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(No subject)

TO Tim O'Keefe 

To: Liquor Law Review; 



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Sun 3/04

Inbox

Dear Panel Members,

These lockout laws need to go. BOCSAR data clearly shows that they have had a negligible impact on reducing the number of assaults perpetrated by drunk people. This fact alone should cause us to conclude that the laws have not succeeded in their intended objective of reducing alcohol fuelled violence.

Our only other sources of data are the Late Night Management Area Reports, which are so ludicrously inconsistent and incomparable that we can pretty safely disregard them, and Fulde et al's work, which suffers from problems ranging from basic arithmetic errors to serious questions about the academic honesty of the authors - not least of which is that the paper is entirely unreproducible because the authors wont share the raw data. Those works do not constitute reliable sources of information, and the Late Night Management Area Reports in particular show clear signs of bias, in that basic measurements - like the number of precincts considered - were changed in more recent reports so that the numbers appear more flattering for pro-lockout arguments.

Even that more flattering data shows that the vibrancy of Kings Cross and other areas covered by the lockouts has been completely destroyed. Many businesses have closed, foot traffic is down, and, anecdotally, the place feels like a ghost town. It is also less safe, as the number of assaults has been hardly affected, while the reduction in foot traffic means that the people who do still go out are now at greater personal risk than they were before. I'm also concerned that the reduction in foot traffic means that the few people who do run into trouble are now less likely to receive timely help, as there's fewer people around who can call the police or an ambulance.

Even if better availability and analysis of data showed that the laws were reducing violence - which is not what the data currently says - we would still need to examine whether they were the best and most effective way of achieving that outcome. Other cities in the world have found that their attempts at lockout laws failed, with Melbourne in particular experiencing an *increase* in violence when they introduced their lockout laws. Since then Melbourne has introduced a number of measures that have made it easier to have a diversified night time economy, with public transport that is available 24 hours a day so that patrons can safely return home at the end of the night. Surely the New South Wales government can learn from their Victorian counter parts and try out these non-destructive approaches.

Regards,

Dr. Tim O'Keefe