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Submission to Liquor Law Review

BF Bernadette Foley 

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To: Liquor Law Review; 

7:35 AM

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From Bernadette Foley





Between the years 2000 and 2010, the number of licensed premises in the Kings Cross area grew from around 30 to over 50. The new licensed premises opened in this period were far larger and could accommodate many more patrons than their predecessors. *Government Licensing Service (GLS) data*

Local residents, myself included, objected to this unprecedented rise in size and number of licensed premises because of the potential cumulative effect that these venues would have on public safety, law and order, and general amenity in the area.

These reasonable objections were not accepted, and the City of Sydney and the NSW Land and Environment Court approved these developments. Buildings that were formerly banks and retail stores were converted into large-scale venues, the primary purpose of which was to serve alcohol.

This resulted in increases in violent crime and street disturbances that destroyed the residential amenity we had previously enjoyed.

The package of laws introduced by the NSW government have gone some way to restoring order and safety in our neighbourhood, but have not gone far enough.

Our local economy, which was declining due to the disturbing influence that late-night venues' patrons were having on our neighbourhood, is now reinvigorated and many new businesses have opened in what are again safe streets.

As residents we join with the local police, emergency workers and staff at our local hospital, St Vincent's, who all support these laws and their extension.

Those who argue that the laws should be wound back have vested interests and their arguments are without weight. The laws have had a positive economic and social benefit. Our hospital can use its limited budget in a more productive manner, and the local police are now able to address areas of local crime that previously were neglected.

For me personally the streets outside my home are safer and quieter; my neighbourhood has started to return to normal.

I do not agree with the City of Sydney, which argues that some venues should be granted exemptions from the laws. This will create a difficult legislative environment and open up avenues for potential misadministration and corruption. Moreover, the problems that the laws seek to address arose from the concentration and large scale of activity. The problems were not in relation to particular venues but to an overall culture that was difficult if not impossible to control. The suggested compromise is weak and ill founded.

To repeal the late-night trading laws will increase the cost and decrease the effectiveness of police and emergency workers, and again place an unwanted burden on our local health providers.

I would be happy to meet with the Hon Ian Callinan to explain my position and answer any questions, if it is desired.

Sincerely

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