

# Statement of Proposal:

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## Local Alcohol Policy Off-licence Trading Hours

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## INTRODUCTION

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Following feedback Rotorua Lakes Council is seeking further input from the community on changes to its Local Alcohol Policy (LAP) 2025. The purpose of the LAP is to manage the sale, supply and consumption of alcohol in a manner fit for Rotorua. This localised approach is an essential tool in minimising the harm caused by the excessive or inappropriate use of alcohol. The LAP is made under the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 (the Act) which allows local authorities to develop alcohol policies tailored to the needs and context of their communities.

The Rotorua District Licensing Committee (DLC) considers the content of the LAP when deciding on every alcohol licence application received.

The Council would like feedback on changes that relate to how maximum trading hours are applied to off-licences such as supermarkets and bottle stores. Currently, different businesses are subject to different maximum trading hours depending on their individual licence renewal dates, and we would like to understand your views on whether the same maximum times should apply to all off-licenses regardless of when their licence is due to renew.



## BACKGROUND

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Any council can develop its own LAP, in consultation with its local community. A LAP can set rules around the number, location, and opening hours of licensed premises, such as bars, cafes and restaurants, supermarkets and bottle stores. These rules can apply across either the whole city and district or only in identified local areas. Rotorua has had its own LAP since 2019.

When producing a LAP, the Act requires Councils to have regard to:

- a. the objectives and policies of its district plan
- b. the number of licences of each kind held for premises in its district, and the location and opening hours of each of the premises
- c. any areas in which bylaws prohibiting alcohol in public places are in force
- d. the demography of the district's residents
- e. the demography of people who visit the district as tourists or holidaymakers
- f. the overall health indicators of the district's residents; and
- g. the nature and severity of the alcohol-related problems arising in the district.

A district's residents include people who have holiday homes there. The council must also consult with the Police, Alcohol Licensing Inspectors, and the Medical Officers of Health when developing a LAP. The Council has carefully considered these factors when implementing its LAP.



## PROPOSED CHANGES

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The Council would like feedback on ensuring that the 9pm maximum closing time applies to all off-licence holders, not just those renewing their licence

Currently, off-licences such as supermarkets, dairies, and bottle stores, are subject to different maximum trading hours. The maximum trading hours applicable to each premises depend on when their alcohol licence is due for renewal.

From 1st November 2025, existing off-licence premises that have to renew their alcohol licence can only apply for the maximum closing time of 9pm to align with the LAP. However, other premises who were granted an alcohol licence prior this time may have a later maximum closing time of 10:15pm. This time extends to 11pm during the Christmas period.

An off-licence renewal is typically issued for a maximum of three years; therefore, it may not be until 2028 that all off-licence premises are subject to the same maximum close time of 9pm if the LAP remains as it is currently.

It is important to note that not all off-licence premises are guaranteed these maximum trading hours as each application is considered by the DLC on its own merits. This depends on the nature of the business, its trading history and other factors considered by the DLC in deciding whether to grant an application to renew an off licence.

The current difference in maximum trading hours may not fully realise the anticipated harm minimisation benefits despite previously receiving a clear message from the community in support of shorter opening hours. Therefore, we are proposing to amend the wording of the policy to ensure that all off-licence premises are subject to the same maximum trading hours of 9pm, regardless of individual license renewal dates. If approved, the changes will take effect three months after the Policy is adopted.

The Council would like feedback on ensuring that the 9pm maximum closing time applies to all off-licence holders, not just those renewing their licence or whether the reduction in maximum trading hours from 10:15pm to 9pm should only apply during the individual licence renewal process.

**Option 1 (Agree):** I agree that all off-licences should be subject to the maximum trading hours of 21:00 - 3 months following public notification after adoption.

**Option 2 (Disagree):** I disagree and believe that the reduction in maximum trading hours from 22:15 to 21:00 should apply during the renewals process.



HAVE YOUR SAY

## NEXT STEPS

Community Consultation period:

**Submissions open:** Tuesday 6 January 2026

**Submissions close:** Friday 13 February 2026

**Late February 2026** – Hearings and Council Deliberates and decides on the way forward

**Late March 2026** – Council adopts the final LAP

## MAKING A SUBMISSION

We want feedback from as many people in our community as possible. Give us your feedback through whatever channel is the easiest for you:

**Visit our website** [www.rotorualakescouncil.nz](http://www.rotorualakescouncil.nz)

**Write to us:** send your feedback to Rotorua Lakes Council, 1061 Hauppa Street: attention LAP

**Drop off or fill out a hard copy form available at the Council Customer centre or the Library**

**Phone us:** Call us on 07 348 4199 (8am-5pm Monday to Friday)

**Email us:** send your thoughts to [participate@rotorualc.nz](mailto:participate@rotorualc.nz) with the subject line LAP

**Leave a comment on Facebook Posts related to LAP on** [@rotorualakescouncil](https://www.facebook.com/rotorualakescouncil)

You are welcome to share your views in any way that suits you.



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