

Liquor Act causes stir

| Kim Kirkman

Margaret River liquor stores are divided on the impact of proposed Sunday trading in regional WA.

A review of WA's Liquor Control Act this week recommended the State Government authorise all liquor stores to trade on Sundays between 10am and 10pm.

Liquorland, owned by Coles, and Woolworths, which opened a BWS store at Margaret River in December, lobbied the review committee to extend Sunday trading to regional WA.

Metropolitan liquor stores have traded on Sundays since 2006 and, the report said, 48 of WA's 203 regional liquor stores already have special permits to trade on Sundays, mainly to support tourism.

But Margaret River's Knights Inn Bottlemart proprietor Graham Downs said the move would not be welcome.

"This is the wine region of Western Australia, 90 per cent of the people that come here come for the wineries," he said.

"What do they want a bottle store open on a Sunday for?"

"This is just more of the big companies looking for more dollars and it's going to force the smaller operators into struggle; finding extra dollars to pay Sunday wages."

Margaret River Hotel manager Stephen Hughes said apart from

on long weekends, Sunday trading would not be worthwhile for the hotel's drive-in bottle shop.

"Most tourists pack up and leave on a Sunday," Mr Hughes said.

Settlers Liquor Store spokeswoman Rachel House said the bottle shop would take advantage of Sunday trading if it became an option but she could not predict whether the change would be profitable.

Karridale, Witchcliffe and Prevelly liquor stores all trade on Sundays already.

In its submission the Liquor Stores Association of WA said in regard to metropolitan liquor stores: "the claim from the hotel sector that Sunday trading would spell the end of their members' business has never eventuated".

The Australian Hotels Association opposed the move.

The proposal was one of 141 recommendations in an independent review of the act submitted to Racing and Gaming Minister Terry Waldron on Tuesday.

Other recommendations included crowd controllers being required to complete Responsible Service of Alcohol training and beer producers to sell liquor between 10am and 10pm.

The Margaret River Wine Industry Association was unavailable for comment.

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