

Liquor licensing review

CH Chris Herrmann [REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]

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Hi,

I've been a resident in Darlinghurst for over 15 years now, who has experienced the impact of licensing laws first hand. I would like to share some of my experiences with you on this matter.

There have obviously been some tragic high profile cases in the media over the past few years, where individuals were seriously injured by intoxicated persons. These were obviously tragic events, and sadly I believe that they were avoidable.

What the media didn't capture at the time, or since then, is the difference that it has made to people like me on a day by day basis – the people who live “in the Cross”. Once upon a time there would be 2 quiet nights a year – Good Friday, and Christmas Day. By “quiet night” I mean that my young children would not be woken by drunks fighting, screaming, throwing bottles. And the inevitable mess the next morning – usually just bottles. But sometimes graffiti, vomit, discarded clothing. Sometimes a person sleeping on the pavement. When I walked to work in the morning I'd go past people stumbling out of pubs vomiting and falling over.

Walking down any street late at night you'd be dodging a train of heavily drunken people and everything that goes with that.

Now? The restaurants we (still) go to are (still) full every night of the week. We rarely encounter someone hurling drunken abuse as we walk through the Cross.

Recently I had the small misfortune to land in Emergency on a recent Friday evening. Interestingly I was surrounded by people with a range of issues – I had asthma, another person had an acute eye infection, someone else suspected heart attack, one person on ice who wasn't being violent but had broken his leg on a skateboard, and so on. There was no one drunk. No one was particularly happy about being there, but no one was violent aggressive abusive or anything like that.

Yes – it's quieter. Undoubtedly quieter. And it's great. As a person who lives in the Cross with my young family it's like night and day.

As a small segue, when I was in University many years ago my father lived in Balmain. My friends and I would go to Balmain, have dinner at a pub around the corner from my Dad's place, then proceed to have a drink at each of the local pubs. The pubs all closed at midnight – so we came home, invariably drunk. Dad would laugh at us, we'd fall asleep on the couch / floor / whatever, and no one ever got hurt. Did the pubs closing at midnight limit our ability to have a fun night? Not at all. We had a great time, have great memories, and all before midnight.

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Regards

Chris Herrmann

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