

Response Independent review of the impact of liquor law reforms

Joey Schaasberg [REDACTED]

Wed 30/03/2016 3:59 PM

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

Hello,

Please find below my response.

Joey Schaasberg

My name is Joey Schaasberg, a 32 year old urban planner who's moved from Amsterdam to Sydney about a year ago. I wanted to share my concern about the restrictive liquor laws in Sydney and how I think this is affecting the creative value of the city.

In urban planning, it is a well known fact that cities can create economic outcomes in the form of new ideas, new hightech businesses and regional growth by attracting the so called Creative class. They are designers, writers, artists, planners, developers, people with good ideas. There's loads of literature around, have a look, but here's one of the articles.

<http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2001/0205.florida.html>

It's no surprise that for a long time cities have done their best to attract these kinds of people. They do this by creating places that allow for the sharing of ideas and stimulation of the mind. This ranges from creative hubs for startups, undefinable weird hang out places for artists, and yes, a free environment of bars and dance clubs that are open all night.

As a newcomer to the city (I've been visiting mostly the gay bars and some dance parties), the feeling has crept up on me that Sydney is trying to scare away the creative class. The lockout laws are a big restriction for the creative class to go about, be free, have fun, and contribute to the development of creative ideas that in the long run are beneficial for the city. Nobody disagrees with the initiative to stop alcohol related violence, but it seems very much like the wrong actions have been taken to stop this.

There are loads of international examples that show how you can effectively reduce violence, alcohol and drug abuse. As you'll quickly find out, most of them try to create transparency instead of hiding, moving or scaring away the use of these substances. For example in the Netherlands, you can have your (illegal) drugs tested for almost no money. There are less accidents with bad drugs because of this.

In Europe, you won't find scary sniffer dogs and obtrusive police officers at events, but nice people who will explain you the risks of using drugs. It's no secret that there are less weed smokers in countries where it is legal to smoke. Have a google and the heavily researched benefits that are available by creating a more transparent environment in terms of the effects of drugs and alcohol.

A cultural scene is invaluable to your city, it needs ages to develop but can be destroyed in a short amount of time. I think Sydney is running backwards and is doing irreversible damage to the city that it will regret in 5 years time. I urge you to adopt a more innovative and modern approach in the fight on drugs and alcohol abuse. There is loads of international experience in this subject, please learn from these examples before doing something you regret later.

Good luck,

Joey