit from the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation;
- the organiser or relevant Defence or veteran organisation to confirm that the gathering is a bona fide Anzac Day reunion;
- liquor service under the exemption to be confined to the approved reunion, venue and hours;
- all normal responsible service of alcohol obligations and venue licence conditions to continue to apply; and
- the special arrangement to cease at 1.00 pm, when the ordinary Anzac Day trading arrangements resume.

This approach would preserve the safeguards already contained within Queensland's Anzac Day liquor laws while addressing the particular circumstances of the Brisbane march.

It would also build upon an existing legislative mechanism rather than create unrestricted Anzac Day morning trading. The essential change would be to recognise that a genuine Defence unit or veteran reunion should be capable of qualifying for an Anzac Day permit in its own right, rather than eligibility depending upon an agreement with an RSL or Services Club.

Anzac Day commemorates service, sacrifice and mateship. Allowing veterans to gather with the men and women with whom they served after marching together is entirely consistent with that purpose.

It seems anomalous that a legitimate reunion of former and serving Defence personnel may be unable to use an otherwise suitable licensed venue simply because an RSL or Services Club does not have sufficient capacity to accommodate them or because the reunion cannot practically provide a substantial meal to every person attending.

I therefore respectfully request that you review the current arrangements and consider:

- 1 **broadening the existing Anzac Day permit mechanism to expressly recognise bona fide Defence unit, unit association and veteran reunions; and**
- 2 **introducing that change initially as a geographically limited pilot applying to the Brisbane CBD and appropriate surrounding inner-city areas for functions associated with the Brisbane Anzac Day March.**

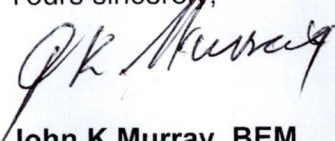
Such a pilot could be reviewed after its first year in consultation with the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation, the Brisbane Anzac Day March organisers, veterans' organisations, Defence associations, Queensland Police and participating licensed venues.

This would provide the Government with practical evidence of how the arrangement operates while maintaining appropriate safeguards and preserving the dignity of Anzac Day.

I would appreciate the opportunity for this proposal to be considered in sufficient time for any necessary administrative or legislative arrangements to be put in place before the next Anzac Day.

I would also welcome advice as to whether the Government would be prepared to consult with veterans' organisations, Defence associations, the Brisbane Anzac Day March organisers and affected licensed venues with a view to developing a workable pilot arrangement.

Yours sincerely,



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