

A Submission to the Callinan Inquiry on Liquor Laws in NSW

The Hon. Ian Callinan AC QC

Dear Sir,

As a resident of [REDACTED] for almost seven years, I have seen a dramatic change in my local community. Almost seven years ago I moved home to Sydney after ten years living abroad in New York. Despite having grown up elsewhere as a child, I chose to make [REDACTED] my newfound home precisely because I was looking for the kind of atmosphere and vitality that the location was known for. While I knew that the 'buzz' of the city was unlikely to match that of downtown Manhattan, I was satisfied that the café culture, restaurants, bars and local residents would provide the closest thing possible to a globally equivalent metropolitan city. As a 28 year old, female, lawyer working in Sydney's CBD I relished the proximity to the city, the convenience of public transport and the local culture that [REDACTED] has provided me.

Unfortunately, however, that paradigm has significantly changed in the last two years since the lockout laws were introduced.

Now where many of the small bars, cafés and restaurants once were, I see For Lease signs and endless Development Applications for some new high-end apartment complex. Where I admit there used to be some nights when I would reach for the earplugs to drown out excited party-goers that chose to make their way home past my apartment, I now hear nothing save for the odd cat or possum fighting in the gum tree beside my courtyard. I have lost three of my favourite café's Douce France, La Croix and Chez Dee to these lockout laws and the uncommercial licensing laws that barred them from serving alcohol with dinner. The owners were hard-working locals who had a passion for Kings Cross and all the local fixtures of our neighborhood.

In 2009, as a young single female resident I was hardly, if ever, fearful of my neighborhood. I would often walk and go out at night alone or with friends and frankly the buzz of the area and the number of people around me was a comfort. I appreciated the local cops that would walk back and forth down the strip and along Victoria Street. I even had a few of the local ladies and men that worked along the strip that would knowingly smile and greet me as I came and went. I have been involved with the local Wayside Chapel during holiday seasons and enjoyed getting to know the people that share our strange little corner of Sydney.

Since the lockout laws came into effect, I have noticed two distinct changes: A new eerie, empty, silence in the evenings and a general gentrification of every last corner of the Cross. Both of these changes worry me. Now, when I return to the Cross late at night from work or from going out I walk along quiet, dark, streets. I note also, that the drugs have not left. Where previously, I could rely on there to be groups of people milling about on Victoria Street and down the lane that leads to my door now there is no one, or perhaps even more

¹ Please note: [REDACTED] is not technically an official suburb. However, I reside directly [REDACTED], according to [REDACTED] Real Estate agents) [REDACTED]

disquieting, the only people I see now are sitting alone injecting themselves with something or mumbling something incoherent to themselves. Furthermore, as I walk the streets on weekends in daylight hours, the neighborhood has become decidedly affluent, it seems that Potts Point has now swallowed up almost all that remains of the once thriving bohemia. Some may think that this is a positive shift but I challenge you to consider the loss of culture, lower-income residents and small business. The message this sends to our broader community when the neighborhood that once welcomed all of Sydney's residents and visitors is now just one enormous real estate development.

As a final note, I would like to express my deep sympathy and genuine anguish at the loss of Thomas Kelly and Daniel Christie. Two young men with so much life to live being thoughtlessly killed is a tragedy in the truest sense. Further, I cannot imagine the grief and despair suffered by their families. One day I hope to raise my own children and I shudder at the thought of losing a child that you have raised, cared for and hoped to instill with a passion for life, a sense of belonging and an ambition to work and find people and interests that they love. The way their lives were lost is not acceptable. But despite my sadness and anger at the circumstances that led to their lives being taken too soon, I cannot accept that these laws have done anything to prevent what happened to them. Both of these boys were king hit at 9pm and 10pm, well within the current accepted trading hours. I put it to you that these laws, had they been in effect when these crimes occurred, would not have prevented what happened.

The only effect of these laws has been to kill the culture that has been a fixture of my neighborhood for decades and line the pockets of shrewd developers looking to cash-in on the gentrification.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S.G.', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephanie Glass