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# Submission to the review of alcohol

WP Wayne Plumridge 

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1:37 AM

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I do not agree with these laws and believe that they should be repealed and look towards other more effective solutions.

First and foremost I believe that something must be done to address the culture of violence in relation to drinking. I am a police officer who works in the areas and the first principle I rely on is in relation to civil liberties. Restricting and limiting peoples freedom to when and what they can drink based on a location and time is not part of the freedom that this country and the Western world is built upon. Restrictions on something that is normally free to do goes against the rule of law and the Government should not be seeking to control it through punitive legislation but should be changing the culture through education, environmental design, and culture change. Restrictions can lead to further "draconian laws" and this process could be viewed as a continuation of the previous "Alcopop tax" laws which saw an increase in "pre drinking or pre loading" before hitting the town. This is a seldom discussed issue which I have no doubt impacted on the increased violence prior to lockout laws and times.

The data on assaults in the lockout area is not being examined or reported accurately. There was already a continuing decrease in offences and when you look at the entire Sydney area the lockouts cover, you will not see a massive increase in the reduction from year to year. (BOCSAR). In fact if you look at the graphs you will see a year prior to lockouts that the assault rates dropped to post lockout laws and no legislation was required for it. No research was made into why this occurred. Additionally the lockout laws were introduced just prior to winter which always see a seasonal decline.

If you examine the data and graphs carefully you will see a steep decline before the lockout laws were enacted. The main reason from my view was the whole media discussion on the issue which raised awareness. When the media issues refrain from reporting on the issues you will notice an increase in line with seasonal change.

Displacement always takes time to properly map and locate adjustments. Reports that no displacement or little has occurred is under reporting just how much is occurring. The problem with displacement is it takes a large chunk of crime and moves it over a larger area therefore it is hard to detect. Areas like the casino are seeing clear rises in crime but not everyone who would not go into the lockout areas are going into the casino straight away. Therefore the increase is continuing but takes time. Further the hotspot maps (BOCSAR) clearly show an increase in areas such as the Crown Street Hotel Surry Hills and the Strawberry hills

Hotel. The map is clear and when you add Newtown and the Casino you will find there has not been the so called reduction the laws are touting.

Further points to add is the two deaths used to push this agenda occurred long before the lockout law times would have had effect. Demographic change in the area is being ignored. The price of housing in the effected zone has increased dramatically and that always improves on crime rates due to the people who begin to live and work in the area. Stricter licensing enforcement is having an effect on RSA and security practices. Police crime prevention such as bailing a person not to come into the area and long term banning notices are beginning to have an effect.

It is clear that the foot traffic has been massively reduced. This is evident empirically and would be a major cause as to the reduction. If research was conducted on that issue they may find that the rate per capita has increased not decreased due to the lower number of people coming to the area.

Victoria has had excellent success with 24 hour licensing and addressed issues such as 24 hour transport. Also a redesign allowing larger areas for pedestrian so they do not bump into each other has been attributed to a reduction.

In summary the laws are not needed to reduce crime. It was already on the way down without them. Other factors are being ignored and the displacement is not being properly address. I encourage you to repeal the law, work with the business community to improve the image and content of clubs, create a 24 hour license area, improve transport, increase policing patrols, and remove the "alcopop tax".

On a side note I would like to recommend a new criminal sentencing offence of "Commit offence whilst intoxicated." Current legislation places the burden of responsibility of the pubs and clubs to make sure a person does not get drunk and violent. Lets put it back on the individual and punish them when they are being sentenced so increase their penalty. Consider it akin to an aggravating factor.

One last comment, stop saying all police support this. I know a lot that do not.

Regards,

Wayne Plumridge

Police Officer