

Submission - Benjamin Collins

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

Hello,

I am writing this submission as a private citizen who is opposed to the New South Wales state government's so-called "lock-out laws".

To do this properly, I would like to tell you a little about myself, so that you can try to understand my point of view. I am twenty-six years old. I work as a journalist for a major international news organisation. I was born in Sydney and have lived here for most of my life. I don't like going out to bars or clubs late at night, and I wouldn't go to Kings Cross of a weekend if you paid me. Despite this, I cannot stand these laws, and, in the strongest possible terms, I would like them to be completely abolished.

I very well know that living in a "free" society requires a sacrifice of personal liberty. True "freedom" - or the ability to do whatever you want - would be a situation from a dystopian fever dream. Even the staunchest classical liberal accepts this. But it's a balancing act. With these laws the NSW government has overloaded the scales. I am very concerned about the precedent this has set, and worried elected representatives will allow even more personal liberties to be stripped from the majority of law-abiding citizens in a knee-jerk attempt to kill negative media attention, which is exactly how these 'lock-out laws' came to be.

The New South Wales government has no right to tell people when and where they can buy a legal product, or patronise a legal business. I hope you won't take that as a unsubstantiated opinion. I'm writing this because the politicians with the power to repeal these laws refuse to do so even though they are extremely unpopular. The only job of premier Mike Baird and all the other MPs and senators is to enact the will of their electorate. I don't think they are, and I am in the majority. That is a good enough reason to scrap these laws as any. In my opinion it's on par with statistics that clearly show these laws have not had the effect Mr Baird claims they have, and statistics that show many people have been driven out of business.

I also take particular issue with police, doctors and public health workers who are vocally supporting these laws. The police especially are paid by the public to deal with crime, and we should not be enacting laws, or keeping bad ones just because they think it makes their jobs easier.

Let's talk realpolitik: It's quite obvious it would be politically difficult for the government to do away with these laws completely. This submission argues that the most sensible option would be to keep the existing lock out provisions, but totally scrap the 10pm cut-off for purchasing alcohol from a bottle-shop. This is the most egregious assault on the freedom of law abiding citizens who have nothing to do with the suggested issue of 'alcohol-fueled violence'. It's very obvious to everyone with half a brain that the government has no evidence to show this particular aspect of the legislation has any affect on violence at all. To put it quite plainly, anyone who's going to hit an innocent bystander is already drunk by 10pm, and they're certainly not impulse buying a bottle of legal (and highly taxed) chardonnay.

Ben Collins,

Email sent using Optus Webmail