

Understanding the interim alcohol protected area opt-out model: A guide for Communities



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Contact details	Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet
Approved by	Giovina D'Alessandro, Senior Executive Director Alcohol Policy Coordination Unit
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0.1	5/06/2023	Alcohol Policy Coordination Unit	First version
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Acronyms	Full form
AMP	Alcohol Management Plan
CAP	Community Alcohol Plan
DITT	Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade
GRA	General Restricted Area

Glossary

Director of Liquor Licencing	<p>The Director of Liquor Licencing (Director) holds a statutory role with power to make determinations in respect to certain liquor matters under the Liquor Act 2019 (the Liquor Act).</p> <p>As part of the application process to opt-out the Director must consider a Community Alcohol Plan. The Director's decision and reasons are published in a written notice.</p>
The Northern Territory Liquor Commission	<p>The Northern Territory Liquor Commission (the Liquor Commission) was established under the <i>Liquor Commission Act 2018</i>. The Liquor Commission is an independent statutory authority with extensive powers to regulate liquor licensing in the Northern Territory.</p> <p>It is the primary decision-maker in regards to liquor licence applications and in hearing and determining complaints under the Liquor Act.</p>



About this guide

On 16 February 2023, the new interim alcohol protected area (APA) opt-out model came into effect. The changes were informed by the Office of the Central Australia Regional Controller's first report to the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments. The report recommended urgent amendments to the Liquor Act.

The Liquor Act includes ways in which alcohol can be controlled in different places in the NT. The amendments effectively changed interim alcohol protected areas (interim APAs) from an opt-in to an opt-out model.

If your community, homeland or outstation is now an interim APA this guide will help you to consider the following options:

- to have alcohol with no restrictions
- to have alcohol with customised restrictions
- to be a dry community.

The restrictions are time-limited and are set to finish up on 28 February 2027.

A new opt-out model

The opt-out model applies to all NT communities previously subject to alcohol restrictions under the Commonwealth's *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012* legislation.

The model means that all communities will be dry, and it will be against the law to bring in, possess, consume, sell or supply alcohol in these areas unless authorised to do so.

Get the list of interim APA communities.

[Interim APA communities PDF \(545.3 KB\)](#)

[Interim APA communities XLSX \(42.2 KB\)](#)

Communities that were already an interim APA under the old model area are automatically covered by the new opt-out model. They will remain dry and will not need to do anything.

Communities that are a general restricted area (GRA) are also not affected and don't need to do anything.

Get the list of GRAs.

[General restricted areas PDF \(495.3 KB\)](#)

[General restricted areas XLSX \(43.8 KB\)](#)

How to opt-out

A community can decide how it wants alcohol to be sold and consumed in the community.

This can involve:

- if a community has a licensed premises, agreeing on specific days and hours of trade for a licensed premises
- types of alcohol
- locations for selling alcohol
- using a permit system
- a community can also decide that it wants to apply to remove any restrictions on alcohol.

If you want to allow alcohol back in your community, you need to opt-out of the model and stop being an interim APA.

There are two ways a community can stop being an interim APA:

- by having your interim APA status revoked by the Director of Liquor Licensing or
- by applying to become a GRA by the Liquor Commission and gaining approval.

Some models communities may wish to consider include:

Partial liquor restriction	<p>A community can choose to partially restrict the possession and consumption of alcohol.</p> <p>For example, Barunga has a partial restriction of alcohol where beer is permitted. However, all other liquor in the area is prohibited, unless the person has a liquor permit.</p>
Partial GRAs in a Community	<p>A community can also choose to designate a specific area of land to restrict the possession and consumption of alcohol.</p> <p>For example, the Nyirranggulung Mardrulk Ngadberre GRA covers a large portion of land, however excludes the community of Beswick.</p>
Liquor permit system	<p>A liquor permit system can be introduced into a GRA, enabling communities to manage alcohol responsibly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• alcohol volume limits• establishing permit committees for approving, varying and revoking individual permits• breaches and penalties regime• local decision making in the management of permits
Community Clubs	<p>Applying to establish a community club is a separate process and requires an application for a Liquor licence. Further information on this process can be located in the Liquor Act and on the DIIT website.</p>

Developing a community alcohol plan

As a community decides whether to remain dry or bring back alcohol, an important part of the discussion involves considering supply, demand and harm reduction measures to support future alcohol management. The development of a Community Alcohol Plan (CAP) provides an essential framework to consider these elements.

A CAP must:

- be in writing
- specify the area the plan applies to
- how the plan will be implemented and managed by the community
- have the support of at least 60% of adults who live in the community
- comply with the Liquor Act and regulations
- state how long it will be in effect for
- include any other details set out in the Liquor Regulations.

The CAP must also include measures aimed at:

- managing the supply of alcohol
- reducing demand for alcohol in the community
- reducing harm or the risks of harm that may be caused by alcohol
- show how each measure will be measured.

Demonstrating community support for the plan

For communities with a population over 50 people, the CAP must include:

- the total number of adults who are genuine permanent residents of the community, that is, they do not have another place of residence
- the methods used to determine the total number of adults who reside in the community.

For communities with a population of 50 people or less, the CAP must include:

- a list of adults whose principal place of residence is within the community
- a signature from each adult showing their support of the Plan, provided that this represents at least 60% of the eligible cohort

Further information and guidance on CAP requirements can be found in the [Liquor Regulations 2019](#).

Assistance developing a Community Alcohol Plan

Communities who wish to explore these processes and support options should email AAISystems.DoH@nt.gov.au to register their interest.



Get your interim APA status revoked

To get your interim APA status revoked, follow these steps:

Step 1. Develop a community alcohol plan

The CAP must:

- be in writing
- have the support of at least 60% of adults who live in the community
- comply with the Liquor Act and regulations
- state how long it will be in effect for
- include any other details set out in the regulations

Get a copy of the [community alcohol plan template DOCX \(118.0 KB\)](#).

Step 2. Fill in the form

Fill in the [application to revoke an interim alcohol protection area DOCX \(66.9 KB\)](#) and have it signed by the registered land owners of the area.

Step 3. Attach supporting documents

You must provide all of the following with your application:

- detailed description of the area to be declared including a copy of the title or lease
- map of the area showing boundaries
- a copy of the CAP
- evidence that the CAP is supported by at least 60% of adults living in the area
 - you can ask the NT Electoral Commission to do a ballot of the community

Find out more about this service on the [NTEC website](#)

Step 4. Submit your application

Email your application and supporting documents to DirectorLiquorLicensing.DITT@nt.gov.au

After you apply

The Director will review your application and decide whether to revoke the interim APA status.

They will consult with NT Police, NT Health, healthcare providers and any other relevant stakeholders.

The Director may revoke all or part of an interim APA if satisfied that the revocation is in the public interest and not likely to have a significant adverse impact on the Territory community.

If approved, the Director will provide a notice of this decision and publish it on the [DIIT website](#), which will include a copy of your CAP. You can then legally allow alcohol back in your community as per the Director's decision.

The Director must review the CAP for a community within 12 months after the interim APA for the community is revoked.

If you decide later on to operate a community club and want to sell or supply alcohol, you must [apply for a liquor licence](#).

Become a general restricted area

After a community has chosen their customised alcohol restrictions model, they need to apply to become GRA.

As a GRA you can:

1. Allow alcohol in your community under certain conditions; or
2. Choose to ban alcohol completely in your community.

To apply to become a GRA, follow these steps:

Step 1. Fill in the form

Fill in the [GRA application DOCX \(66.8 KB\)](#).

You must include:

- a detailed explanation of the restriction being proposed
- a detailed description of the proposed GRA
- reasons for the proposed restriction
- Where available include a CAP.

Step 2. Submit your application

Email the form to
DirectorLiquorLicensing.DITT@nt.gov.au

After you apply

The Director will:

- notify residents, licensees and any local councils of the restrictions
- consult on the proposed restrictions with residents and councils
- provide a report to the Liquor Commission on submissions received from the consultation.

The Liquor Commission will review the report and decide whether to declare the community a GRA.

If approved, a notice of the decision will be published on the [Liquor Commission website](#).



More information

A range of useful resources can be located on NT.GOV.AU on the 'Changes to alcohol restrictions in NT communities' [page](#) including:

Former Alcohol management plans

If your community previously developed an alcohol management plan (AMP) under the Stronger Futures legislation, you can request a copy by emailing alcoholpolicy@nt.gov.au.

Get the list of communities with AMPs:

- [AMPs PDF \(85.7 KB\)](#)
- [AMPs XLSX \(39.4 KB\)](#)

Factsheets on interim APAs and GRAs

- [Interim APA fact sheet PDF \(175.7 KB\)](#)
- [GRA fact sheet PDF \(152.6 KB\)](#)

Alcohol Policy in the NT

The Northern Territory Government is working in partnership with communities to manage alcohol and reduce alcohol-related harm for all Territorians. The Alcohol Policy in the NT website provides useful information and resources about alcohol policy as well as key alcohol-related indicators in the Territory.

- Link to the [alcohol policy website](#)

Office of Central Australian Regional Controller

On 24 January 2023, the Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Northern Territory Chief Minister Natasha Fyles announced the appointment of a Central Australian Regional Controller to coordinate government's response to the reported levels of alcohol-related harm occurring in Alice Springs. The role will also see the Controller develop and implement a medium to long-term plan for the region, which will include information on how to progress economic development and improve liveability.

- Link to further information on the [Central Australian Regional Response](#)



Key contacts

If you would like more information to help your community decide what to do, contact your nearest local regional office.

Barkly	Phone: 08 8962 4503 Email: barkly.cmc@nt.gov.au
Big Rivers	Phone: 08 8973 8588 Email: cmc.bigrivers@nt.gov.au
Darwin, Palmerston and Litchfield	Phone: 08 8999 3425 Email: cmc.dplexec@nt.gov.au
East Arnhem	Phone: 08 8987 0536 Email: eastarnhem.cmc@nt.gov.au
Top End	Phone: 08 8999 5430 Email: cmc.topend@nt.gov.au
Central Australia	Phone: 08 8951 5781 Email: asp.cmc@nt.gov.au

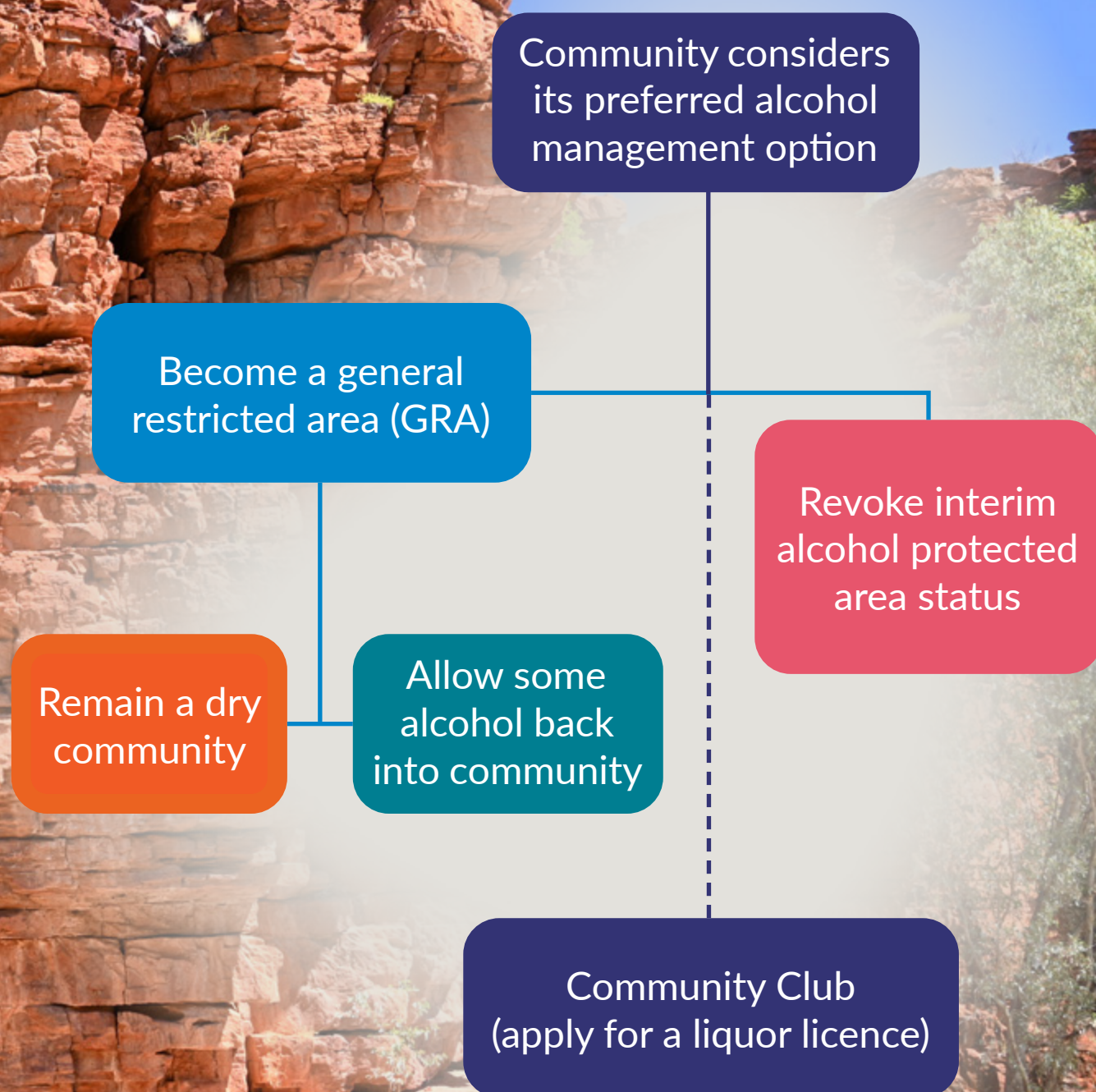
Other contacts

Licensing NT	Phone: 08 8999 1800 Email: ditt.licensingnt@nt.gov.au
Banned Drinker Register	Phone: 1800 237 226 Email: BannedDrinkerRegister.doh@nt.gov.au
NT Electoral Commission	Phone: 1800 698 683 Email: ntec@nt.gov.au

Support

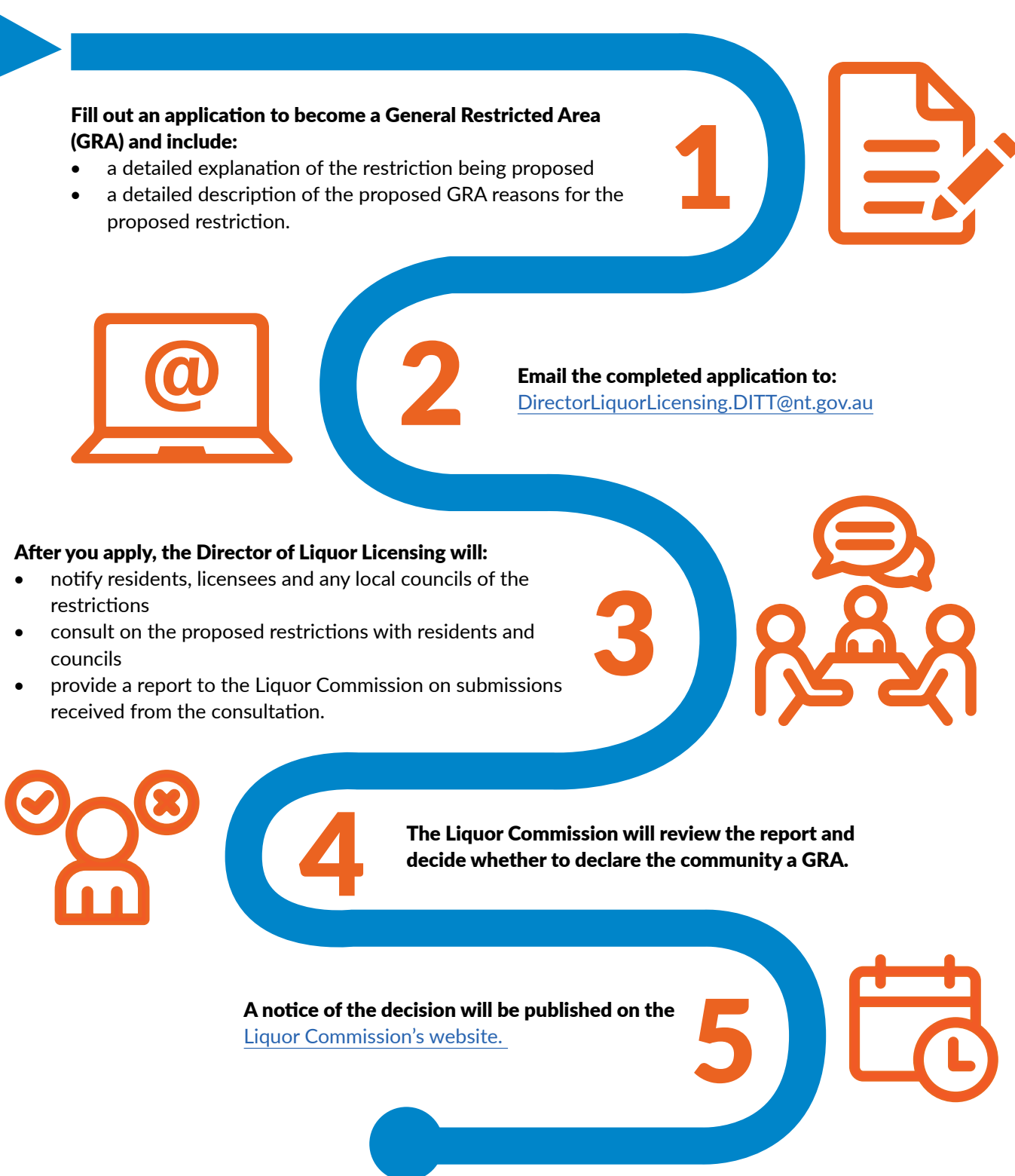
For drug and alcohol services in the NT, call [08 8999 1800](tel:0889991800) or email MHAOD.DOH@nt.gov.au

Overview of the interim opt-out model options



A quick guide to remaining a dry community

Pathway 1. Community decides to remain dry and completely ban alcohol.



Pathway 2. Community decides to have alcohol with customised restrictions.

Community decides on a preferred model, for example:

- partial liquor prohibition
- partial General Restricted Area (GRA) in a Community
- liquor permit system
- operate a community club and sell or supply alcohol (this requires applying for a liquor licence)

1



2

Fill out an application and include:

- a detailed explanation of the restriction being proposed
- where available, include a Community Alcohol Plan
- a detailed description of the proposed GRA reasons for the proposed restriction.

Email your completed application and supporting documents to: DirectorLiquorLicensing.DITT@nt.gov.au

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4

After you apply, the Director of Liquor Licensing will:

- notify residents, licensees and any local councils of the restrictions
- consult on the proposed restrictions with residents and councils
- provide a report to the Liquor Commission on submissions received from the consultation.



The Liquor Commission will review the report and decide whether to declare the community a GRA.

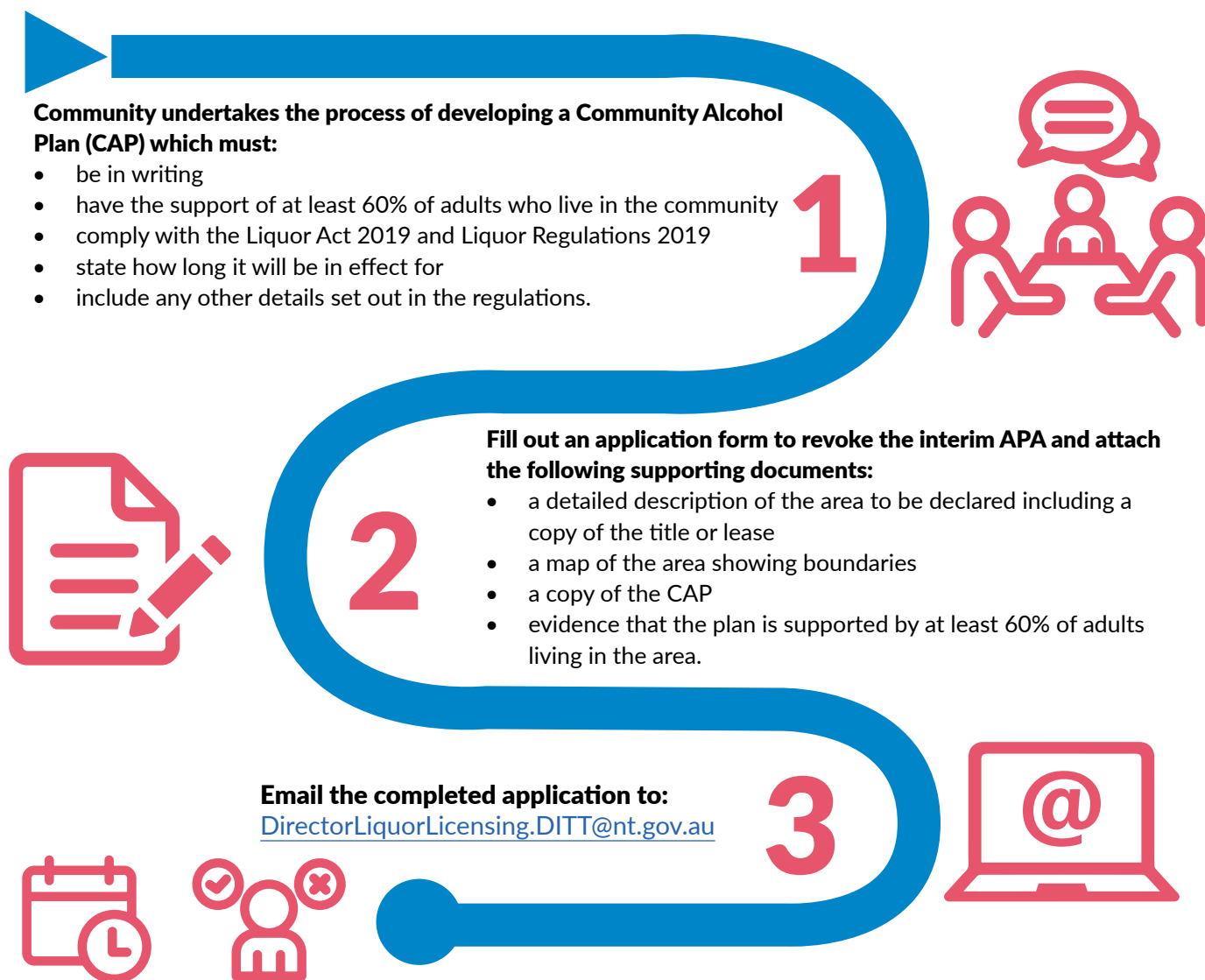
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A notice of the decision will be published on the [Liquor Commission's website](#).

A quick guide to remove interim APA status

Pathway 3. Community decides to have no alcohol restrictions and revoke their interim alcohol protected area (APA) status



After you apply the Director of Liquor Licensing (the Director) will review your application and decide whether to revoke the interim APA status. They will consult with NT Police, NT Health, healthcare providers and any other relevant stakeholders.

The Director may remove all or part of an interim APA if satisfied the revocation is in the public interest and not likely to have a significant impact on the Territory community.

If approved, the Director will provide a notice of this decision and publish it on the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade website, which will include a copy of your CAP. You can then legally allow alcohol back in your community as per the Director's decision. The Director must review the CAP for a community within 12 months after the interim APA for the community is revoked.

If you decide later on to operate a community club and want to sell or supply alcohol, you must apply for a liquor licence.

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