

Individual Submission to the Independent Review of the impact of liquor law reforms

To the Honourable Ian Callinan AC,

I am making a submission as an individual to the *Independent Review of the impact of liquor law reforms*.

I am a university student living and working in Sydney and I feel that the 1:30am lock out, 3am cessation of liquor sales and 10pm take-away liquor sales restrictions should be repealed and other measures put in place, such as a state wide education and advertising campaign against anti-social behaviour and alcohol related violence.

I will directly discuss points 3.6 and 3.7 in the background paper and their relationship to my experience of Sydney and some anecdotal stories that have been told to me by friends.

Firstly in relation to 3.6, point 3.6.1 a) alcohol related violence and anti-social behaviour in Sydney CBD and Kings Cross precincts, potential displacement areas, as well as broader community. The rates of alcohol related violence and anti-social behaviour have not decreased in the Star Casino which is exempt from the lock out laws, instead there has been an increase in this area. Alcohol related violence and anti-social behaviour has increased in Newtown, a once safe place to go out. Lesbian, gay and transgender people are now frequently subjected to anti-social behaviour, name-calling, stalking behaviour and so on, on a more frequent basis since the lock out laws have been introduced in Kings Cross and the Sydney CBD.

Before the lock outs people from the Central Coast would go to Kings Cross and the CBD, however it is increasingly obvious that they are coming more and more to Newtown and surrounding places due to the lock outs not impacting on this area. This has caused many differing communities to come

to Newtown which has been a safe space for people of lesbian, gay, transgender status for many years. Newtown is no longer safe for these people. It has also become increasingly dangerous for women. Since the lock out laws have been introduced many of my female friends have been negatively impacted. One friend was followed home by a group of drunk men all the way to her front door. This had never happened to her in Newtown before the lock out laws were introduced.

In relation to 3.6.1 b) safety and generally amenity of Sydney CBD and Kings Cross precincts and potential displacement areas, I would like to bring to your attention that the safety of women and LBGTQI (Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender and Queer Identifying) people has been impacted in Newtown and that the problems that occurred in Kings Cross and the Sydney CBD have simply been moved on, they have not been fixed through the lock out laws. As I discussed above, my own friend has personally been made to feel unsafe in a place she once felt relatively safe living in. My gay, lesbian and transgender friends have all increasingly told tales of being name called, followed and made to feel uncomfortable in Newtown where they previously felt safe to go out. While foot traffic is down in the cross and CBD it is increasingly up in Newtown and its surrounds.

These issues that I am discussing are important and magnify that the problems that were occurring in the lock out areas have not been fixed, they simply have been moved on. People no longer go to King Cross for a night out. They don't go as frequently to the CBD. They go to Newtown or the casino if that's their kind of thing.

The unsafety of women and the LBGTQI community and the general safety of all could never be fixed through a lock out law. What needs to occur is more education about alcohol, violence, LBGTQI and womens issues and the expectations of the NSW community. Young men, women and transgender people should have compulsory education about alcohol related violence and anti-social behaviour, showing them what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. This is currently not effective education taking place and this would help immensely. Secondly there should be a state wide advertising campaign stressing what is correct social behaviour and what is not, outlining the potential prison

terms and fines associated with such crimes. These advertisements could be done in a similar fashion to the advertising used in association to drink driving or using a mobile phone whilst driving. These should be put up in pubs, clubs and bars, on public transport, on train station television screens and on the television. Programs should be run on ABC TV in association with this campaign. There is entrenched problems with alcohol related violence and anti-social behaviour in NSW and we need education not laws that punish the majority for the actions of a minority.

My final point in relation to this point is that the lock out laws pose an extreme threat to personal safety as they force out people onto the streets at 1:30am if they can't get into the venue that they wanted to. This causes more alcohol related violence to occur as there are more drunk people on the streets and it is easier for people to fight in a street environment. It also makes for unsafe waling conditions and poses a further threat to women and LGBTQI people's safety.

Lastly in relation to 3.6.1 c) government, industry and community stakeholders, including business, financial and social impacts, and impacts on patrons and residents (including whether licenced venues continue to trade after 3am when alcohol sales cease). This is a big issue for young adults and university students like myself. Many bars, pubs and clubs have reduced the number of working hours for bartenders and waitresses in their venues due to the lock out laws. This has produced a strain on university students already struggling to pay outrageous rent prices in Sydney. Many high staffed venues in the Kings Cross and Sydney CBD precincts have been forced to close due to the decline in foot traffic in their areas such as the once extremely popular restaurant and bar Hugo's in Kings Cross which employed over 100 staff.

The lock outs have also decreased the monetary opportunities for emerging Sydney based musicians. Many music venues through the lock out zone have been forced to close and this has created decreased opportunities for emerging DJ's, bands and performers. The lock out laws are thus causing the Sydney music and entertainment industry to decline and forcing young and emerging creatives to move to Melbourne and other places to pursue their careers in music and

entertainment. If Sydney really is a 'creative city' then its laws should foster a creative and open music and entertainment industry. The lock out laws are denying this from happening.

In relation to 3.7 - 10pm take-away liquor sales restriction. These laws punish the majority of Sydney siders who just wish to go to the bottle shop to get another bottle of wine for their party or dinner. They are unreasonable and should be lifted or simply given extra time, such as restricting after midnight which is a more reasonable time to close.

In relation to businesses in Sydney I would also like to note that the lock out laws have adversely impacted on restaurants, bars, pubs and clubs across Sydney, notably music venues. Many venues that have had to close have been music venues. And the small restaurants and bars that have closed have closed due to reduced foot traffic in their areas. The lock out laws have gutted Sydney of interesting venues to go out to at night and those that are still open are struggling to do so or have changed hands.

As I see it the reform laws have not met the objectives that the government set out and should be repealed or reformed so that they create a safer city for all. Problems have been moved out to 'displacement areas', including Newtown and the Star Casino. Education and advertising would be crucial to achieving the objectives of safety. Without these things nothing will change and the lock out laws will continue to be ineffective in protecting those that go out, live and work in Sydney city.

Please keep Sydney open for all. Help emerging musicians to earn a living and get noticed. Help young university students pay their rent and work in their industry of choice. Help businesses to stay open and continue making Sydney a diverse and creative city.

Sincerely and with hope for a more open Sydney,

Warm Regards,

Alexandra Mitchell

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