

Submission to the Review of the *Liquor Amendment Act 2014* by the Hon. IDF Callinan AC QC

4 April 2016

To: Liquor Law Review, liquorlawreview@justice.nsw.gov.au

From: Rubi Piekalns

As a Sydney resident and a peaceful participant of its once vibrant nightlife, I am grateful for the opportunity to make this submission. I am writing to you because I have personally experienced the impacts that the lockout laws have had on our city – I have seen businesses close, witnessed the loss of jobs, lamented the lack of places to socialise with my friends and mourned the dwindling opportunities to listen to live, local music.

We all agree that safe streets are a priority, but there are better ways to achieve this. Evidence and common sense suggests that a better planned response could have a greater effect on reducing alcohol-related violence *without* having the unintended consequences that the lockout laws have had.

What happened?

Sydney's night-time economy had an awkward start to life. It grew up and out too quickly and without being properly planned for. Before we knew it, tens of thousands of people were coming into a few precincts every Friday and Saturday night, and yet instead of being managed on the scale this required, Kings Cross was left to its own devices. The police were not willing or able to deal with the belligerent or violently inclined. The venues were packed and the streets were chaotic. When it all got too much or you decided it was time to go home, the busses and trains had stopped and the fight for a cab was a long one.

Then, tragically, two young men lost their lives. The city mourned and rightly decided things had to change. The government's response, however, chose to deflect the blame and rushed through blanket laws without consultation. The lockout laws have been a failure.

What needs to change?

The lock-out laws have caused irreparable damage to the economic, social and cultural fabric of Sydney. Instead of the 1:30am lockout and 3.00am cease of service, the **7 key actions** below should be implemented together to curb the violence and keep Sydney open for all to enjoy.

- 1 Developing best-practice **policing** strategies;
- 2 Investing in 24/7 public **transport**;

- 3 Implementing integrated urban **planning reform**;
- 4 Encouraging diversification of **after-dark activities**;
- 5 Establishing anti-violence **education & intervention** campaigns;
- 6 **Incentivising well-run venues**; and
- 7 Appointing a **Night Mayor**.

SIGNED *Rubi Plekalns* , 4 APRIL 2016