



Submission to Review

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To: Liquor Law Review; ▾



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Inbox

Hon. Ian Callinan AC QC

I am writing to contribute my experience to the review process, and to briefly outline the negative impact this hastily enacted legislation has had upon myself, a significant portion of my friends, and more broadly - to the city I was once proud to call home.

Since the implementation of the restrictions under review, I have witnessed the decimation of Sydney's nightlife, particularly in the area that I have worked for almost the last 20 years - Oxford St, Darlinghurst. At the time of their introduction, I was employed as the General Manager of The Exchange Hotel/ Q Bar, a multi-venue institution in the Sydney scene. By August 2015, after struggling along as best we could, we finally shuttered for ever, and with that I lost a job a love, and there were upwards of 50 people in the same position as me - from bar/security staff, through to DJ's and Promoters. This was as a direct consequence of the actions of an extremely small minority of the population.

There wasn't anyone I spoke to within the industry that didn't support the objectives of reducing alcohol related harm, but there were a million steps that could have been taken between where we started, and where we ended up. As you're aware, the statistics already demonstrated a decline in violent incidences over the previous ten years, and we were still to assess the effectiveness of the Kings Cross experiment - rolling this program out across the city may have been sufficient to achieve the same outcome. I would also say that it was unfair to target venues who operated responsibly - I don't understand why the Police don't target organizations who weren't upholding their RSA obligations. The mechanisms all existed to address the issues but they weren't being utilized effectively.

It's not an overstatement for me to say that I despair of the pathetic, over-Policed "nanny state" city that Sydney has become. It isn't for myself - I've now forged a career in a new industry, and being well and truly middle-aged, I'm not out and about every weekend - however, I recognize the developmental importance that this nighttime playground provides. I'm aware that some people do experience some harm within it, but the vast mass don't, and it is for this deprived majority that I felt compelled to make this submission.

Kind regards
Paul Dignam