

05/02/2018

Chairperson
Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority
Liquor & Gaming NSW
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Sydney NSW 2001
newcastle.review@ilga.nsw.gov.au

Review of liquor license conditions for 14 Newcastle CBD venues and other matters

Dear Mr Crawford

I wish to make a submission in support of **retaining** existing s104 Newcastle Conditions currently under review.

This review only came to my attention when it was reported in the local Newcastle Herald. My understanding is that the application for review by AHA was somewhat secretive, and other stakeholders were not notified until much later. Fortunately intervention by the NSW Upper House has secured a reasonable extension of time for submissions to 24 January 2018. The review sought by AHA unashamedly serves their own interests, and not the communities or families that have suffered as a result of alcohol-related problems and violence.

As a long-term resident of Newcastle East, living adjacent to the CBD, I have seen first-hand the improvements to our residential and social amenity since the Liquor Administration Board imposed conditions upon the licences attached to alcohol premises. In my own neighbourhood, there has been a reduction in malicious damage and anti-social behaviour from patrons leaving local venues.

This anti-social behavior was previously evidenced by patrons:

- leaving empty drink bottles and glasses on roads, footpaths, window sills and gardens,
- smashing bottles and glasses
- urinating in lanes and on fences
- arguing between patrons/partners/friends
- creating loud noise and shouting when outside
- vomiting on footpaths and fences
- damaging cars and properties in the vicinity of alcohol outlets

I refute AHA claims that restrictions to trading hours are 'outdated or superfluous' as stated by AHA in their proposal to ILGA. There is a clear link between alcohol consumption and violence/malicious damage. It is a tenuous supposition to assume that because of the 9 years of restrictions, the behaviour of patrons has 'changed'. There is no evidence to demonstrate this. Self-regulation within the alcohol industry has failed miserably in the past. No

evidence has been proffered to prove that these failures have been reversed.

Prior to 2008, business profit/compliance models and related responsible service of alcohol (RSA) practices actively contributed to Newcastle having the **worst levels** of alcohol fuelled violence, assaults on police and drink-driving charges in NSW.

If patrons are given the opportunity to drink more and for longer, they will do so. Restricting access to long drinking hours and high alcohol strengths in public places has demonstrated that unacceptable alcohol-related behaviour can be mitigated successfully. Increased danger to public health will undoubtedly result from a return to the previous model.

Newcastle Superintendent John Gralton has stated that evidence showed for every hour that licensed venues served drinks after midnight, assault rates increased by 20 per cent. That fact alone should be enough to ensure that current conditions remain in place. He has gone as far as publicly stating that if anything, the existing conditions should be tightened.

I support local police and emergency service personnel in their call for the s104 Newcastle Conditions to be retained. They give many examples of the improvements to nighttime activities as a direct result of the restrictions currently in place.

Non-domestic assaults in our CBD are still around 9 times the NSW average rate. The level of reported domestic violence in Newcastle is almost twice the NSW average rate.

Licensing laws must protect communities from the adverse effects of alcohol consumption. The s104 Newcastle Conditions should be maintained in their present form or strengthened. Customer convenience and hotel owners must not take precedence over the laws of common sense and proven results. The current proactive reforms (as demonstrated by the s104 Newcastle Conditions) should not be diluted. The price communities pay for negative alcohol-related behaviour is too high, and any dilution or regressive changes to the protections that the s104 Newcastle Conditions provide, must not occur.

Regards,

Karen Read

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