

Submission

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To: Liquor Law Review; v

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Action Items



I was born and raised in Sydney (lived in Toongabbie with my parents until I was 21, Spain for a year, and then moved to [REDACTED] when I started full time work, because I couldn't bear the terrible train service from Toony, but hey, that's the subject of totally different rant about the epic failures of NSW state politics) and lived there until last March, when I moved to Hong Kong, where I have lived for the last year.

I was back in Sydney over the weekend for the 5 day Chinese New Year holiday and just wanted to congratulate you on decimating wonderful suburbs and businesses that I used to love so much.

Just because you don't want a beer or a bit of a dance at 1am doesn't mean that no-one else should have a beer or a bit of a dance at 1am, or any other time for that matter, Mike. Oh but wait, I can at the casino(s). Yippee! I just love the casino. So vibrant and full of life! How fortunate that this bastion of culture, and not to mention, civility and safety, is exempt from your draconian, reactive and ill considered lock out laws. Why would I want to go somewhere around the corner from my house, to, say Jimmy Liks, for a couple of cocktails and a gossip with friends (not to mention the best barramundi curry ever - RIP friend), when I could go and sit glassy eyed and slack jawed before a poker machine at Star City?!

A million people have already made this point I'm sure, but because I delight in futility, I'll make it again. Madrid and Hong Kong are both wonderful places to live. In both cities you can buy alcohol freely. You can drink it in the street. You can sit in a plaza, or on a beach, with a longy or a seajito. I have never seen a fight. I have never heard of anyone dying. You want my two cents? If you make the imbibing of alcohol such a big deal, it becomes a big deal to the people imbibing it. I can drink a beer whenever I want in Hong Kong, wherever I want. But you know what? No one really does (except in LKF or Wan Chai - but that's their raison d'etre. And sometimes, although increasingly less often in my dotage, I am seized by the desire to drink a bit too much prosecco and jump around to some dreadful reggaeton track ft. Pitbull. AND ITS FUN AND NOONE DIES (except maybe some of my braincells)). There is no panicked 9:30pm or 12:30am swill; there is no need to "preload" before a night out. There is no compulsion to "go large" to make the whole production of going out in Sydney "worth it" - the rigmarole of trekking into the city to be abused by overzealous bouncers and likely spending most, if not all, of your weekly wage in the process; on expensive drinks (I appreciate the excise on alcohol is a federal issue) and incompetent, rude and inexperienced taxis, because the trains don't run and the nightride bus only goes once every hour from a stop 3km away (Oh look, and here we are back again on the subject of dismal public services! Also, on the taxi point - cheers for your recent moves to restrict Uber in Sydney. Why listen to the market, when you can listen to an industry association with a vested interest in maintaining the status quo?!). I know this is what people do, because its what I used to do. It's what

my friends used to do. Many people have also made that point that a cultural shift needs to take place, and I think this shift can only happen once (perhaps counter intuitively) you give people agency. You permit them privileges and responsibilities, and make them invested in maintaining those privileges.

When your laws are capturing and pre-emptively punishing people whose only crime is to enjoy a drink, like my mum, a 60 year old science teacher who sometimes like a glass of champers with brunch, or my 87 year old grandpa who likes a nip of whiskey in his coffee you know they've probably overstepped the mark. These are both real examples.

If and when I ever come back to Australia (not a clear cut decision at the best of times, and again, that is the subject of yet another post about the systemic failures of government at both a state and federal level -

cough [#letthemstay](#)*cough*), Melbourne is looking increasingly attractive. Good riddance to me? Perhaps, but good luck keeping NSW productive when everyone who wants a drink from time to time, or *shock horror* wants to sell someone that drink from time to time, flees to Mexico to do so.

On a final note, recently when mates from overseas have asked for recommendations about where to visit in Australia (mates from Buenos Aires, Mexico City, London, to name a few places), I've told them they only need to spend a day or two in Sydney, to check out the beautiful harbour and beaches. Before you trashed the city I would have told my mates to stay a week! Be interested to see your stats on tourism spending, Mike, perhaps overlaid with your nifty little massaged graphs showing the "decline" in assaults.