

Dear Sir,

I am writing to voice my support for Matt Barrie's submission to this review. The reason for my support is not that I necessarily disagree with the lockout laws. It is that I agree with **his approach** to assessing the impact of these laws - that is, that **these laws should be subject to rigorous analysis in order to determine if they are performing their intended function**.

In medicine, in psychology, in education, the standard is that any substantial change to current practice must be evidence-based. Public policy should be no different. Especially in this case, where the public policy in question is essentially a medical intervention, aimed at saving lives and preventing injuries.

There has been much debate about the purported impact of these lockout laws, but the debate has not been well-supported by analysis of evidence. Mr Barrie provided numerous examples in his submission of apparent errors and statistical manipulation being performed. What strikes me, though, is that these laws were apparently implemented without a plan in place to assess their success or failure. Regardless of whether or not this is the norm in public policy, I would have thought that implementing the same laws which have been discarded by other jurisdictions (eg. the city of Melbourne) should have been done with careful consideration as to how the success or failure of the policy was going to be measured.

However, given where we are - 2 years after implementation of the laws - we obviously cannot go back and implement a scheme to measure the success or failure of these laws. We therefore must make the best of the data we have available, which I believe has been adequately summarised in Mr Barrie's submission. Of course, his conclusions should not be taken at face-value. His analysis should be reviewed and an independent assessment of the data should be performed - I have no doubt that your review will do just that.

Any public policy obviously requires weighing up the costs against the benefits. We wear seatbelts in cars, even though they cause inconvenience, because the inconvenience is outweighed by the lives saved. We don't ban backyard pools, even though doing so would save lives, because we value the liberty of allowing swimming pools to a greater extent.

Mr Barrie's analysis concludes that "the lockout laws must certainly be a failure given the difference in high injury alcohol related admissions is about one patient every two weeks". But this only gives one side of the story - the benefits. Maybe this is sufficient to outweigh the costs? Unfortunately, we are missing data here too. We don't know the cost to the economy (let alone the 'cost' of restricting personal liberties) because, as Mr Barrie asserts, the NSW Audit Office "had no plans to" measure the effect of the laws on the economy.

In this case, if the lockout laws are having their intended effect - saving lives and preventing injuries - maybe we will be prepared to accept the restrictions on liberties required by these laws. But what we are not prepared to accept is a restriction on liberties without the

associated benefits - not to mention the additional economic costs borne by businesses in the affected areas.

If your review can assess, analyse and summarise the benefits and costs of these laws, that would go a long way towards achieving consensus on the question of whether they are necessary.

Yours sincerely,
Yasmin Clarke