

# Liquor laws to be tightened

An end to Gauteng's moratorium on liquor licences will be announced in March, economic development MEC Qedani Mahlangu said in Johannesburg on Monday, 27 February 2012.

The exact date of the end of the moratorium was expected to be revealed on Sunday. Liquor laws and trading times were also to be tightened up, she said.

There was "no chance" of liquor sales being allowed outside restricted hours.

"I want people living in the townships next door to shebeens to have a quality of life," she told reporters.

The times of some venues selling alcohol would probably be restricted to after 2pm and then cut short in the evening.

"People living in the suburbs would never put up with what people in the townships have to put with," she said, referring to the noisy and drunken behaviour at shebeens.

The MEC said she would not be pushed into allowing big retail groups to dominate the liquor market at the expense of small bottle stores.

"The small guy employs eight people, the big guy uses existing staff," she said. Keeping and creating jobs in the industry was paramount.

Mahlangu said that in Sandton City, an established liquor store's lease renewal had been refused because a major retailer wanted the sole licence in the centre.

"The big guy will not be allowed to bully the little guy," she said.

Source: Sapa