

# The Romans did this once

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission regarding the Sydney lock out laws.

I have one point which goes to what I believe is the greatest fallacy made in defence of the laws. This is the suggestion that the laws have been successful given the decrease in the rate of assaults, which manages to be short-sighted, mistaken and irrelevant all at once.

A Roman general once was tasked with bringing peace to a rebellious province. He did so, by killing all of its citizens. His soldiers wrote on a wall, "solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant", which means, to bring desolation and call it peace.

To point to the current state of Kings Cross and reference the decreased number of assaults, is also to 'create desolation and call it peace'. Of course assaults are down – the after dark economy has been destroyed.

Yes, the measures have decreased assaults and so strictly speaking have achieved what they intended to do. (I will ignore the 'per capita' point which actually shows that per person visiting the Cross, assaults have not decreased). But it is a textbook example of inelegant and heavy handed legislation that while technically achieving its stated goals, is doing so at a societal net loss.

There are far more effective, more precise options available that would achieve the same goals, without resorting to the elimination of local business and the punishment of the 99.9% of young people that no longer visit the Cross because there is no spectacle or vibe.

Some options that should be considered include:

- giving the alternative laws within the *Crimes and Other Legislation Amendment (Assault and Intoxication) Act 2014 (NSW)* a chance to demonstrate their effectiveness by themselves. The minimum sentences for violent offences when intoxicated and on-the-spot fines for anti-social behaviour are well-crafted measures that precisely target the individuals responsible.
- educational/cultural campaigns targeting people's behaviours on nights out.
- shifts or increases in police presence. If there is a cost for higher police monitoring, this can be levied from the local businesses who would happily pay this if it meant traffic increased to pre-lockout levels.

Many thanks,

Tom Platt