



NSW Police Force

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Mr Jonathon Horton QC
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Liquor & Gaming
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D/2017/976383

Dear Mr Horton,

I refer to your Review of Newcastle Central Business District (CBD) Liquor Licence Conditions and provide the following submission.

The NSW Police Force is opposed to any changes to the special licensing conditions operating in the Newcastle CBD and surrounding areas, on the basis that changes will lead to increases in alcohol-related violence.

In 2009, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) found that the introduction of special licensing conditions in Newcastle CBD (from 2008) provided 'strong evidence that the restricted availability of alcohol reduced the incidence of assault' (Crime and Justice Bulletin Number 137).

The local police experience in Newcastle is that the introduction of special licencing conditions, imposed across a geographical area, has significantly reduced alcohol-related assault. Police data suggests that since March 2008 there has been a 79 per cent reduction in 'violent incidents', including assault, robbery and sexual offences, in and around 14 licensed venues in Newcastle and an 81 per cent reduction in alcohol-related non-DV assaults between midnight and 4am in the Newcastle CBD.

As you are aware, the NSW Police Force is committed to reducing all forms of violence across the State, including alcohol-related violence. Nearly a decade on from the introduction of the special licensing conditions in Newcastle, the successes of this scheme, in reducing alcohol-related violence and other harms, are recognised nationally and internationally. Any watering down of the conditions will inevitably result in a significant increase in the number of assault victims.

I understand that in conducting your Review, you will consider contemporary research from BOCSAR, as well as the impact of the legislative and regulatory changes resulting from the 'Review of Amendments to the Liquor Act 2007' (the Callinan Review). Notably, clause 53S of the Liquor Regulation 2008 now allows for live entertainment venues in the Kings Cross and Sydney CBD entertainment precincts to apply for an exemption from lock-out and liquor sales restrictions.

As already indicated, the NSW Police is opposed to any changes to the special licensing conditions operating in the Newcastle CBD, including the availability of exemptions.