

Resident Submission: Liquor Law Review

JA James Alexander [REDACTED]

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To: Liquor Law Review; ↓

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The Hon. Ian Callinan AC QC

Dear Sir,

As a former King Cross nightclub promoter, resident and young technology-industry professional who lives and works inside the City of Sydney council areas I would like make the following submission for the Liquor Law Review.

Having grown up in Sydney, attended and performed at 'late-night' DJ gigs and have supported the local electronic music industry I believe the new laws have seriously damaged the reputation of the city, the ability do business in the industry and the night-life entertainment options of the city.

In summary, I believe the 1.30am lock-outs and 3am cease of alcohol sales are ineffective and damaging and quite clearly were rushed through state parliament without proper debate or consultation (see <http://surelynot.live/2016/02/18/a-crown-of-thorns/>). Both laws unfairly punishes small businesses in the high-time economy which includes organisers of late-night music gigs (see below) and entertainment events and lacks evidence that it is a effective policy to curb alcohol-caused night time violence.

I also believe the 10pm take-away liquor ban to be unnecessarily damaging to small businesses owners and the reputation of the city and legislated without any evidence.

Mis-use of statistics, over-reaction and the need for better data and reporting from hospitals and police.

I believe the lock-out law supporters and government have mis-represented the situation to the extent which exaggerates alcohol-caused violence. We know Sydney is one of the safest cities in the world but in particular I would like to highlight (from Matt Barrie's own submission):

- When one considers the actual hours affected by the lockout (1am - 4am, as some venues reopen at 5am), the total difference is approximately 25 patients (classed with serious injuries) over an entire year post lock-outs but its impossible to say the causes of those injuries and wether they were alcohol-cased or just related or in a venue.
- There were more alcohol-related injuries at 6pm, 7pm, 9pm, 11pm and midnight after the lockouts

- Exaggeration and confusion of 'alcohol-caused' and 'alcohol-related' and separation of 'venue-related' incidents is needed for example, "a lady having a glass of champagne at dinner at home, who subsequently falls down a staircase after tripping on a cat would be included in these statistics."
- I believe the method in which this data has been collected and analysed for this paper is spurious, to say the least
- See more: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/death-sydneys-nightlife-economic-collapse-its-night-time-matt-barrie>

Advocacy for late-night events

There is nothing wrong with post 1am late night entertainment and I believe it increases the cultural attractiveness and entertainment options of a city, although the rhetoric from senior pro-lockout supporters and politicians suggest the opposite.

For cities such a Sydney, with a growing live-music sectors such as electronica, the typical DJ event will start between 2-4am as opposed to traditional live music events that used to start at 8pm in previous decades.

Sydney needs policy that encourages more late night events, including event-diversification, and with up to 80% less foot traffic in some areas (See City of Sydney's Late Night Management areas Research: Phase 4) it becomes uneconomical to operate any venues or events in the city.

In particular:

- 19 per cent decline in attendances across all live venues
- 15 per cent fall in the amount venues spent on live performers, putting unnecessary pressure on up-and-coming artists
- (see <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/sydney-lockout-laws-bite-as-live-music-ticket-sales-crash-20160218-gmxgot.html#ixzz44p7fJfMq>)

Targeting Minority Groups

As a queer-identifying man and frequenter of Oxford Street, the lock-out laws have made a huge impact, destroying the number and quality of LGBTB-focussed events and venues. This is extremely detrimental. They have also placed huge pressure on small tour managers of up-and-coming artists, e.g. small-scale promoters, and small-bar operators.

Lock-outs have highlighted our under-represented our 'night-life entrepreneurs' and I believe as part of the review better representation and consultation methods should be enacted.

Better Representation

I believe the NSW should create a new position, 'Night-time Mayor' to manage and represent night-life entrepreneurs, nightclub promoters, night-time artists and small businesses. Managing issues on nightlife diversity, safety and licensing should not be left to the inexperienced or uninformed and is itself and complicated task.

Better Transport, Licensing and Planning – already recommended by City of Sydney

We do not need blanket laws, we need well-researched, evidence-based, flexible response using transport, planning, licensing and police. I believe the proposals already presented by City of Sydney should be considered (see <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/its-time-we-grew-up-and-ditched-the-one-size-fits-all-lockout-20160403-gnx1ml.html#ixzz44pDZj4Ea>).

Sincerely,
James Alexander

