

Submission: Lock Out Law Review

FM Fleur Mitchell [REDACTED]

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To: Liquor Law Review; 

Fri 1/04

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To the Hon. Ian Callinan AC,

As a 30 year old who has grown up and lived in inner Sydney my whole life, I am disappointed by the negative impact the Lock Out laws have had on our city, particularly on businesses, live music and the arts. Sydney prides itself on being a global city, one that is vibrant and culturally alive, however the direct result of these Lock Laws has been to destroy the vibrancy of our city. It is not the same. It is no longer comparable to cities like London, New York and Amsterdam.

I believe that these laws do little to address the violent behaviour that they were brought into address. The laws do not address psychological and behavioural problems that many of the aggressors in these incidents are dealing with. Nor do they prevent individuals pre-loading at home. Instead they punish the responsible majority. As a resident of the Kings Cross area for over five years, I have been shocked at the change in what was once a bustling, vibrant nightlife district. I have seen venue after venue and restaurant after restaurant close down. I am troubled by the lack of transparency in these laws, particularly that the Star Casino appears to be exempt from any of the restrictions on drinking, smoking or lock out times. It is abundantly evident that a donation of \$4.7 billion gambling debts to the Government allows the Casino to operate on distinctly separate rules. This is unjust and not worthy of a city as great as Sydney. I have many friends who have been directly affected by these laws, they have lost jobs due to venues closing down. This is sad, avoidable and unacceptable.

I am also dismayed as an arts and cultural worker to see that these laws have directly impacted upon the viability of live music and visual arts venues and consequently the livelihoods of artists who perform in these venues. Many of the most successful contemporary visual artists, musicians, writers and curators that work professionally in Sydney were fostered by its nightlife in Oxford Street and the Kings Cross. These individuals have gone onto develop internationally renowned festival such as Vivid and the Biennale of Sydney, which bolsters not only the cultural identity but economic and tourism value of our city.

We need to protect and foster what makes this city great, one of those things is a vibrant cultural nightlife, that helps support venues that in turn support performers, a city that allows

its residents and visitors see live music and performance, enjoy a glass of wine whenever they choose to or spend all night dancing in a safe environment. These laws punish the responsible majority, people like myself. I, like many other young Sydneysiders, find myself looking at other cities interstate and overseas as more viable options for living and working, as people of my age group find themselves increasingly locked out of the housing market, welfare system and secure employment, the lock out laws have meant the destruction of my vibrant and beautiful city that I enjoy recreationally and feels like the final straw. I care about and am proud of my city and if these laws are continued, I fear what the long term affects will be for Sydney, not just economically but more importantly, culturally.

There are so many other more positive methods at our disposal that have worked in other cities, like the Night Mayor system in Amsterdam, which was worked to great effect, with other major European cities taking similar action. This is not about entertainment vs safety. I believe that both can be achieved simultaneously, and that our legislators have an obligation to preserve freedoms for law-abiding citizens while making a night out safer.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my submission.

Fleur Mitchell