

Lockout Review

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

Having bought a unit over 12 years ago (now leasing it out) on the border of the city/[REDACTED] precisely because of the fact that Sydney was amongst the most exciting places on earth to work, holiday and be entertained in, the Lockout Laws have caused me much sorrow. There wasn't a single night - from Monday through Sunday where visitors to this great city couldn't find a venue in which fun was to be had. That these draconian laws have come from a liberal government that believes in free enterprise, the cutting back of red tape et al, is particularly surprising. I would expect nanny state overkill from Labor, not the coalition.

I think the first thing that needs to be noted is that there was never any doubt that a curfew would lead to a significant lowering of violent incidents in and around the CBD. But in my experience, the city was getting safer each year and venues were getting stricter before the lockout. I wish the Government had done more in this regard before locking us out of our city thanks to the protracted campaigning of news organisations and the medical lobby rightly entrusted to protect us. But are the violent offenders that were coming into the CBD just pulling their drunken aggression now on private property or on people they know. So many of these king hits occurred by people coming into the city already drunk rather than those drinking at the licensed venues in the area. If police have to respond to disparate drunk related private assaults, then police might actually have to do more work in the future and the problem with addressing alcohol consumption remains!

Secondly, the brutalisation of our night life has meant in the case of those living in the lockout areas, a reprieve from late night noise coming through into their apartments but at the cost of the vibrancy that makes a city's soul tick.

Thirdly, I am embarrassed when I now host friends from overseas that if we do dinner at 930, we can barely make it to a decent cocktail bar without being able to have a proper cocktail because of shot restrictions after midnight. This cascades into a worry that our international reputation among young people will be so tarnished in terms of the sheer amount of rules governing alcohol consumption that we will lose the creative people that are necessary for the driving of economic growth, opportunity and innovation in the future. If people don't want to come to Sydney because it is boring and take their energy and talents to Melbourne which now has eclipsed Sydney in its amazing nightlife, I worry about my property prices falling or not being able to rent it out.

Fourthly, The consequences to those thousands who work in hospitality have been devastating. I have friends who work in the industry who are being clobbered by the reduction in people bar hopping as part of a great night AND who also cannot find a place to have a drink with friends after work because they are effectively locked out of their city after work.

Fifthly, taxi drivers i've spoken to have had the double whammy of competition from uber and the reduction in passengers getting out of the city come night time.

If the lockout is not withdrawn, I certainly hope there can be a relaxation - perhaps even shifting the lockout time to 3am and removing shot restrictions so that good small bars can serve us decent cocktails and nights out aren't prematurely shortened. And perhaps encourage the smaller bars, which have been a huge bonus to the city (even after the lockouts), by extending their trading hours.

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