

SUBMISSION to the independent review of the impact of liquor law reforms

Pat Skenridge [REDACTED]

Wed 30/03/2016 5:58 PM

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

SUBMISSION TO THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF LIQUOR LAW REFORMS

The claimed death of business in Kings Cross/Potts Point is not because of lockout laws. It's that there is only a certain cohort of people who want to come here now, the others having been driven away over the last few years by the extreme liquor culture - and the same goes for Oxford Street Darlinghurst. It was only a matter of time.

These precincts have been dying a slow death because of the over-concentration of liquor outlets and the consequent loss of the once-vibrant area brought by small bars, intimate music venues, boutique shops, a dash of bohemia, restaurants of all kinds - not just liquor mills and the take-away, fill-you-up-to-combat-the-booze-food now in Darlinghurst Road.

Kings Cross (Potts Point) is the most densely populated 1/2 square mile in Australia. Statistics show that more than 81% of residents are single and mostly under 35, contrary to claims of invasion by hordes of retirees made by those representing objectors to the lock-out laws. I'll put my hand up - yes, I'm old, I live here but have known the Cross since my childhood with family and close friends living here, as well as enjoying the variety of experiences provided in the Cross throughout my entire life.

It's a marvellous place to live and visit: somewhat louche but with an extraordinary street courtesy, helpfulness and friendliness, famous (and infamous) characters, great shops, restaurants, theatres, small bars, people from the very rich to the destitute - you name it! Is now, always has been. Well, until the last few years ... and before the lockout. On any Friday or Saturday night - and sometimes every other night - at almost any hour you are met with any army of pathetic, staggering, vomiting, falling-down, shrieking, screaming, violent alcohol and drug-affected "visitors". And the fearful sound of ambulance sirens ... it's not just awful to see, it's also very, very sad.

It is NOT the vibrancy of times past where visitors came to enjoy the entertainment venues, who might get a bit squiffy in the course of having fun: now they pre-load and simply come to get drunker because they can't do it anywhere else. (Please note, many hoteliers outside Kings Cross have **voluntarily** adopted lock-out laws). Even with the lock-out they're still here, but not in the numbers.

Then there's the lack of compliance with the regulations for the responsible service of alcohol - but perhaps we shouldn't go there as no one else seems to want to - I hope His Honour will!

And as for the idea that all of this brings in a fortune to the State, just consider for a moment the enormous cost to the NSW Government for medical and police services who have to deal with drunks and their victims on the streets of Kings Cross and surrounds - ask Kings Cross LAC Chief Inspector Michael Fitzgerald and Gordian Fulde of St Vincent's Emergency Department. I hate to think of young people waking the next day, remembering what they did and suffering the consequences in so many different ways.

The long hours and intense consumption of alcohol permitted by licencees disregarding the requirement not to serve those already affected by alcohol, plus the propensity of a significant number of young people to drink to destruction leading to great harm to themselves and others is, itself, the cause of the downturn of business in Kings Cross - it has been dying for the past 3-4 years - if not longer, caused only by the takeover of Darlinghurst Road and surrounds by a single cohort of the population with one aim - to sell and drink as much alcohol as possible, regardless of the consequences. Vibrant business will only return once the lockout laws are made permanent as they are in many areas in New York, London and any other major international city, allowing the return of a mix of the population as well as more sophisticated tourists (as opposed to backpackers who make up a large cohort of the current consumers of alcohol), visitors and locals who will now walk around the corner to enjoy a more welcoming place studded with better, and yes, livelier businesses.

I look forward to the Hon. Ian Callinan QC, seriously considering my submission and to a resolution to maintain the current lockout laws as they are, thus restoring real liveliness to the precinct.

Patti Skenridge

