

Liquor Law Review Submission
To: The Hon. Ian Callinan AC
Re: NSW Liquor Law Review 2016
Via: liquorlawreview@justice.nsw.gov.au
4 April 2014

Dear Sir,

We, the undersigned, welcome the opportunity comment on the Liquor Law Review.

Summary

We are against the 1.30am lock-out and 3am cease alcohol sales measures due to the detrimental effects they have on business; in particular upon the fledgling startup sector, which plays an increasingly vital role in the NSW economy.

We believe the laws should be repealed and Sydney should evolve into a 24-hour city as other leading global cities are doing.

Rationale against the 1.30am lock out and 3am cease alcohol sales measures

For Sydney to attract international business investment, it must compete with other global cities. Part of the investment equation is the culture of the city — is it vibrant, is it open for business? The lockout laws are anti-business. An international business person is currently unable to order a Scotch on the Rocks at a CBD hotel bar after their late night conference call. This is sending a signal that Sydney is not open for business. The signal it sends to startups, which primarily comprise of younger people, is even worse. It indicates a lack of interest or understanding in growing a startup ecosystem.

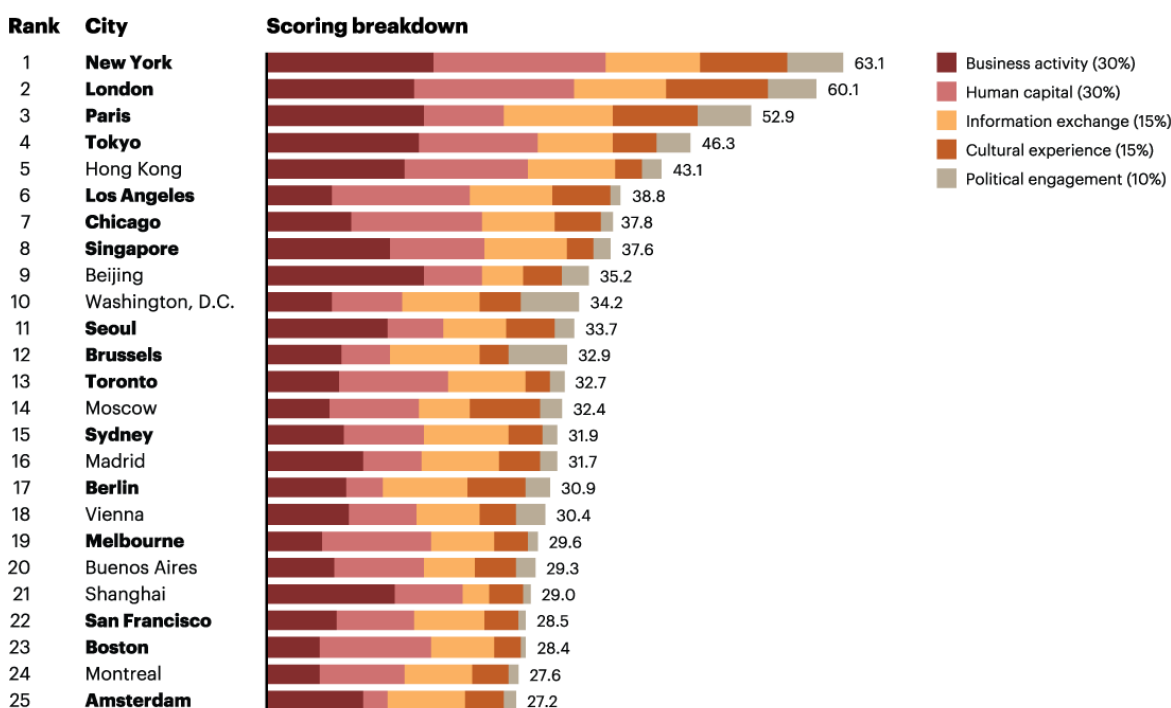
Thriving startup ecosystems are fundamental to the success of modern economies. In the USA, although startups account for only 3% of employment they produce almost 20% of gross job creation. (see http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/REST_a_00288) The vital contribution of startups is understood by the Australian Government and underpins the National Innovation Agenda.

A vibrant culture is essential to attract and retain creative talent. "To prosper in the creative age, regions have to offer a people climate that satisfies [young worker's] social interests and lifestyle needs." — Richard Florida. <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2001/0205.florida.html>

The importance of culture is also emphasised in [A.T. Kearney's Global Cities 2015 report](#): "Cities that create an environment and buzz that attract and retain entrepreneurs, while also hanging onto their home-grown talent, will be best positioned for future success". As can be seen in the chart below, Sydney has room to improve its cultural experience in order to increase its global competitiveness.

Figure 1
The top 25 cities on the Index and the Outlook

Global Cities Index (current performance)



The liquor laws are an anathema to young people. It is more than the loss of drinking hours to them. Being unable to dance and celebrate the night is a blow to their sense of being. Murat Kilic, CEO of Reckless Republic and Spice in Australia, [laments](#): "Our need for the night is by no means new. Primitive man had the campfire where the tribe came together, they shared stories, they laughed and they ate. More than that though, it was a place where creative outfits were donned, makeup was worn, and people danced wildly to the deep beats of the community drum. The nighttime has always been a place of mysticism and bacchanal, a sacred place to set your raw soul free ... We have to save Sydney's soul."

In addition to the cultural underpinnings of a healthy startup ecosystem, there are practical issues that require a functioning night-time economy. Startup workers often work very late hours. Sometimes "sprints" (bursts of programming activity) will finish at 1 or 2 in the morning. Also, being in our timezone often means late night conference calls to European or American partners and customers.

For the above reasons, lockout laws threaten Sydney's attractiveness to young innovators and, in turn, pose a risk to the economic potential of NSW.

Suggestions for reducing alcohol-related violence

Sydney, like other Australian cities, does have a serious problem with alcohol-related violence. Our suggestions to reduce alcohol-related violence are as follows:

1. Introduce 24-hour liquor licensing to allow patrons to leave a venue at whatever time they please. This will enable the controlled dispersal of patrons, instead of encouraging them to scull last drinks before ejecting them onto the street all at once.
2. Establish a Night Mayor office to manage the night-time economy such as Amsterdam, Paris, Toulouse, Zurich and an increasing number of cities are doing. Learn and employ global best-practices for managing the night-time economy. See: [A 'Night Mayor' Is Transforming Amsterdam After Dark](#)
3. Get tough on aggressive drunks. Use existing laws (SUMMARY OFFENCES ACT 1988 – SECT 9) to crack down on intoxicated and disorderly behaviour.
4. Experiment with predictive policing technology to better understand and target problem areas and times. See: [Don't even think about it](#)

Thank you for considering our opinion,

Yours faithfully,

John Dobbin | Director of John Dobbin & Associates, Founder Cinja, Founder and non-executive Director of Nexus IT & Communications Solutions.

Gavin Heaton | Director of Heaton Communications, Founder of Disruptor's Handbook

Anne-Marie Elias | @ChiefDisrupter

Duncan Tebb | Founder of Ocean Rowing Expeditions