

Liquor law review submission

Nairn [REDACTED]

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

Liquor Law Review

liquorlawreview@justice.nsw.gov.au
GPO Box 7060
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have been a resident of Surry Hills since 1996. I own my own apartment (and have three other investment properties within the lockout zones). I work at St Vincent's Hospital, and have studied at COFA and University of Notre Dame, Darlinghurst over the years. I have a lifetime of memories at stake within the geographical areas affected by the lockout laws.

As a participant within the arts community and as a former lecturer at the College of Fine Arts, I have many international friends and guests that either stay with me or within this area. Being a gay man I have also visitors every year during summer and Mardi Gras.

So it is with dismay that I have seen the diminishing of my local area and its night-time activities over the last few years.

One example. I went to the Sydney Festival and treated four overseas guests to tickets to see Meow Meow at the Spiegel Tent. The show ended at 11:30pm. We walked to Oxford St and found a new wine bar (replacing the once famous and culturally important Phoenix club, closed since lockouts were introduced). As we sat down in what was a quite, sparsely populated bar we were served a \$95 bottle of Bordeaux in plastic wine glasses. We accepted this with as much good grace as we could, but I was embarrassed. By the time we finished that bottle of wine and a cocktail, with some accompanying tapas, we had missed our opportunity to move onto a livelier venue up the road for some dancing. I didn't see these guests again, and I doubt they will come back to Sydney.

I often finish work till 10:30 (I am a nurse working in the area). I have no opportunity to grab a bottle of wine on my way home. In Surry Hills, many of us choose to dine later (or are unable to secure a sitting earlier than 8:30-9pm). If we choose to come back to my apartment for a nightcap, we have to make sure we have a prior stocked bar. This is clearly ridiculous for an international city.

I am a proud member of my inner city's gay community. We have always celebrated our community convivially at nightclubs and on dance floors. Often choosing to meander between venues depending on mood, crowds and what friends we may bump into. I am now forced to choose one venue and stake my whole night on this one location for fear of being locked out at 1:30 am.

If there is a party at a venue, I must remain in that party after 1:30 or else be locked out. The ability to pop out and meet some mates at a different venue, then return to a ticketed event, no longer exists. My community, our sense of cohesion and our ability to maintain a variety of social contacts across differing venues have been diminished. Our social circles are becoming smaller, less expansive. This has far reaching impacts for a community that relies on peer relations (often above blood relations) as a means of social, emotional and spiritual support, now and into the future.

The gay community and inner city dwellers have always cherished the night-time. Finishing up at a dance venue at 4am and popping into a late opening bar for a final nightcap with a group of friends was always a pleasure. We could debrief, tell stories in more talk friendly environs, meet new people. Now we must all go straight home. Why should I have to? It's not the city I have invested 20 years building. And the insult of having the casino exempt (such a gay friendly space as it is) is quite frankly insulting.

Please reconsider what these laws are doing to our inner city night-life. For many of us, this is the life we cherish over the humdrum of our daily jobs. It is not for everyone, sure. But we chose this, and you have taken it away from us. And I have done nothing wrong.

Nairn Scott

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Riley St Resident
Surry Hills