

 Reply all |  Delete Junk | 





Reinvigorate Sydney

S

Sarah 

To: Liquor Law Review; 



 Reply all | 

Fri 1/04

Inbox

I am not a local of Sydney though I have visited the beautiful city many times in the last few years. I did however grow up in Bendigo, Central Victoria, where a 2AM lock out was instated shortly after I turned 18 in 2007. Unsurprisingly, several of the already limited numbers of venues shut down. Currently in Bendigo, punters have the choice from three establishments, all open til 5AM. Of course, Bendigo did not have a sprawling or diverse night life to begin with, but what little diversity it did have was lost. There are now three largely identical nightclubs, that are across the road from each other, and have a cab rank beside them.

What is left out of analysis of the "success" of Bendigo's lock outs, is the developments and changes that occurred simultaneously to make the CBD a safer place. Including the construction of a well-lit taxi rank with toilets, and laws that prohibited cab drivers from picking up punters who were not at the rank. The result? A central, cleaner and safer way to get home, that is easily monitored by police if necessary. Personally, I never experienced violence in Bendigo and any tales I heard were usually around security guard brutality or footy club events.

It saddens me that Sydney, Australia's most recognisable city and renowned for its vibrancy, is choosing to stifle the nightlife that people expect to find in all corners. Alcohol-fuelled violence cannot be solved by shutting a city down. It is something that needs to be addressed in schools and broader society. We are dealing with a much bigger issue here that ties gender norms and our culture of excess inextricably together. It is a failing of our society to ditch macho culture and teach boys that talking is okay and violence is not. It is not acceptable that "boys will be boys" attitudes still prevail in our kindergartens through to our high schools. And alcohol fuelled violence is one of the outcomes that can be squarely pinned to these attitudes. Throw in our classic "Aussie" attitude to drinking and there you have it. A segment of society who struggle to deal with their emotions, have severely reduced inhibitions from drinking 20 beers before they get out and then try to assert their importance and significance as a man. Way to go, society!

I would sincerely hope that the vast majority will not continue to be punished for the actions of few. Especially given that punishment is not only inflicted on young peoples' leisure time, but also on their appreciation of culture, participation in society and maybe even more importantly their back pocket when their hospitality job is all of a sudden no longer an option. This problem is undoubtedly everyone's problem, but shutting down Sydney is not going to address excess, nor will it teach pacifism. These are things we pick up well and truly before we are milling around Kings Cross or lining up at Ivy.

Let's look at this issue for what it really is and let Sydney's colourful identity be reinvigorated, before it is absolutely too late.

Sarah Fitt