

Dr Adrian Dunlop and Ms Maryanne Robinson

7th February 2018
Mr Jonathan Horton QC
The Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority
PO Box 8325
PARRAMATTA WESTFIELD NSW 2150

Dear Mr Horton

SUBMISSION TO THE NEWCASTLE CBD LIQUOR LICENCE CONDITIONS REVIEW

This is a submission to the *Newcastle CBD Liquor Licence Conditions Review*. We are residents who live in Newcastle East, having lived here since 2007. We are also professionals who work in Newcastle, as an addiction medicine specialist and a provisional psychologist. We live within 100m of alcohol licenced premises in Newcastle East.

Having relocated from Melbourne to Newcastle, we were instantly aware of the appalling, constantly present alcohol-related violence in the inner-city streets of Newcastle immediately on moving to Newcastle. These events occurred adjacent to hotels currently subject to the 'Newcastle conditions', introduced in 2008. Soon after the introduction of the Newcastle conditions, the effect on a reduction in street level alcohol related violence was obvious. From then, our city was clearly safer for our family to live in.

The assertion suggesting Newcastle is somehow now more 'mature' and will not experience more alcohol related violence if the Newcastle conditions are relaxed flies in the face of a robust body of high quality local, national and international research on safety and alcohol availability. Arguments to relax the Newcastle conditions blatantly ignore these facts. As a community, our local council has failed to engage our community to understand their views on alcohol. The Newcastle council submission regarding the Newcastle conditions has ignored the health and social costs of alcohol related harm in its assessment and has not engaged the views of local experts in the alcohol field.

In truth, we cannot afford the consequences of increased alcohol related harms that will inevitably follow relaxed conditions. Alcohol harms already cost our community too much. Alcohol related deaths and other alcohol related health problems are far greater in the Hunter New England district than elsewhere in NSW¹.

Key facts about alcohol In Australia, worthy of consideration for this review include:

- **One in four** Australians **drink too much** each month²
- **One in three** motor **car crash deaths** are alcohol related³
- **One in five** Australians have experienced **alcohol related verbal abuse** in the past year¹
- **Up to two-thirds** of **family violence assaults** are alcohol related⁴

¹ <http://www.healthstats.nsw.gov.au/>

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017. National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2016: detailed findings. Drug Statistics series no. 31. Cat. no. PHE 214. Canberra: AIHW

³ Devlin A, Fitzharris M. An analysis of single-vehicle fatality crashes in Australia at various Blood Alcohol Concentrations. In Australasian Road Safety Research Policing Education Conference, 2013, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia 2013 Aug.

- Alcohol results in **over 5,500 deaths** per year and **over 155,000 hospital admissions**⁵
- Alcohol is associated with **one in four to one in eight hospital emergency department presentations**^{6,7}
- Alcohol **costs** Australia between **\$A15 billion**⁸ and **\$A35 billion**⁹ each year
- Alcohol brings in a taxation **revenue** of approximately **\$A8.6billion** per year¹⁰
- Current TV regulations **do not protect children** from exposure to alcohol advertising¹¹

As a medical practitioner and psychologist who live and work in Newcastle area, we are a regular witness to the devastating effects of alcohol on our community.

There is robust international evidence that alcohol availability, through hotels and bottle shops, is strongly associated with alcohol related harm and that reductions in alcohol availability results in decreased alcohol related harm¹².

Restrictions in alcohol trading in the fourteen Newcastle hotels has resulted in a successful significant and sustained reduction in alcohol related violence, demonstrated by academic publications from researchers at Newcastle University and elsewhere. The restriction in alcohol availability resulted in an immediate decrease of alcohol related violence of 37%¹³ that has been sustained with a decrease of alcohol related assaults by 21% five years after the introduction of the Newcastle conditions¹⁴.

This evidence is also supported by the latest data from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR). From October 2007 to 2017, there has been a 79% reduction in the non-domestic assaults recorded by police in Newcastle and Newcastle West on Friday and Saturday night¹⁵. Data from

⁴ Laslett, AM., Mugavin, J., Jiang, H., Manton, E., Callinan, S., MacLean, S., & Room, R. (2015). *The hidden harm: Alcohol's impact on children and families*. Canberra: Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education

⁵ Gao C, Ogeil R, Lloyd B. Alcohol's burden of disease in Australia. FARE and VicHealth in collaboration with Turning Point; 2014.

⁶ Egerton-Warburton D, Gosbell A, Wadsworth A, Fatovich DM, Richardson DB. Survey of alcohol-related presentations to Australasian emergency departments. *The Medical Journal of Australia*. 2014 Nov 17;201(10):584-7.

⁷ Butler K, Reeve R, Arora S, Viney R, Goodall S, Gool K, Burns L. The hidden costs of drug and alcohol use in hospital emergency departments. *Drug and alcohol review*. 2016 May 1;35(3):359-66.

⁸ Collins DJ, Lapsley HM. The costs of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug abuse to Australian society in 2004/05. Canberra: Department of Health and Ageing; 2008 Feb.

⁹ Laslett 2010 The Range and Magnitude of Alcohols Harm to Others www.fare.org.au/

¹⁰ Doran CM, Byrnes JM, Cobiac LJ, Vandenberg B, Vos T. Estimated impacts of alternative Australian alcohol taxation structures on consumption, public health and government revenues. *Med J Aust*. 2013 Nov 4;199(9):619-22.

¹¹ O'Brien, K.S., Carr, S., Ferris, J., Room, R., Miller, P., Livingston, M., Kypri, K. and Lynott, D., 2015. Alcohol advertising in sport and non-sport TV in Australia, during children's viewing times. *PLoS one*, 10(8), p.e0134889.

¹² Babor T., Caetano R., Casswell S., Edwards G., Giesbrecht N., Graham K. *et al*. Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity—Research and Public Policy. *Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press*; 2010

¹³ Kypri, K., Jones, C., McElduff, P., & Barker, D.J. (2010). Effects of restricting pub closing times on night-time assaults in an Australian city. *Addiction* 106 (2): 303-310.

¹⁴ Kypri, K., McElduff, P. & Miller, P. (2014). Restrictions in pub closing times and lockouts in Newcastle, Australia five years on. *Drug and Alcohol Review* 33(3): 323–6.

¹⁵ NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. (2017). NSW Recorded Crime Statistics Oct 2000 to Sep 2017: Number of non-domestic violence related assaults recorded by the NSW Police Force in Newcastle and Newcastle West as occurring on Friday and Saturday nights, 10pm to 6am. Reference: jh17-15776

Newcastle Police shows that from March 2008 to July 2015 there has been a 140 per cent increase in on-premise liquor licenses in the Newcastle CBD.

Alcohol is deeply entwined in Australian culture, from the cradle to the grave, and has been since the days of the Rum Corps. Births, baptisms, weddings, birthdays, Christmas, Easter, end of term, end of year, celebrations of academic, work or family achievements, grief, deaths, mourning, success and failure are all marked by alcohol use, often by high risk (binge) alcohol use, in Australian culture. The alcohol industry has no risk of going broke in this country.

It should be noted that the principal proponents of extending the licencing hours and relaxing the 'Newcastle conditions' are proposing this to increase liquor sales and availability, with the aim of increasing profit. As has been demonstrated above, our community bears a significant economic, health and social cost as a consequence. We encourage your review to consider the objectives of the *NSW Liquor Act 1982*, consider the evidence being presented and find that the licensing conditions should not be relaxed.

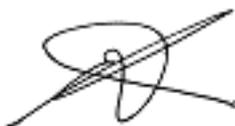
The Review can be confident that any significant loosening of licensing conditions, i.e. increasing the availability of alcoholic beverages in the Newcastle CBD, will create additional alcohol related harm.

The evidence above demonstrate the Newcastle conditions are effective in reducing alcohol related harm and should remain in place.

We strongly support maintaining the Newcastle conditions and believe they should be extended to adjacent suburbs where unacceptable alcohol related violence continues to occur including the Hamilton area/Beaumont Street.

Yours sincerely

Signed by



Dr Adrian Dunlop
MBBS GdipEpiBiostat (Melb) PhD (UNSW) FACHAM FISAM



Ms Maryanne Robinson
BA (Psych) GradDip (Psych) DipShiatsu
