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Struggling New Business Owner (Lock Outs & Police State)

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Reply all | To: Liquor Law Review; 

Sun 3/04

Inbox

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Hello,

My name is Jono and I've recently started running events again after having a 4 year break. I can tell the nightlife has changed dramatically since I had my break and one of the hardest tasks for me at the moment is finding venues to host my events. A lot of venues that I used in the past are now full of poker machines and do not host events any longer. Without venues I'm unable to run my business.

I've heard so many stories about how lock out laws have affected businesses and punters alike, I've also heard tales of how strong police presence has made customers and promoters uneasy. I had heard these stories but never experienced this until last weekend. I organised a small day event at Hermann's Bar located on Park Street near Sydney uni. It was an outdoor event and we built a stage out side with the bar being inside. As it was the Easter Long weekend an RBT was setup just up the road from my event.

Once the event was setup I left to pick up the photographer and a couple of the DJ's. Once I dropped the photographer off I found a few customers had turned up and were enjoying themselves with their mates. I left to pick up the DJ's who were in the city. By the time I had gotten back I was informed that police had come down from the RBT to announce they were shutting the event down because the music was too loud. Please keep in mind there are no residents around the venue, it is surrounded by Sydney Uni on a Saturday afternoon on the long weekend. We weren't disturbing anyone, there hadn't been any complaints laid, there was no violence, situations or anything to warrant the police to threaten to shutdown my event. What did seem to affect everyone is the police circling around the event like sharks. The licensee then spoke to the police who then advised we must keep the volume down or they will shut down the event.

After the RBT police went back to their post they then called in the second in charge of

Newtown Police station who came down to my event, arms folded at the entrance with his off sider making everyone feel uneasy and uncomfortable, no one knew what was going on. The licensee once again approached and advised everything is above board, we were continually doing sound checks and making sure the volume was at the required level however this wasn't enough for these 'bored' officers. Both officers stood there for at least 30 minutes surveying the event and aggravating customers with their attitudes and presence. There was no good reason for the way they behaved or how they treated the licensee or my staff.

This sort of police bullying is uncalled for, there were not complaints, no situations and no one was doing anything wrong other than having a few drinks under the sun with their mates and listening to music. My first event back and this is what I experience, I moved my plans to a day event due to the lock out laws and strict conditions and for my efforts the police decide to bully my event. The lack of venues willing to stay open later at night so my customers aren't waiting around for hours on end for public transport is crippling our night life and it proving to make things very difficult to run a business.

Hopefully we can get these rules over turned and have a stable safe nightlife once more.

Thank you,

Jono

Jono Gibb
Event Manager

