

Lockout laws

Joshua Mostafa [REDACTED]

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

Dear Sir / Madam,

I'd like to make my views about the lockout laws known, as a member of the public. I do not own a pub or licensed venue, nor do I work at one. I do however run a local independent record label, [REDACTED] (ACN: [REDACTED])

One of things that makes Sydney a great world city is its culture. Music is an important part of that culture. A thriving music scene depends on late night venues being able to operate. It's to the people of Sydney's credit that it has been able to hold its own on the Australian music scene. However, this has been done *despite* what I understand to be unusually expensive entertainment licenses at venues. Over the years, this has caused a problem for venues having to make a choice between trying to make money from live music, and simply putting in more gambling machines.

It should hardly need stating that live music, as one of the arts, is a social good, and gambling has a negative impact on society. The lockout laws have compounded this problem. Legislators are surely aware of the power of laws as 'nudge' factors in changing societal behaviour. Setting the boundaries of the lockout zone to exclude the casinos and to punish the areas that have traditionally nurtured Sydney's live music is a cynical move that implicitly tells people they are better off wasting their money gambling than participating in the local music scene.

If Sydney is to compete with the other major cities of this country, notably Melbourne - which is known internationally as a culturally vibrant city with a great music scene - it should learn from what has worked in other cities. The current direction in legislation is going exactly the wrong way. The lockout laws are entirely wrong-headed. Their ostensible purpose, to reduce violence at night, is undermined not only by being a misguided to response their ostensible trigger - a horrific incident that occurred *outside* a venue and *well before* the lockout time - but by the fact that violence has risen steeply at casinos since the introduction of the law.

Finally, young people will not simply take what is dished out to them by lawmakers: they will vote with their feet. A brain drain to other cities will deprive Sydney of the innovative potential of youth and the next generation of creative thinkers. Lawmakers would do well to consider the unintended consequences of these laws in the future of our city.

Thanks,

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Joshua Mostafa
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