

Public submission on liquor laws

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

Hi

I just wanted to express my absolute rejection of the notion that these totalitarian lockout laws are aiding health and public safety. They are funneling people into the casino's. The same casinos which perversely have exclusions on drinking and smoking regulations. What message does that send youth? That gambling addictions and all the related family and social problems are acceptable but drinking two shots after a certain time on a random fun night are not. It's a complete and utter joke!

To shut down the ability to move between establishments after a set time means that clubs and live music venues have suffered disproportionately. The bars where sedentary old people drink to the wee hours do not get impacted as heavily. This means youth have suffered disproportionately from the control mechanisms imposed because of only two coward punches. Two coward punches that would have occurred anyway even with these laws in place. Therefore we need to ask why? Why is the government promoting statistics for alcohol related hospital admissions without taking into account the reduction in foot traffic in the same areas? Why isn't the government being transparent on the true driver behind these laws?

If these laws are so effective in minimising alcohol related violence they should apply state wide, casinos included. Especially since alcohol related violence is increasing at Star City. Why are the casinos excluded?

The supposedly very effective laws should apply to all the former popular night life areas including the casinos, existing and proposed. The populace are onto the very corrupt dealings of the O'Farrel government which have been further supported by Baird. Packer and Star City are rejoicing these laws. Meanwhile the youth are in disbelief. They will leave to Melbourne or overseas. Is this really what a government wants with an already aging populace?

We expect good government, not totalitarian control. We do not need to be regulated in how we socialise. We should never be coerced into socialising in casinos as a primary option. Instead the police need to be supported to do their job in deterring and apprehending the few that wish to spoil the party. The people need options to move in and out of the night life areas quickly. More buses and trains servicing the areas monitored by more police. More night life areas created so that the population isn't massed in one or two places. More public education about alcohol related injuries and violence. These are the steps to a holistic management of the supposed problem. If this seems like it costs more then perhaps tax alcohol more to pay for it. Or better yet tax gambling more to pay for it.

We don't stop everyone driving when one or two aggressive drivers cause major crashes and deaths. Why then do governments impose these kind of laws on the back of a coward punch? Please explain.

To party and enjoy freedom of movement at night is the fundamental right of the youth of Australia. Take it away and you remove key civil liberties. No government which removes key civil liberties will be successful long term no matter how much you contort your statistics to attempt to win public favour. Blatant corruption will not be accepted. The casinos are to be included in the lockout laws or the lockout laws should be abolished altogether. It's that simple. You cannot pick and choose who is included in the lockout zone based on how much money and kick backs the liberal party gets. The people are watching and ready to vote you out.

Here is a smart solution, the CBD is dead at night. Comparitively speaking, very few people live in the CBD compared to surrounding districts and if they do they are in high rise towers away from potential street or below ground venues. Allow pubs and clubs to operate in dispersed locations around the CBD without lockout laws. This would prevent congregations of hundreds or thousands of people in one zone, like Kings Cross, and still allow a nightlife to flourish bringing vitality back to the city. Bring the CBD lane ways and streets alive at night. That way the government can continue to support kings cross being converted into expensive quiet luxury apartments while also getting revenue from increased alcohol taxes, licensing fees and a booming CBD nightlife. The youth can remain and enjoy the city rather than seeking freedoms elsewhere. This is a win-win-win in my books. I encourage you to please consider.

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Yours Sincerely,
Clinton Rakich