

Submission to Independent review of the impact of liquor law reforms David Lang - Consult Oz

DL

David Lang

To: Liquor Law Review; ▾



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Dear Hon. Ian Callinan AC,

I am an independent consultant that has over 15 years experience operating as a consultant, events manager and entertainment manager in Sydney. I have suffered considerable hardship from the introduction of NSW Lockout Laws.

At the time of introduction of the lockout laws, I had been in the advanced stages of



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- hospitality consulting services, with regard to design of learning development systems, conducting practical hospitality and tourism training, along with development of quality controls systems, client relations management systems and human resource management Systems;
- staffing and recruitment services;
- catering management services; and
- DJ and entertainment services.

I have been building my network base substantially over the last 5 years with a focus of becoming a fully independent consultant, but this was severely impacted with the introduction of lockout laws.

Almost immediately upon the introduction of these lockout laws, there was a considerable downturn in trading across venues and it was evident that this had a considerable impact on the viability of the venues I was negotiating with. All plans for any implementation of the services I was offering were been "put on hold" before contracts had been finalised.

Within a short space of time, some of the venues were even forced to close their doors for trading due to the considerable downturn in patronage and sales. This was in stark contrast to the regular growth in trade they had been experiencing previously, and the higher standards of quality and professionalism for venues entering the Sydney market. With standards increasing, the demand for quality training services was also increasing, so my business growth potential was looking very good.

Although I was in advanced stages of negotiation, and I had provided consulting, management and DJ services to the venues (at no charge to the venues at a considerable expense to myself with an aim of securing terms of contract), I was not able to finalise the contracts and suffered considerable financial hardship.

I have many colleagues in the industry that have lost their businesses and jobs due to the results of these harsh laws that seem to have been given no real considerations for the impacts they would have on the hospitality, catering and tourism businesses right across Sydney CBD and areas affected by the lockout laws.

Many superior quality staff have left Sydney to go interstate or overseas in pursuit of better career opportunities, and this has caused additional impact on the hospitality market in Sydney. It is common knowledge that this migration of staff has created a massive shortage of skilled labour and has contributed to a downturn in the quality of service offered in Sydney as a whole.

I respectfully contend that the Lockout Laws are poorly conceived and implemented without regard for the impact on hospitality, catering and tourism venues that would not be considered to be affected by these laws eg: general small bars, cafes, restaurants, takeaways stores, etc. The impacts are so considerable in the hospitality, catering and tourism industry, that the true impact of losing numerous high quality venues and staff will never be truly calculated in dollar or tourism quality terms.

The Lockout Laws have also impacted significantly on the entertainment scene in Sydney, with many world class venues, training grounds and launching pad for many Australian entertainers, DJs and electronic music producers, now closed. It has also impacted significantly on the electronic music scene with a huge downturn in the number of international acts performing in Sydney with the loss of venues. The impact of this loss cannot be measured in real terms, but there are many producers and DJs that will now never have an opportunity to reach their real potential.

The Lockout Laws have also led to a resurgence in "underground warehouse parties" and the "bush doof" parties, where there is generally little to no liquor control, security or consideration for the impacts on nearby residents or the local community. These are not managed by professionals, so there are considerable risks that are not even expected when they take place, let alone having any consideration for professional management. In effect, they are out of control house parties.

I know it is not in the terms of reference, but I think it is quite clear to say the the considerable taxes, duties and excise on liquor, which don't seem to make any sense, make liquor an extremely expensive product for consumers, but highly profitable for the government. It is common knowledge that the majority of trouble is caused by patrons that get drunk at home before coming out to party at venues to save money. These are the people causing most of the trouble, not patrons in controlled environments in venues. Most acts of violence are perpetuated by people that have not even entered venues.

So in closing, I restate that the laws have had a hugely detrimental impact on many once successful businesses in Sydney and will continue to do so while they are in place in their current form.

Kind regards,

David Lang
Executive Manager

Consult Oz

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