



Dear Sir,

Submission regarding the continuation of Lock out laws

I have lived in Potts Point for three and a half years witnessing both the period before lock out laws and the period since.

The behaviour of many of the 20,000 who enter the relatively small precinct particularly on Friday and Saturday night would not be tolerated in any civilised entertainment area in the world. The disproportionate amount of liquor licences in such a small area most of which is now residential, just makes your head shake.

The effectiveness of the lockouts surprised me, but it seems that the RSA laws were probably working effectively. However the consequence of their effectiveness was a conglomeration of intoxicated persons rejected from many establishments milling on the streets as they persisted in trying their luck at the next venue up the street.

The numbers on the street was a recipe for disaster and the fights, abuse and anti-social behaviour was on a scale that one would only expect in some apocalyptic movie. The lock out laws have effectively disincintivised those venturing to the precinct to try their luck under RSA laws. The resulting anti-social behaviour has decreased by around 70-80 % in my opinion.

The noise on Friday and Saturday nights certainly affects residents but it is the helplessness residents feel when they hear and see the constant abuse and assaults on the streets particularly where women are involved. This occurred generally between 1 and 3pm every Friday and Saturday evening. There was the unceasing fear that the screaming, yelling and verbal threats would escalate, resulting in serious injury or worse. Ignoring this behaviour and accepting it as normal within earshot is inconsistent with any neighbourly or protective instinct.

No one should have to try to sleep with unending audible profanities, threats and confrontations constantly echoing through residential apartments at night knowing the incident could be a headline the next morning and there was nothing they could do about it.

The numbing acceptance of this behaviour as an inevitability is something that no law abiding country let alone Australia should have to abide. The concentration of persons in such a small area particularly when intoxicated wouldn't make sense to the most ardent partygoer when assault and worse becomes a mathematical likelihood.

The argument that the vibrancy has been lost in the area is incongruous with the witnessed behaviour. The abuse, both verbal and physical, the vomiting, urinating and property destruction would hardly be defined as vibrancy, if anything it is an Australian embarrassment. I am the last one to wish to impose restrictions in a free society but where damage and physical harm appears inevitable regulation unfortunately seems to be the only choice.

Australia has a cultural problem. I have witnessed young girls riding bikes and walking safely in the Hamburg red light district after midnight which profoundly contrasts with the weird acceptance of severe anti-social behaviour in Australia as a normal night out.

I am of the view that the majority of well-behaved young people deserve a well-controlled area for nightclubs and late night activities. However I query whether the current Australian culture is mature enough to move to a level where regulation is not required.

In the meantime the lockouts have been a remarkable success and the level of violence, abuse and general anti-social behaviour has been curtailed in my view by around 70%.

If these regulations have prevented even one death or serious injury they have been worth it and I can attest that the number of physical fights in the vicinity of our apartment has dramatically declined. The lock out laws have shown they work to dramatically reduce senseless and preventable destruction of young lives and their family's lives. Unfortunately until the maturing of the Australian culture can occur along the mode of cities such as Hamburg, regulation seems to be the only responsible way authorities can continue to proceed.

Regards

Michael McCormick

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