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23 January 2018

REVIEW OF LIQUOR LICENSE CONDITIONS FOR 14 NEWCASTLE CBD VENUES AND OTHER MATTERS

Dear Mr Crawford

I live less than 200 metres from a licensed liquor facility, the Grain Store. Under the Newcastle conditions there have been a few alcohol fuelled incidents but not as many in total number and frequency than under the relaxed liquor licencing provisions nine years ago.

Prior to the Newcastle conditions I had two break-ins to my business and residence , three window breakages, ongoing graffiti vandalism and numerous noisy and unruly physical encounters on the mainly residential streets of Newcastle East. These deemed walking out of my residence dangerous and unwise especially at night.

For the last nine years I have walked to council meetings late at night and met friends for dinner without the dread of being assaulted.

It beggars all belief that the AHA would want residents and small business to be confronted by the unruly and alcohol fuelled crimes of the bygone era of hotel self-regulation and relaxed liquor licencing provisions.

The Newcastle conditions have been good for residents, small business and good for young and often underage drinkers as these have provided the necessary breaks in liquor consumption for the protection of young drinkers from self-harm and other harm. It has also conserved police enforcement and health professional resources.

Emergency care professionals indicate that one in five—that is 20% of all emergency accidents—are alcohol fuelled. Do you want this percentage to increase by relaxing liquor licencing laws and encumber our health care systems? No reasonable person would support such a relaxation of the liquor licencing provisions.

I am also concerned about the reported rate of non-domestic assaults in Newcastle, whilst on the decline is about NINE times the NSW average rate. The level of reported domestic violence in Newcastle is also almost TWICE the NSW average rate. And, the majority of these incidents are alcohol related.

Since there is overwhelming independent, scientific research showing a strong correlation between late drinks times, liquor outlet density and alcohol related problems, I strongly oppose any increase in availability of alcohol (trading hours) and drink strengths for all licensed premises including those with standard trading hours.

And, I support the retention of and advocate for the strengthening of the current package of license conditions commonly referred to as the s104 Newcastle Conditions.

Furthermore, any variation to the Newcastle conditions needs to be undertaken in an open and transparent manner and under the same legal provisions by which they originated.

As Newcastle East resident and business owner I oppose any relaxation of the Newcastle conditions that have been successful in reducing alcohol related anti-social behaviours and youth crimes and contributed towards a more livable and convivial inner city.

Yours faithfully

Maria Charlton

Resident and business owner of MAP Marketing

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