

Submission to Liquor Law Review

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To: Liquor Law Review <liquorlawreview@justice.nsw.gov.au>;

Cc: Penelope Jaffray [REDACTED]

I have lived in Potts Point since 1983, when I bought my property in Victoria Street where I now live with my husband Keith McConnell.

During the past 33 years I have observed a number of changes to the area, but none as dramatic as the virtual shutting down of the area after the imposition of the lock out laws.

I have read the background paper and looked at the statistics. In my opinion the statistics do no more than confirm the obvious, if you have less (or no) people in an area you will have less incidents of assault or "alcohol fueled" violence. It may be a trite comparison, but an obvious one, if we removed cars from the road, we would certainly have less car accidents.

Whilst I can appreciate the St Vincent's Emergency Department's relief at having less alcohol related trauma to deal with each weekend, this just shows that there are less, much less people coming to the area during the normal "entertainment" hours of Friday and Saturday night. There are not more sober people and less drunk people, there are just less people. There is no evidence that the ratio of drunk to sober people has changed.

One reason I moved across the from the North side to live in Potts Point 33 years ago, was that it stayed "open". You could shop late, eat late, and feel quite safe because there were so many people around. Now there is a deathly silence after 10 pm.

A number of food businesses in the area have closed or do not open for dinner because there are not the numbers of customers to justify paying staff to work at night.

My husband and I often work late and have noticed that it is now very difficult to find food establishments that have kitchens open after 9.30 pm, let alone 10 pm.

The 10 pm restriction state wide on take away liquor sales is in many cases totally inappropriate . We travel to regional NSW each weekend and find that most regional supermarket liquor outlets close before 9 pm. It is sometimes difficult to arrive at a supermarket in time to buy wine for the weekend if needed for entertaining. I cannot think that the 10 pm take away restriction was really aimed at people in country NSW who might want to buy a bottle of wine after 10 pm.

The premise of the 10 pm take away restriction itself seems rather doubtful. Is there any evidence that people who buy alcohol from a bottle shop after 10 pm then engage in "alcohol fueled violence"?

The two tragic deaths that prompted the changes to the liquor laws occurred before 10 pm. It is difficult to see how the current laws would have made any difference in those instances.

It is the culture of violence rather than the culture of alcohol that should be addressed, although the latter seems from my observation to have reached an unacceptable level of promotion, in particular through sporting sponsorship.

In my view the changes to the Liquor Law was a knee jerk reaction. The result has certainly been to remove people from the streets of Kings Cross, but it has also changed the whole area and not for the better. If you spend any time

in Melbourne, the contrast between a city that is alive at night and a city like Sydney that has now gone to sleep, is quite stark.

Obviously, there is a problem with abuse of alcohol and the violence that sometimes ensues, but I hope there are cleverer ways of tackling the problem than just "shutting down" a city.

Respectfully submitted

Penelope Jaffray

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