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Formal submission. Nick Clapham

NC

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To: Liquor Law Review; ▾

Sun 3/04

Inbox

I understand you have many submissions to read and process, so I will present mine in point form under two categories: what is wrong with Sydney's nightlife and what can be done to improve it.

What is wrong with Sydney's nightlife

1. The state government intimidates venues to comply with strict responsible service of alcohol laws. Venue operators are so worried about serving intoxicated customers, and the fines they may receive, they act pre-emptively and remove or refuse entry to patrons. Its almost impossible for groups of men to enter pubs after 9pm. Well behaved patrons are kicked out of venues, not because they are drunk, but because they appear to be intoxicated, when in fact they are simply enjoying themselves.
2. The RSA laws place too much responsibility on the venue and not the actions of the individual. Tourists are being asked to leave pubs or clubs or are being refused entry because they appear to be overtly happy (a sign of intoxication under RSA guidelines). This not only causes confusion, but damages Sydney's reputation as a safe, fun and exciting international city.
3. The state government places too much emphasis on intoxication, when the real threat to the safety of others is violence. Security and the government should channel their efforts into managing violent behaviour, and not patrons who like to have a few drinks and enjoy the company of others.
4. The lockouts. Why punish the overwhelming majority of late night revellers and businesses because a small group of men commit acts of anti social behaviour or violence.

How to improve Sydney's nightlife

1. Re-define the RSA laws. The definitions of intoxication are too strict and actually punish those who are simply having fun. Singing to music, dancing in a wild way or perhaps swaying a bit because you have a few too many beers is behaviour we should celebrate and not condemn. Have you been to a German beer hall? Or danced the night away in a wile nightclub in London? People are enjoying themselves and loosing up, fueled by alcohol, after a hard week at the office. Yes, lets eject patrons who can't walk straight or are falling over, or are knocking over a table, but lets not punish those who are having fun.

2. Heavy fines should be issued and electronic tagging introduced for any patron who commits an act of violence or destroys property while being intoxicated. If such acts are carried out, the perpetrator will face a 3-month ban from Kings Cross or the City and will wear a bracelet on their ankle. If they enter these zones after 8pm, they will be arrested and face jail time. If serious injury is inflicted on others due to intoxication, mandatory jail sentences will be imposed. Remember, it's the responsibility of the individual and not the venue to act responsibly while drinking. Police the offender and not the revellers.

3. Abolish the lockouts and restore Sydney as a fun, safe 24 hour sun soaked metropolis.