

# Independent Review of the Impact of Liquor Law Reforms - Submission

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To:Liquor Law Review <liquorlawreview@justice.nsw.gov.au>;

To Hon Ian Callinan AC,

I am writing in regards to the **Independent Review of the Impact of Liquor Law Reforms**.

A bit about me... I am an Australian born 40 year old creative professional living in Glebe, NSW 2037. I work hard, pay a mortgage and taxes, and do my best to be a positive, respectful and tolerant member of our society. I'm also a proud gay man, partnered for 10 years... but all of that shouldn't matter.

I have also produced numerous shows, events and experiences at licensed venues over the last 15 years.

Firstly, I believe that 'happy and free people aren't violent'. I travel the world regularly and the more individual freedoms, diversity and respect I encounter, the happier and more peaceful the community/culture. It is evident here however that those freedoms are dramatically eroding in Australia, and perhaps our violence and frustration in our community seemingly increasing as a result.

Increasingly of late I've become concerned with the over regulation of our nation, and in particular unjust and poorly thought through 'harm minimisation' policies introduced by the NSW State Government.

Often these policies are rushed through in reaction to biased, fear based, sensationalised media reporting all designed as clickbait generating news media profits. These policies often result in wide reaching impacts to our individual freedoms, business enterprise, creativity, expression and tolerance... affecting my personal choice, business enterprise, my creative expression and impacting on my community.

## **Unjust Lockouts**

I'm a proud Sydneysider who has been enjoying our nightlife in all shapes and forms for over two decades. I love our diverse people, cultures and lifestyles... but lately, that's all been muted with the unfair policies introduced by the NSW State Government. Our individual freedoms have been restrained to suit the conservative ideals of those in power.

I completely endorse zero tolerance to violence and ensuring those accountable face the full extent of the law, but I oppose sweeping legislation that restricts the freedoms and happiness of the well behaved majority.

For the record, I don't drink that much, or that often... but if I'm out celebrating something, I would hope the government could give me the benefit of the doubt to behave, rather than treat me like an untrusted criminal.

Stopping everyone from being able to enjoy themselves at a time they choose because of the actions of 0.00001% of the population is crazy. As is stopping people from grabbing a bottle of wine for a late dinner for the actions of 0.00001% of the population. Imagine if we applied that principle to other areas of health and wellbeing prevention, it's insane. It's like a principal disciplining a whole school for one persons actions... no matter how well behaved, responsible and unconnected to the incident the others were. It's just unfair and unjust. That's the feeling the NSW Government has created. That is what both I and a large proportion of my community are feeling in Sydney at the moment. Going out to enjoy an event or an experience that someone has created is that much more unattractive as a result. I clearly see the impact of it with so many venues closing, so many friends losing work and the soul of our

city dying

I've also produced many events myself at licensed venues. The over regulation and constant changes to policy have made the whole concept of expressing my creativity through events unattractive. Trying to create an experience that is something different is nearly impossible as the conservatives are squeezing out our freedoms to suit their very limited ideals of what is 'right' or 'appropriate' to them. Unfortunately, this seems to be a rather sad Casino experience, or a venue tanked with tax generating, and life damaging poker machines.

These laws restrict freedoms, creativity, diversity and free enterprise (again, unless you are ironically in the Casino business).

Through clever media management and representation of biased figures, the government are unjustly demonising and restricting the freedoms of those who they deem not within their ideals (hours of work, choice of entertainment, taste in music and so on).

I do not understand how a free, diverse, apparently creative and entrepreneurial country like ours could ever have ended up with such laws in place, and how our police (both licensing and state police) continue to increase control and power over our rights and freedoms.

### **NSW Lockout & Alcohol Restriction Laws**

- Being locked out of all licensed venues after 1.30am (except the Casino!).
- Not being able to buy a bottle of wine after 10pm (some people don't get home from work before 10pm).
- Not being able to buy a drink of your choice after midnight (I don't drink beer, I rarely drink wine, does liking cocktails make me a criminal?).

### **Unnecessary police presence where people are happy or not hurting anyone.**

- Police turning up in force at peaceful places or events in large numbers just to intimidate crowds.
- Unjust and ineffective searches by NSW Police and their Drug Detection Dogs.

### **Police and Licensing Police creating new powers or using poor excuses to shut down anything outside of the NSW governments limited moral compass;**

- Licensing police suddenly preventing the long running 24 hour licensed Sly Fox in Enmore, from having amplified music after 3am, even though they have had no complaints and have been operating as such for over 20 years.
- Reports of Police shutting down well behaved private parties with NO noise complaints and instead using the excuse 'not enough fire exits'.

The above laws and actions have greatly impacted upon my personal choices, my community and I believe our standing as a nation. When tourists arrive, they are gobsmacked with the overregulation and policies... and they are taking that message home. There is no doubt that these laws are damaging Sydney's reputation internationally and will have a significant impact on tourism – if it is not already doing so.

Additionally, as a result of these policies and laws, my perceptions of those who create/enforce them has also been damaged, including our elected government and the NSW Police Force (the only 'Force' in the nation). It seems that increasingly all Sydneysiders are not trusted and punished unjustly.

I hope this email proves useful in some way, and I thank you for taking the time to read it.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you would like me to elaborate on any issues.

I would like my identity to remain confidential

Kind regards



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