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# Reclaim The Streets Submission to Liquor Law Review

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## Reclaim The Streets Submission to Liquor Law Review

Reclaim The Streets is the long-running activist movement that assembled in three anti-lockout protest festivals on 13 September 2015, 12 December 2015 and 19 March 2016.

This submission carries the weight of 315 volunteers, 185 performing musicians, and 10,000 protesters who rallied over those 3 days to demand their freedom to dance all night and share sunrises with new friends.

The great public outcry against this suite of laws stems not only from the absurd injustice of a curfew affecting responsible adults, but also from a fear of loss of critical public space and community. This fear became justified with the closure of many significant venues.

Nightclubs are more than just dispensaries for alcohol. For many they are the only place to meet people like themselves.

It's necessary for everyone to have a common space where inhibitions can be broken down and new connections made. This process takes time so it is equally necessary that this common space stays open all night.

Though this practice is universal, vulnerable groups have much greater need.

### Communities:

Even with significantly higher representation on TV and access through the internet, queer people, particularly young queer people often still feel isolated.

The connections formed in public spaces like bars and nightclubs are needed to counter the effects of systemic discrimination.

People who are part of a community are less likely to feel depressed, anxious, isolated and suicidal.

The lockout laws hit queers disproportionately because they cover the inner city areas where that critical community was built.

The 1.30am deadline occasionally also leads to people being cut off from their friends outside a venue. This leaves them vulnerable to attack.

The Queer community outside the lockout precinct also took a hit.

The city curfew significantly reduced the amount of adequate space to dance in without reducing the number of dancers.

Enough punters relocated their weekend festivities from the City to Newtown to cause conflict with the area's large Queer community.

Though curfew proponents insist the displacement of violence is not reflected in the statistics, there is no shortage of anecdotes from Inner West locals fearing for their safety.

### **Music:**

The other affected group is performers. Musicians are screaming out for stages.

The model where liquor sales supported live music was only profitable when the venues were able to sell alcohol all night.

As well as restoring late-night liquor venues, we need to diversify the spaces we gather in together as a community to listen to music, and we need to pay the artists for it.

The government needs to incentivise small-scale music venues that aren't dependent on liquor sales, and don't restrict BYO either.

We also need outdoor public spaces available for performers to use for free without seeking long and costly approval from councils.

### **Planning:**

We need to design entertainment precincts that encourage varied nightlife alongside nightclubs.

The introduction of clearways on Oxford Street caused a plummet in the diversity of businesses as the street became a noisy and unpleasant place to be.

When there are fewer eyes on the street the capacity to self-regulate diminishes and we end up with late night altercations.

The roads through clubbing districts should be blocked after 8pm on weekends and people who aren't clubbers given a reason to be there.

It'll make those places much more pleasant and safe, with the added benefit of cutting the number of drunk people accidentally stepping in front of cars.

Service the area with frequent, reliable 24-hour trains. People want to take the trains. Let them take the trains.

These changes are also essential for developing a nighttime economy tourist market and positioning Sydney as a global cultural city.

### **Culture:**

Rather than constant surveillance and entrenched security we need to create a culture of self-regulation based around looking after yourself and your mates.

Social spaces allow creative minds to flourish. Once you take away the capacity for people to interact and make their own choices you are essentially extinguishing enormous potential resulting in a bland, generic city.

Sydneysiders work hard and deserve to go out on the weekend. Whether that involves dinner with matching wines, or beers and jäger bombs, it should be up to them, not the government.

Adults who want to have a good time shouldn't be chastised for it, and they shouldn't be penalised for the misbehaviour of a few stray idiots.

All solutions should encourage more people into the city at night because a vibrant nightlife is not the cause of social decay; it is the cure.

Links:

### **Protest 13 September 2015**

**Event:** <https://www.facebook.com/events/881584515256628/>

**Photos:** <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.446432592230969.1073741833.257795641094666&type=3>

**Protest 12 December 2015**

**Event:** <https://www.facebook.com/events/1274606679232253/>

**Photos:** <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.464584183749143.1073741834.257795641094666&type=3>

**Protest 19 March 2016**

**Event:** <https://www.facebook.com/events/237327156602371/>

**Photos:** <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.502740839933477.1073741839.257795641094666&type=3>

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