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My submission to the liquor law review

JN James Nichols [Redacted]

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To: Liquor Law Review;

Mon 4/04

Saved submissions

I am writing, as a resident of Darlinghurst, within the "lockout" precinct, to express my strong opposition to the lockout laws.

I believe that the one-size-fits-all "lockout law" of 1:30 am lockouts and 3 am end of service, is a poor policy to deal with the problem of violence. It is excessively heavy handed, damages nightlife options and harms the local economy. It has not been scrutinised against other possible measures to curb violence such as encouraging high quality live entertainment, venues presenting challenging and engaging art, rewarding enjoyable and peaceful venues, encouraging more diverse night time economies such as late night shopping or museum openings, and funding late night transport to clear punters from dense areas.

My suburb of Darlinghurst is heavily affected by the lockouts. Businesses are shutting doors and I feel the streets are only getting more dangerous as people are in the area less. Historically there has been little planning in the night time economy, allowing for the concentration of venues in the Darlinghurst / Kings Cross area to increase to an unsustainable degree. Sydney's night life was troubled even before the lockout laws began, as options for venues with quality local live entertainment began to dwindle. It is time now to finally address this problem and have a sensible plan for the night time economy, review or create entertainment precincts throughout the city, including in suburban areas, and plan for the flow of people throughout the city as a result. One such way to do this would also be to lower the barrier of licencing, allowing for more entrepreneurs and less organised crime or large, out-of-touch operators to be running the industry.

I also believe strongly that noise complaint laws should be reviewed - as currently the burden lies solely on the venue to accommodate the complaints even just a single resident. This is unfair say when a venue provides entertainment for many thousands of people in a night. There should be non-legal forms of mediation, perhaps agent-of-change laws as in Victoria, and a higher threshold of decibel-limits in entertainment precincts.

James Nichols

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