

Submission to the Liquor Law Review

I am a resident of Sydney and have been since before I was 18 and am writing out of concern that not only is bad policy being implemented but also that people younger than myself are able to enjoy Sydney in the same way I was able to. I also wish to put forward my vehement opposition to mandatory sentencing, which despite not being part of this review, was apparently a key part of the 'reforms' put forward by this government. Mandatory sentencing is inherently unfair, unjust and has no place in Australia or anywhere in the world. Judicial discretion is paramount, not politicians who have bowed to the pressure of a public campaign of fear by the city's media.

The basis for my submission shall not just be that I feel that these laws (speaking now and for the rest of this submission about the 'Liquor Laws' aka the Lockout Laws. I will henceforth refer to them as such.) crush the people of Sydney socially and destroy a vibrant nightlife that we were one known for but also on a statistical analysis. My statistical analysis, with a following discussion is below on the next page:

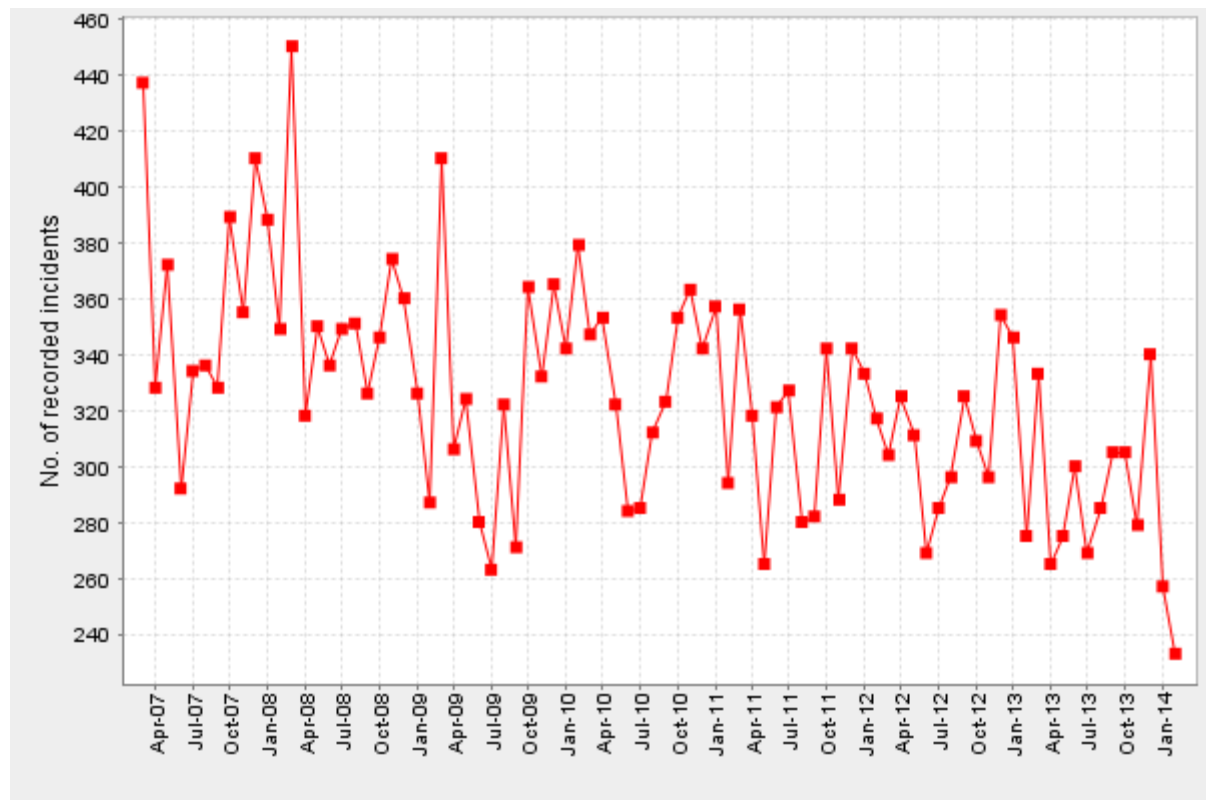
Crime Trends Tool

Table 1. Recorded incidents of selected offences in the Sydney Local Government Area

Annual totals and 84 month trend from March 2007 to February 2014

Offence	Mar 2007 to Feb 2008	Mar 2008 to Feb 2009	Mar 2009 to Feb 2010	Mar 2010 to Feb 2011	Mar 2011 to Feb 2012	Mar 2012 to Feb 2013	Mar 2013 to Feb 2014	84 month trend	Average annual percentage change	Total percentage change
Assault - non-domestic violence related	4318	4173	3958	3935	3771	3695	3446	Down	-3.7%	-20.2%

Table A



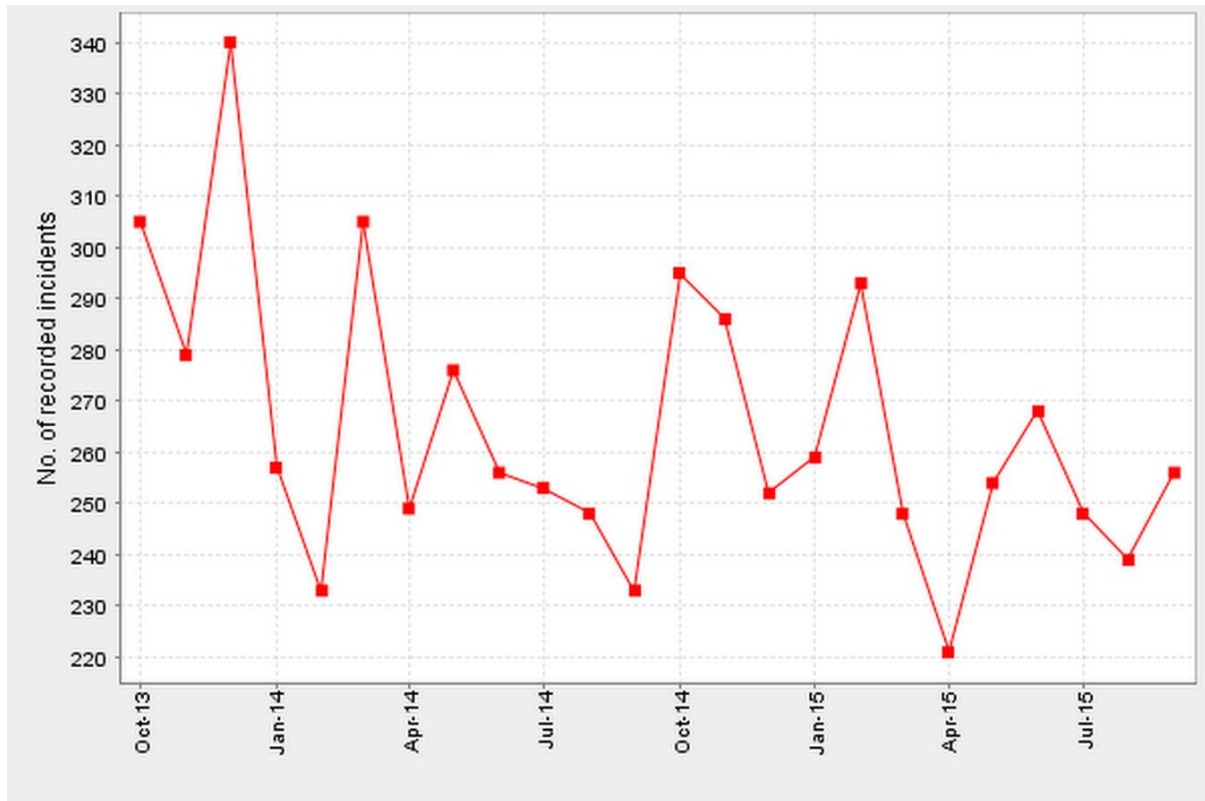
BOCSAR reference number 2016-551608

Table 1. Recorded incidents of selected offences in the Sydney Local Government Area

Annual totals and 24 month trend from October 2013 to September 2015

Offence	Oct 2013 to Sep 2014	Oct 2014 to Sep 2015	24 month trend	Annual percentage change	Total percentage change
Assault - non-domestic violence related	3234	3119	Down	-3.6%	-3.6%

Table B



BOCSAR reference number is: 2016-551608

Table C

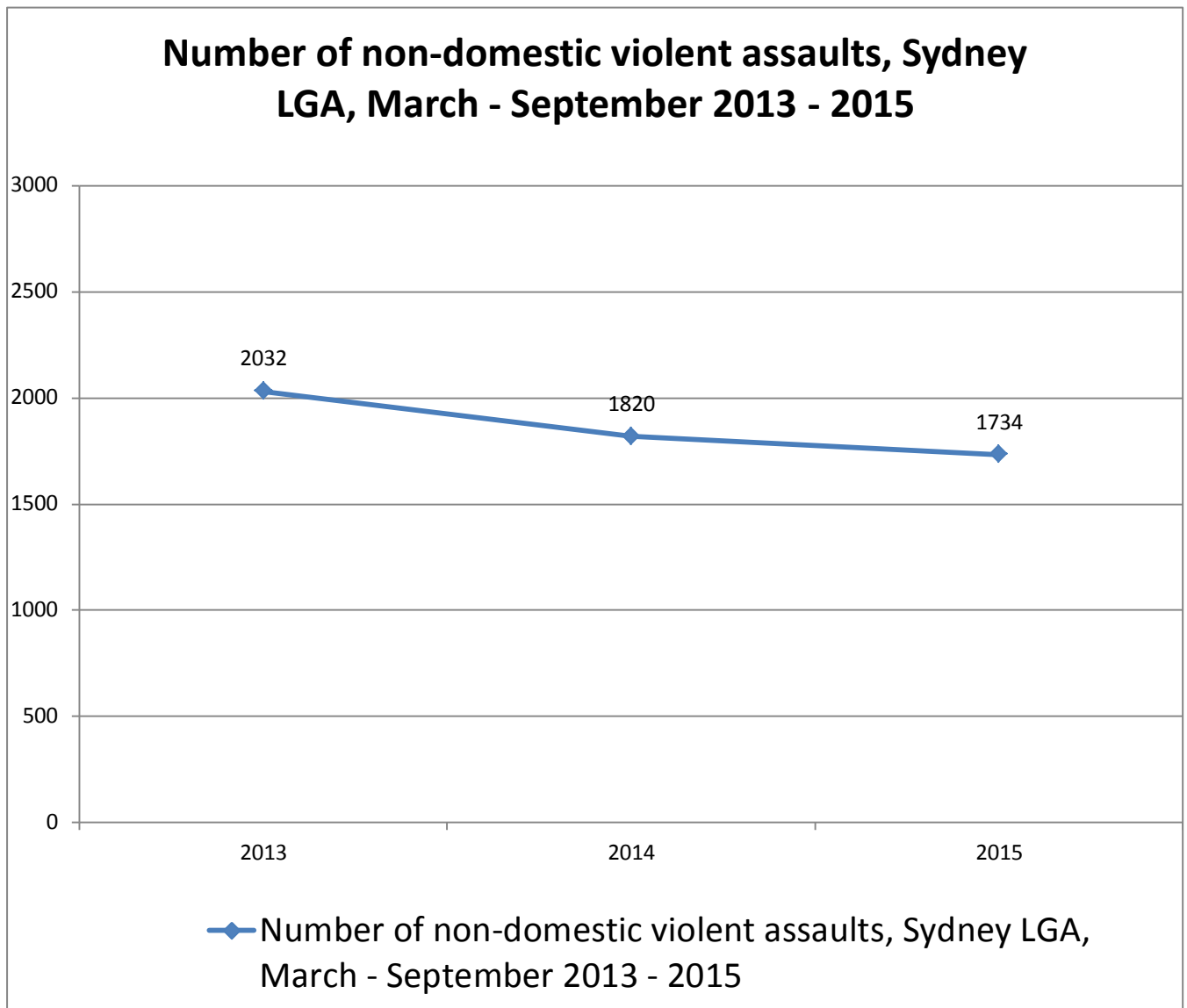
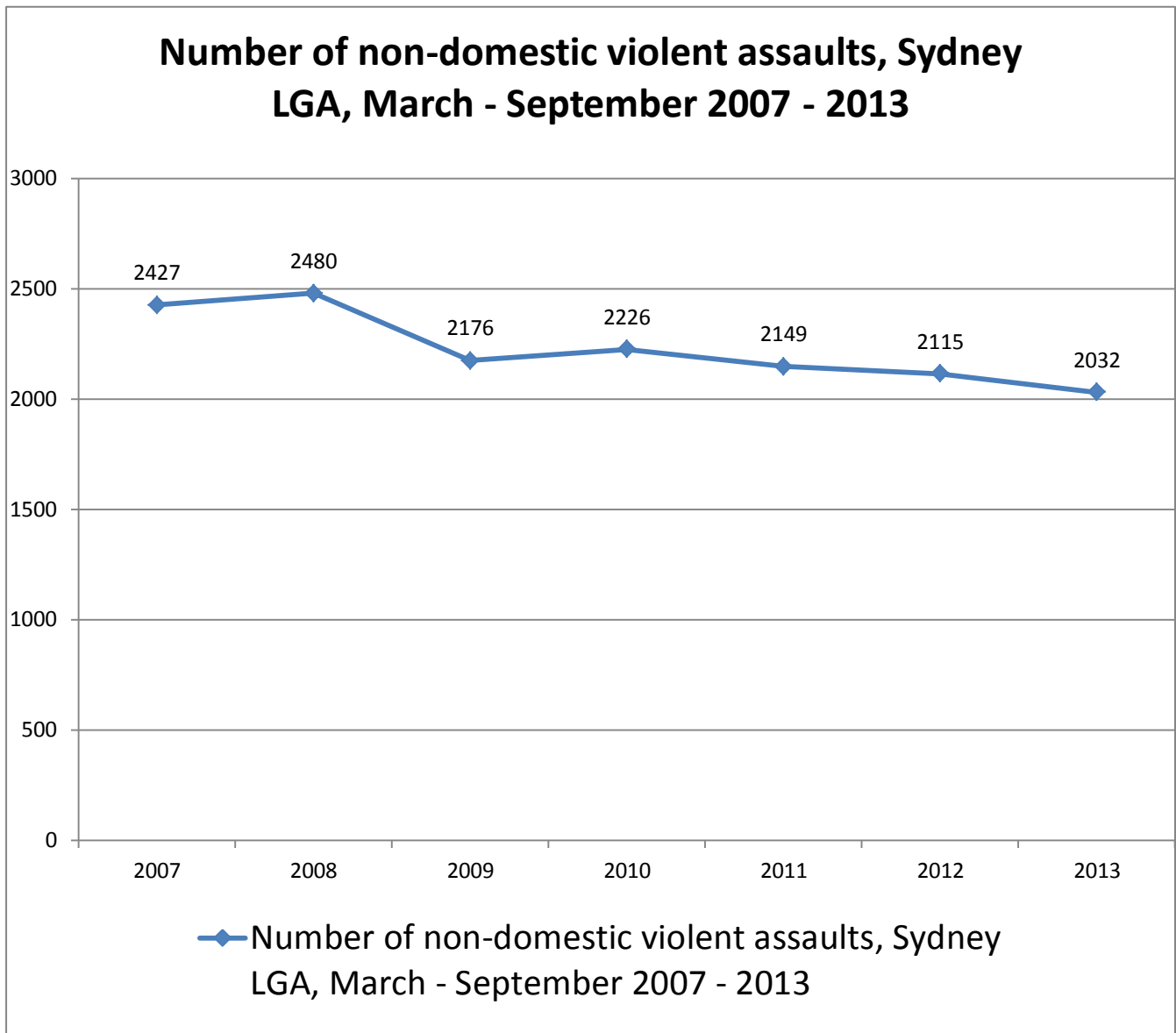


Table D



Raw Data, March to Sept, 2007-13 and 2013-15, Sydney LGA

2007 - 2427

2008 – 2480 +2.2%

2009 – 2176 -12.3% freeze on Kings Cross Precinct licences from this year...

2010 – 2226 +0.5%

2011 – 2149 -3.5%

2012 – 2115 -1.6%

2013 – 2032 -3.9%

% change, total (-16.6%) and year on year average (-2.7%)

2014 – 1820 -10.4%

2015 – 1734 -4.7%

% change, total (-14.7%) and year on year average (-7.6%)

Discussion of statistics

Firstly, all data contained within this submission has been obtained purely from the bocsar.nsw.gov.au website and more specifically by using the tool at this webpage: <http://bocd.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/bocd/cmd/crimetrends/Init>

In looking in detail at the data from the first two graphs, A and B it quickly becomes clear that we are not comparing apples with apples so to speak. What I mean by that is the period for which the data covers is not the same, month-by-month. The data period for which the lockout laws cover end in September 2015 and begins in March of 2014. So as a result I collated the data not for the year-end totals but for the corresponding period that made the most sense and had the most data, that of March to September for the period I chose.

The results are not surprising, had one been listening to Bernard Keane the respected Crikey journalist when he said “And while alcohol consumption was falling, violence on the streets of Sydney was falling even faster. Between 2007 and the start of the lockout laws, non-domestic violence assaults had fallen over 20% in the city of Sydney. And that’s the number of assaults – during that time the population of greater Sydney grew by around 10%.” [see <http://dailyreview.com.au/bernard-keane-sydneys-lockout-laws-are-based-on-lies/37453>] when he spoke at the protest march for Keep Sydney Open on Sunday Feb the 22nd of this year. With, as Bernard noted, the population of Sydney rising and no doubt the tourist intake also increasing, this is no mean feat for the figures to have dropped by an average of -2.7% year-on-year (the average for the whole of year year change was a higher figure of -3.7%) and a total of -16.6% over the timescale (see raw data underneath Tables C and D).

The clear point to be made here is that whilst there was undoubtedly a significant drop in violence in the Sydney LGA as a result of the lockout laws (due entirely to a decrease in foot traffic, down by 84% see here: <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/the-death-of-kings-cross-as-we-know-it-20140916-10hkfk>), such a decline was already seen through the prior 7 years of data on non-domestic assaults in the Sydney LGA. To say that the lockouts are working is only to say that there are less people there at night and that people had been less and less violent before the lockouts came into force.

Further Discussion

I also find a few other issues of note. Public transport, late at night that is, is quite diabolical in Sydney, especially in Kings Cross. Fights over taxis or near taxi stands due to crowds of drunk people being forced together are inevitable when such frustration is borne out. If there was a better, more widely available public transport network that didn't simply go from train station to train station then at least some of the violence that occurred before the lockout laws would certainly not have happened.

Secondly, all of the incidents that sparked the outrage, the so-called one-punch attacks, occurred before 10pm. Lockouts from 1.30am and closures at 3am aren't going to fix that.

I would also say that the take-away liquor laws do not make sense. If the intent of these laws is for less people to be on the streets, intoxicated and ready for a fight, surely partying inside and at a residence is preferable when friends and or family is present? Should it not then be easier, not harder to obtain alcohol for such a purpose? Therefore it makes little sense for the sale of take-away liquor to be restricted, especially state-wide where there is even less evidence for it to apply.

Additionally, I would wonder, though it is not within the scope of this review, why small bars do not trade longer hours than they do. It is surely not because of the lack of trade, they are bustling when they are forced to close early at midnight or 1am. Surely these places, which seem to be entirely free of violence, are the perfect places to trade all night long? Who exactly would get drunk and want to fight at an establishment like Baxter's Inn, the whiskey bar?

Though I do not go to gigs and live music in the same way as my friends might, it is also a salient issue that the lockout laws have had an undue impact on live music in Sydney. So many great Australian acts have perfected their trade here playing late at night and never would have had their chance in today's environment. Venues can no longer afford to have undercard acts when they shut at 3 and close their doors at 1.30am. I refer you to a pertinent quote from this article

(<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2016/feb/19/analysis-shows-sydneys-lockout-laws-led-to-40-drop-in-live-gig-revenue>) "According to figures released by [Apra Amcos](#) and the [Live Music Office](#), there has been a 40% drop

in live performance revenue at Apra- and Amcos-licensed venues within the Sydney CBD lockout area.”

I note that violence has increased in Pyrmont, where a notable exception namely The Star, to the lockout laws is located as per this article:

<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2016/feb/11/sydneys-lockout-laws-five-key-facts-about-the-citys-alcohol-debate> .

One suggestion I have is to put in place a night-mayor, someone to specifically oversee the workings and goings-on of the nightlife of a city, as is present in Amsterdam and is being seriously considered in London. Other good suggestions are contained here: <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/sydney-lockout-laws-how-cities-around-the-world-minimise-alcoholrelated-violence-20160211-gms490.html> .

Another notable issue is the Premier’s distortion of the facts surrounding the debate in a notable Facebook post as was dispelled in this article by the no less than Don Weatherburn, the director of the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research in this article: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-10/crime-statistician-refutes-bairds-sydney-assault-figures/7154804> .

An important aspect of the lockout laws that directly affects me is my ability to go out and watch rugby late at night, when it is on in either South Africa or Europe and the UK. These games, as well as soccer games on in Europe and the UK are on generally between midnight and 4-5 am, times when I and many other patrons would be directly affected by these laws. Watching sport live and with friends or other fans is an important part of nightlife and should also be taken into account when considering the impact of these laws on the many nighttime communities.

I hope my submission is taken into account, as I believe this is an important issue to not only my peer group, those younger than me but also to Sydney as a whole, as an international and mature city. It is a basic right for people to be able to enjoy themselves in the manner in which they please, as long as it does no harm to others. There must be another way. We must also be able to be a 24 hour city with a 24 hour nightlife and 24 hour public transport system if Sydney can truly be called a global city.