

Lock Out Law - review submission

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To: Liquor Law Review; 

2:42 PM

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To the Hon Ian Callinan,

I would like to make a submission regarding the **review of the lockout laws that are in place in the Sydney CBD and Kings Cross** but laws that subsequently affect a huge section of the community outside of this geographic boundary.

The Sydney that I knew, once had a great night life and downtown culture. For music lovers young and old, we could talk proudly of the Sydney scene that had an identity, a culture, a heartbeat, a place where we could take friends from overseas out for a night, to be left with lifetime memories. Once the sun went down the city grew a pulse, personalities became alive, friends got the chance meet up in great venues that proudly supported a generation of great music, artists and DJ's and were places that international tourists, backpackers and locals alike could dance the night away. Most clubs had a closing at 3am, some 6am in distinctly late night zoned areas had a fantastic mix of people, all there because they felt they were welcome to enjoy themselves and be safe in doing so. After midnight the city was buzzing. I love the fact that this attracted a huge diversity of people, but I lamented that the culture of fun also attracted its fair share of gutter trash.

Living in [REDACTED], the city is my backyard, my front yard, my kitchen and my school. Unfortunately my back yard was starting to be abused by people who had no ownership, no care for what they left behind. Drunken groups of anti-social men, trashy clubs focussing on even trashier people. Fights were common place amongst people who I knew were not local- or anywhere near being local. Yeah that's fine, people wanted a late night trading precinct and apparently Kings Cross was the place to go – if you lived within 100kms of Sydney. When people went out, unfortunately they made their best effort at going too hard. I understand, different strokes for different folks, I get it.... What I didn't appreciate, was that this came to a head when the aforementioned westie trash unleashed their small man syndrome on two poor young men.

My backyard became the focus of Australia's knee jerk response to the rising culture of accepted commercialised violence. Two innocent 18year olds died as result of random violence (was it?) in the late night district of Kings Cross. Barry O'Farrell's political response to these barbaric acts was not to find the cause of the violence, but to cut the locality of where it occurred, business model off at the knees in order to halt any chance of a repeat of these acts.

Yes, it has had the resulting effect of dramatically reducing St Vincent's emergency department alcohol-related. I would argue that these could easily be labelled bogan-related injuries.

Groups of men with the sole purpose of intimidating other patrons in the area became the norm. The fun was being

sucked out – by these parties, but how did government respond? **By closing down the precinct.**

What action was taken by the then Premier Barry O'Farrell to target these people, who were undoubtedly the cause of the problem. **Nothing.**

What referral by expert urban strategists was employed to support a healthy and safe night-time economy. **None**

Who were the key protagonists in dictating legislation to govern Sydney's night-time economy. **The Police**

It was police local area commanders who dictated the terms of what they wanted to achieve. By targeted the only indicator of success - KPI's in alcohol related assaults, this without a doubt directly affected their effectiveness commanders in doing their job without the slightest hint of regard for the what else could be affected by this. These commanders understandably didn't want a repeat of young men life being tragically cut short, so they did what they did best. The band-aid solution to violence has worked. But the wound is festering and the culture and the vital limb of City Sydney is rapidly dying.

I implore the Premier Mike Baird, to look to evidence based response to managing night-time precincts, to support venues, live music, a late night food culture, provide transport services, friendly police and security. The lockouts have murdered the night-time economy and patriotic allegiance that many of us have long supported for this city. We now talk of the city as an embarrassment, our colleagues from overseas are heading back to Europe and America, saying the city is dead after dark.

I am absolutely disgusted that the only place exempt and thriving are the casinos, which are the most violent venues of them all (why?).

There's a balance a strategy to combat violence. Just putting the city into lock-down isn't it. No expert would ever suggest it was.

My suggestions I feel that would provide a safe and supportive framework for Sydney's late night economy would be –

- The development of a number of smaller late night precincts across the city – for locals to call their own
- Each with their support of
 - High quality food trucks, water and community services
 - Effective transport to and from the late night hubs
 - Police, security and liason officers providing information , assistance
 - A piazza or congregational public space, that offers music, security, food, water and alcohol-free open-air quiet time away from venues- and close to transport**
 - Minimisation of super-clubs, preferring smaller venues with alfresco opportunities
 - Dedicated and extensively monitored CCTV network across the precinct
- Police to provide support – not intimidation to venues
- Reintroduce late night trading venues which attract responsible patrons
- Support underground music and harm minimisation strategies
- Target violence of TV – namely MMA, UFC promotions which harbour acceptable extreme violence
- Look at evidence base urban strategies used across the world that support a night-time economy
- Introduce a night-time mayor for the city

I know you will receive a number of positive response to the lockout- namely by those supporting the reduction in violence. I am also one of them. Violence is the enemy here, the Government has to step up and provide action to

remedy this. I ask you to please take my suggestions in my submission into consideration as part of your review. I love this city, I want my children to enjoy what I did. Please provide a safe a supportive place for them to do this.

Regards

Robbie Allen

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