

Submission for Independent review of NSW liquor laws

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

The recently passed the laws have decimated of Sydneys iconic entertainment areas and the culture of our once vibrant city.

I care very much about this, having lived, worked and played in the Cross for over 30 years. I've never seen it like it is now. Even the introduction of the insidious pokies several decades ago, which consequently killed the live music scene across Sydney, was not as bad as this. It is a literal ghost town after dark.

Last Saturday night I found out that our favourite, family run, Vietnamese restaurant in Potts Point, Bay Bua, has closed due to the oppressive liquor licensing laws. It's been around for over a decade and it's gone. Just like that. One of the (reported) over 50 businesses that have now gone as a direct result of these laws. Families that have lost their incomes. Not to mention the hundreds, if not thousands, of people in support industries that have also lost their incomes - such as taxi drivers and musicians. I hope the family is OK.

We went to LL Wine and Dine instead - it's in LanKelly Place, between Darlinghurst rd and Springfield avenue. If you don't know, it's a little pedestrian only street filled with restaurants, that, in turn, were filled with people eating dinner and enjoying each other's company on a warm Saturday night. We were sitting outside having a lovely time, discussing what a great vibe it was to have a street like this, very south of France, when at 10pm our waitress asks us to move inside, as it's the law. (This time a council one). It's Saturday night for goodness sake. Within minutes, the vibe is gone, the street looked deserted, now more like south of Syria. TEN PM ON A SATURDAY NIGHT in the Cross. Another ridiculously stupid law on top of all the others, made by people who think we should all be tucked up in bed by then and certainly can't be responsible for buying a bottle of wine after that time. Or a shot after midnight. Or more than two drinks at a time. It's not just the puritanical lockout laws, it's all these controlling little laws that treat us like children.

If you want to stop the VIOLENCE then treat the source. Why are these young men so violent?? It's happening all the time else where, no matter how many ridiculous nanny laws are put in place.

Many cosmopolitan cities have access to alcohol 24/7, yet they don't have these problems. Why do we? Treat the real problem and let us be responsible for our own drinking behavior, as proper grown ups.

You are destroying our culture and our international reputation.

Surely the police should be catching criminals not policing wine bars and harassing small businesses. What a stupid waste of their time and that's also way to much power in their hands. I don't want them doing this to the detriment of our community. It also puts them on the side of the bad guys, terrible for them and terrible for us.

When the election comes, I for one, am going to be very vocal on these issues that are

killing our city, one stupid law at a time.

I hope your review takes into account what these laws have done to this area and its inhabitants. It's truly appalling.

Yours sincerely

Belinda Lightfoot

