

Sydney Lockout Laws - opinion

Ben Panucci [REDACTED]

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

Hello,

I write to you as a full time musician, arts organisation artistic director and long time resident of Sydney.

The lockout laws have caused enormous damage to Sydney's night time economy and as a musician, I have been affected by this. Late night culture is hardly ever about the binge drinking and violence that media sources with vested interest in development and casinos portray. It is however often a time for the arts to be enjoyed by the local community and tourists. For the arts to flourish and for our city to stand up against the great city's of the world, we need spaces for this to exist. The lockout laws are anti art whether they realise it or not, as they have contributed to the shutting of so many venues.

Tougher laws on violence related crimes and an investigation into what venues, as opposed to areas promote binge drinking would be much more effective as opposed to the blanket laws that have so poorly affected many business that have been safely run for decades and contributed so much to late night culture.

The fact that the Casino is exempt even though it is the most violent place of all is criminal and I am disgusted in Mike Baird and the NSW Government. Their arrogance and contempt towards anyone who doesn't contribute to their pay check is despicable. Since when did the NSW Gov become the mafia??

Another point that should be raised is that the laws discriminate against shift workers. Not everyone works a 9 to 5 job and can go out for a few hours in the city after work and then retire before midnight. Where are the workers who served these people meant to go if they want a drink or some entertainment to relax after a long shift? I believe this is also a class based issue too. People in the service industry earn far less than most and are constantly having their rights taken from them.

The laws don't work and will not work. Violence related issues should be overcome through positive cultural activities and tougher laws for the perpetrator, not a blatant herding to the Casino. I believe we are better than this.

Thanks for your time,
Ben Panucci