

Nigel Kilvington [REDACTED]

As a person who has spent my entire life in Hospitality I have travelled the world for 40 years seeking inspiration for my own hospitality ventures in Queensland. About once a year I would travel to Sydney and Melbourne, as I found both cities, Sydney particularly, offered so much innovation and dynamic energy in the night time economy.

I last visited Sydney in late 2014 and was dismayed and appalled at what had transpired in a little over a year. As guests of Heineken we were 'shown' the city, and it was frankly alarming how government overreach had destroyed what had been one of the world's vibrant cities. Drinks out of plastic cups, no cocktails, no bottles of wine after 10pm, a 1.30am Lockout that was selectively applied, all had clearly had a hideous effect on the said night time economy with high end restaurants, bars, cafes, and late night venues alike decimated by the public's apparent disdain for this over regulation. Throw in a Casino ready and able to suck up all the business because of its absolute exemption to all these Laws, and Sydney can now boast one of the most distorted Liquor and Entertainment markets in the world.

How did it come to this?

Thomas Kelly, who had not been to a bar, was killed on the street of King's Cross at 10pm at night by a drug affected bikie prospect who had assaulted other parties on the same streets despite complaints being made to Police who were expected on that night to 'police' the entire King's Cross area with just six Police. Daniel Christie was attacked in the same area by a similar lawless piece of dirt again after assaulting other parties on the street. Both incredibly tragic deaths! But to blame the late night industry and shut it down over deaths that occurred on the Streets, not in venues, was outrageous. Around 1200 people were killed in Australia motor vehicle accidents in 2014, with many more injured, and yet this is apparently acceptable to both Politicians and the Public.

Perhaps the real problem is that these two young men were just going out to have a good time with friends and fell foul of some of the nastiest bits of work in the country, and that the unwarranted and unfair cause of their deaths seems to be more emotive than a road 'accident'.

Sydney, I will have to bypass you as a destination until politicians and bureaucrats wind back this over-reach, your Press reports rather than creates the news, and sense and wisdom prevails.