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Comment on Review of Liquor Amendment Bill 2014

AH Andrew Hargreaves 

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To: Liquor Law Review; ▾

Fri 1/04

Inbox

Thank you for opportunity to provide comments on this review.

My comments focus on the 1:30am "lock out" laws now established in the Sydney CBD and Kings Cross.

I support the Premiers explanation that these laws are aimed to reduce alcohol-related violence and improve safety.

However, I do not support the 1:30am "lock out" law or 3am "last drinks" provisions.

If it is the desire, and I hope it is, that by reducing alcohol consumption that violence and anti-social behaviour will also reduce then our current "lock out" laws are only a band-aid solution. Instead, I suggest that venues operate and sell alcohol as they desire but that the Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) be enforced.

The timing of consuming alcohol (be it 9pm or 1.15am) is not so much the cause of anti-social behaviour than the amount of alcohol consumed.

I believe that venue operators (and licensee's) must have better RSA training and that all servers of alcohol (eg: bar staff) and security guards have comprehensive and practical RSA training. The ability to obtain RSA training from an online course borders on the ridiculous. Venue staff must be familiar with the realities and practicalities of working in hospitality with people who are close to being, or are, intoxicated.

I believe that reducing anti-social behaviour targeted by these "lock out" laws is best achieved, not by effectively closing venues, but by Liquor and Gaming NSW officers actively enforcing the licences they issue. I envision this would involve L&G officers (perhaps together with Police) attending venues incognito to establish if RSA is being followed and then, if required, carrying out uniformed and formal "audits" of venues and staff. I appreciate that what I just described is a cost, and not an insignificant one, to the public purse and that the "lock out" laws are much more cost effective. However, I believe that it is only with systemic and consistent approaches to RSA can we hope to reduce the anti-social behaviour caused by alcohol consumption in venues.

In summary, abandon the "lock out" laws and instead enforce RSA.

I would value being part of any further conversation and review on this issue and would welcome any feedback from you.

Finally, I do not give consent for my email address to be released.

Thanks,

Andrew Hargreaves