



Newcastle Review of Liquor conditions 2018 Horton QC

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SUBMISSION BY ALAN SQUIRE INNER CITY RESIDENT NEWCASTLE

I moved into the inner city some 15 years ago from the suburbs and until the "Newcastle Solution" was put in place 10 years ago my wife and I were very apprehensive of going out at night in the city particularly on Friday and Saturday nights, due to the aggressive and violent behaviour of drunken people moving between drinking venues.

In those days drunken people were emerging from their final venues at 5am. I recall heading for a swim at about 5-45 am and being confronted by a very drunk young man who wanted to fight me. Fortunately one of his companions said "Come on he is old, very old leave him be"

Nothing like that has happened to me since the Newcastle Solution was implemented. We have been very comfortable about going out at night enjoying the city including the small bars and going for an early morning swim.

The worst aspect of the previous opening conditions is the well documented evidence from the police and ambulance of the very serious assaults due to abuse of liquor and the proven correlation between serious assaults and liquor venues being open after 12 pm.

There have been deaths arising from liquor related violence.

The vital point is that the Newcastle Solution has reduced violent assaults by 37%. Some 6000 people have not been assaulted due to the operation of the restrictions on opening hours and on serving double shots after 10 pm. I will leave it to the police and hospitals to produce the evidence on this.

The Newcastle Solution has worked in achieving the objective of reducing violence. That is what it is all about. It has worked and must not be weakened.

THE AHA DEMANDS

The AHA is calling for changes so that double shots can be served after 10 pm. Any body drinking double shots at any time is getting drunk quicker than he/she otherwise would and getting drunk would appear to be the objective. The AHA should not be seeking to facilitate this behaviour. The closer the double shot drinker is drinking to closing time the more likely he /she will be likely to be involved in violence either as a perpetrator or a victim.

The AHA is, with respect, only considering increasing profits and this must not be permitted at the expense of people being seriously injured or killed. Venue operators can make good money without encouraging their customers to load up on alcohol in a way which increases the likelihood of violence.

It is a sad day when the hallmark of a mature and sophisticated city is the ability to drink double shots after 10 pm.

NEWCASTLE COUNCIL'S SUBMISSION

- Exemption of venues with records of exemplary behaviour to be exempt from some licensing conditions and be allowed to trade longer than those who don't.
- COMMENT I suggest that the success of the Newcastle Solution is that the conditions apply to all venues without exception. As soon as it is known that a venue is subject to looser conditions,

many drinkers will be attracted to that venue, who are less responsible and the pattern of excessive drunkenness is likely to be re established at the so called venues with exemplary records.

- Night time economy being worth\$1.4 billion per year and employing more than 12000 people and need for balance between controlling alcohol related incidents and stimulating the kind of city life after dark that attracts broader participation and investment in Newcastle.
- COMMENT Those figures reflect the situation now with the current restrictions in place. I suggest these impressive figures are a successful outcome of the introduction of those restrictions. The night time economy is not confined to venues which focus on heavy drinking to the early morning and changes which go towards re establishing that culture so that Newcastle once again develops a reputation for liquor related violence, will not attract broader participation and investment in Newcastle. The opposite would be more more likely. Those who frequent the big liquor outlets have adapted to the Newcastle Solution and we are much closer to becoming a mature and sophisticated city because of it. Small bars and attractive cafes and restaurants have flourished since the Newcastle Solution was implemented.

CONCLUSION

The Newcastle Solution has been a very positive factor in Newcastle progressing towards becoming a mature and sophisticated city because it has successfully significantly reduced violence.

That is what the Newcastle Solution is all about. We must not make changes which could lead to a return to the violent days.

Being able to drink double shots towards closing time is not a good measure of maturity and sophistication.

Listen to the police ,ambulance and hospital people, they know the horrific results of excessive late night /early morning alcohol consumption

Alan Squire

