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Lockout Laws in Sydney

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Aaron Rose 

To: Liquor Law Review; 



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Fri 1/04

Inbox

Hi,

I would like to write to your request asking for submissions on the Lockout and related laws currently being reviewed.

I live in an inner city suburb bordering the entertainment precinct. I disagree with the lockout laws and many of laws enacted around the same time and feel like we could have done a better job of keeping an active and vibrant nightlife for Sydney while also continuing to make it safer.

I feel like the decision to punish the masses for a few bad eggs is not the greatest of plans. I believe the government rushed legislation in due to a vocal media who beat up the problem and sought sources to quote at the time shortly after a second, tragic death in Sydney's (now termed) entertainment precinct. The irony is that the vast majority of the laws brought in after this fatality would not have prevented it from happening in the first place. The young man, Thomas Kelly, was hit by a lunatic who was on a rampage earlier in the evening taunting and assaulting others, we're told, all while fuelled by alcohol he had purchased, predominantly, from a bottle shop and consumed outside of any licensed venue in the entertainment precinct. He was hit well before midnight, and thus well before any lockout time which was introduced by the NSW state government. The actions of the offender, Loveridge, that night were abhorrent, but nothing in the rushed legislation following that incident would have prevented him from behaving that way, except perhaps the mandatory sentencing in alcohol fuelled one punch offences. Idiots like Loveridge have unfortunately been walking amongst us for far too long. Education is the key here, not punishment of an entire population.

No other options were seemingly considered by the inept government who rushed in this legislation, led by Barry O'Farrell whose name has since been tarnished after admitting to lying to ICAC. It seems highly dubious that a government lead by a man of such ill character to knowingly lie to ICAC, would also be the same government to enact legislation covering the entire CBD, Kings Cross, Pots Point and Darlinghurst areas, but leave out the Star City Casino, as well as Barangaroo, home of a future casino.

At the time the legislation was being discussed in the media there seemed to be little or no discussion with concerned stakeholders, only pandering to the enraged media lead by the loathsome tabloids. It did seem rather odd that a liberal government would willingly enact legislation to curb businesses from thriving. Perhaps they were too stupid to have considered it an option. Whilst I have no doubt property developers (who also have a dubious relationship with the NSW government when it comes to party donations) have thrived in inner city area

where foot traffic and a late night culture has died, many many other small business have failed. The knock on affect is so easy to see but seemingly it hasn't been seen by the new Baird government who only has blinkers on when it comes to this legislation, instead of clearly seeing the will of the people he has decided to go it alone and decide what is best for the city of Sydney and this state in his eyes only. When a late night bar or club closes, the pub or small bar where people used to go prior to that club also closes, as does the restaurant where everyone met for dinner earlier in the night. It is terribly sad to walk through parts of Darlinghurst and Kings Cross, and remember the wonderful restaurants and small bars that once were. All run by wonderful people, many of them family businesses who had given everything to build a business only to see it go down the drain because of poorly thought out and rushed legislation. Why were no other options considered?

The notion of someone responsible such as myself, not being able to buy a bottle of wine for a group of people at a bar after 10PM but I can buy 4 or 5 glasses, or not being able to buy a nice whiskey on the rocks after midnight but I can have it with coke, or not even being able to buy a takeaway bottle of beer after 10PM is ridiculous. The first day of the new legislation I was actually affected by this insane law. I had worked at my job in the city as a professional until around 10:15pm trying to meet a deadline. I was going to have to take some work home with me and tried to stop in to a bottle shop on my way home, however they were of course unable to serve me as it was after 10, and after the new legislation had been brought in. How ridiculous, I had been working from 7am till around 10 at night and I couldn't even purchase a bottle of beer to take home and nurse while I had some dinner and did the last of the work I needed to do that day. I have been in similar situations since then of course and still find it equally as ridiculous. I can understand that, if I am intoxicated I should be prevented from being able to purchase any alcohol whether a takeaway beer at 10:05PM or a whisky on the rocks at 12:15AM or even at 5PM. All staff selling alcohol are trained in RSA that's what it is there for, now the government is also telling us when we can and can't have this or that type of alcohol as a blanket rule? How bloody ridiculous.

I could go on, of course, but I will not. The lockouts and associated laws are bad for business, bad for personal freedoms, bad for a city which is meant to be an internationally recognised cosmopolitan of a city, and bad for the many young people who will lose a community where they can socialise meet future partners, dance, eat and have a good time.

Thanks
Aaron Rose