


Liquor Law Review

RC

Rhys Coles

To: Liquor Law Review; 



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The Hon. Ian Callinan AC QC

Dear Sir,

I am writing in to express my opinion on Sydney's draconian lock out laws and their inception. I am in a unique position in that I may not share the whole opinion of the other anti-lockout law protesters that I have previously marched with and so I thought that my opinion on the matter may be of some interest.

I moved to Sydney from the UK. I brought my experience here from my home country and now work in a high paid role in an inner-city advertising firm. I have a long term partner and a dog, and am very much rooted to Sydney. However, in the wake of the lockout laws, and other draconian laws and measures being passed by NSW government (best not mentioned here but at another review, another time) I am finding my love for the city dwindling, and dwindling fast.

I do not view the situation through rose tinted glasses. I do not share the memories of some of my friends, of a Kings Cross that was the start of their clubbing years, of late nights in seedy bars and fun times had. When I first arrived in Sydney I did not like the Cross at all, I thought it was dirty and seedy, but not violent. Not overly violent, not "at risk of spiralling out of control" as quoted from Mr Baird. But not my cup of tea. However, in the wake of measures brought in to purportedly combat issues in the cross and CBD, I find myself directly affected by a situation I did not contribute to, and should have no duty to manage. I am here to defend the right to free enterprise and commerce, the combating of corruption and cry foul the incestuous and abhorrent relationships between the Casinos and our policy makers.

On the rare occasion that I venture out (as these days the venues are few and far between) I am now met with empty streets and venues and security staff so paranoid of persecution from police and licensing that they treat their customers with suspicion and hostility. The majority of times I attend a venue I have to dance around the farce that is answering where I have been, what I have drank, whether I ate, if I drank with dinner or after and other unnecessary and invasive questions to ascertain if I have drank what they deem to be too much. This despite having never caused trouble, never been arrested or questioned by police, or the victim or perpetrator of a crime be it violent or other, and the darkest black mark on my record being a single speeding ticket. I have even been turned away from venues when stone sober, having consumed a tipples of alcohol, on the basis that I am exhibiting signs of intoxication (by laughing in the street with a friend on his birthday). The venues have been targeted as

responsible for an issue so complex and far reaching that they are too paranoid to work with supposedly, trying to avoid any fallback

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on the venue where they are at a higher risk of injury and trouble than if they had stayed inside. Violence is not decreasing, it is increasing per capita in the areas most affected like the Cross, and so the fundamental reason for the Lockout Laws has failed in its mission.

We have chosen to persecute the majority for the actions of a few, and the measures put in place do not and have not even combated the original issues and certainly never would have. The deaths that sparked this absolute nonsense did not fall within the lockout times.

We need to be honest, and candid, when we look at the real reason these laws were introduced, why the Star Casino and the new Crown Casino remain exempt from the laws and the corruption that that in its self would suggest.

Ultimately, these laws have achieved nothing but the wholesale destruction of small businesses, venues, other non related venues like longstanding newsagents and takeaway businesses that profit from the night economy. They have funnelled late night revellers to the casinos, curiously exempt from the laws and helped to spur on the country's growing and serious gambling addiction. They have left Sydney a laughing stock.

As a result of this, I am a resident of Sydney, a tax-paying city worker, strongly considering my ties with this country and its backwards ways. I am sure I am only one of thousands of people bored of going to bed, bored of the interference of pious politicians and tired of the money of big business dictating our civil liberties. I am on the verge of leaving this city and its sleepy suburbs to seek a more liberal life on more progressive shores. Now if the 15,000 people who marched with me at Keep Sydney Open feel the same way, and if they happen to pay the same amount of tax a year that I currently pay, then that's another very long number to add to the list of losses currently (rather oddly) not being monitored by the NSW Audit Office. Losses that will continue to increase our dependence on big business to pay our bills each month, to the point that they will begin to just sign the policies themselves, instead of influencing them by signing cheques.

I understand I am able to reference sources in this submission, so I would like to say that I agree with the two posts below and their findings, written by esteemed businessman Matt Barrie. His take on the lockout laws should be paid heed. It is time we repealed these laws and allowed the citizens of this country the civil liberty they deserve. Then we can start to work on the wider and more complex issues of why young Australian men feel like punching each other in the first place, not stopping me from sipping on a Boulevardier in the company of my girlfriend on a weekend because it's past my government ordered bedtime.

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/death-sydneys-nightlife-economic-collapse-its-night-time-matt-barrie>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/would-last-person-sydney-please-turn-lights-out-matt-barrie>

Regards,

Rhys Coles,
Grounded since 2014

