

**The Hon. Ian Callahan AC QC**

Dear Sir,

I'm very pleased that there is an independent review into the current liquor laws in New South Wales.

I'm a 41-year-old professional in the electronic music industry. For over two decades I have worked in a variety of roles in the electronic music business, roles that have changed as my career has evolved. Since 1994 I have worked as a publicist, event promoter and manager, booking agent, music journalist, and artist manager – the latter of which is my core business focus today. Under my company which I founded a decade ago, I manage three electronic music artists, am Executive Producer for an annual conference called Electronic Music Conference held in Sydney each December, I consult to a number of brands, marketing and advertising agencies on strategies and implantation of music programs and initiatives and I sit on a number of committees including the ARIA Club Chart Committee and APRA's Club Music Advisory Group.

I'm incredibly grateful to have been able to work within this art form and in this industry – I have unwavering belief in the electronic music talent that comes from Australia. In 2016 I'm very proud to work in a sector of the music business which has a number of its artists achieving great things in international markets – Flume, Alison Wonderland, Rufus and Flight Facilities are just a few of the artists that are currently selling out medium to large scale venues in key international markets, headlining some of the world's leading music and arts festivals, selling records to Platinum record levels and securing massive synchronisations in advertising, film and television placements globally.

I'm a firm believer that part of the reason why we are seeing such a significant level of success from these artists is because Sydney once had an incredibly vibrant nightlife ecosystem which provided a strong creative

foundation for these artists to develop and be nurtured whilst having a satisfactory platform to "cut their teeth" as performing artists and to engage with a domestic audience within a thriving nightlife culture. Incidentally, all four of those aforementioned artists are all Sydney based artists who commenced their careers here in the period between the mid 2000s through to 2012. Since 2012 a number of them have been spending more time overseas than at home, due to the demands of their international schedules. Their successes overseas are something we should be proud of, and their successes would not have been possible were it not for a strong creative foundation that Sydney once provided them.

It is of great concern that Sydney no longer has a nightlife culture that provides a creative foundation for our electronic music stars of tomorrow. We are already starting to see the effects that the Lockouts have created in Sydney beyond the direct economic impacts on our nighttime economy. Having spoken with all of my colleagues who work as the leading booking agents in this genre, all of them unanimously have expressed that they have already seen a significant decrease in the number of emerging artists coming from Sydney since 2014.

One of the key responsibilities of my role as Executive Producer of Electronic Music Conference (EMC) is to curate and secure a number of leading talent buyers in electronic music sectors globally to attend EMC for the purpose of connecting them with local artists and artist managers with the aim to create export opportunities for our country's artists in international markets. Since 2012, we have hosted numerous leading talent buyers from North America, South America, UK and Europe; multiple markets in Asia including Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, India, China as well as Japan. We have consistently seen great outcomes from this international visitors program in terms of export sales and opportunities for a long list of artists, artist managers and other businesses in electronic music. Sadly, in 2015 we saw a significant increase in the early departure of our international visitors who no longer wanted to stay on in Sydney for

the additional days around the conference dates and instead chose to fly to Melbourne as there is a lot more opportunity for them to see and do more to engage with the artistic community specific to electronic music. It is a great shame that Sydney no longer provides a vibrant nightlife culture that will ensure our international visitors stay in our fine city to absorb more of the cultural richness Sydney once had in abundance.

Some of the more direct impacts of the Lockout laws as I see them are:

- The loss of a significant number of hospitality jobs following the closure of approximately 50 venues including restaurants, bars and nightclubs since 2014.
- The loss of jobs at professional agencies representing Sydney and Australian performing artists in electronic music. Due to the significant reduction in bookings coming from the Sydney market, agencies have had no option but to reduce their rosters of artists and subsequently lay off full time booking staff since 2014.
- A significant reduction in songwriting income for songwriters in electronic music. Personally I have seen a decrease of more than 30% of this income stream for my own artists, and after discussions with many of my management colleagues, this is reflected in the decrease they're seeing for their artists as well.
- Venues are consistently dealing with lengthy visits from licensing and police authorities during peak trading times. This is counter productive as it only sees their focus taken up with liaising with authorities at times when their focus should 100% be on ensuring their patrons are able to enjoy a safe and fun environment to relax and enjoy music in.
- Reluctance for event curators and promoters to host more emerging and pioneering artists within the art form of electronic music. Due to the lack of venues able to host this genre effectively, curators and promoters are forced to stick with acts that are guaranteed to fill venues, rather than having an ecosystem that can truly support

fresh, emerging talent. This is vital to ensure our emerging domestic artists have opportunities to align with the right kinds of international artists for the purpose of developing a domestic audience.

I'm sure it has become apparent to you in the process of reviewing the submissions that the people of Sydney, the various stakeholders within the nighttime economy of Sydney, the City of Sydney council, the state government and the NSW Police agree on one thing – we all want a safe and vibrant nightlife in our city. There has to be a better way to achieve this than a blanket Lockout that negatively affects all venues in key entertainment precincts aside the Casino.

Whilst on the topic of the Casino, surely it can only be seen as unfair that this is the only option for patrons to engage in any nightlife “culture” (if you can call it that) after a certain time period. Surely, if we are focused on the wellbeing of the people of our city, we should place as much importance on the significant rate of depression and suicide amongst gamblers as we do on the injuries and deaths that have resulted from alcohol fueled violence?

Some solutions I believe we need to explore and consider for a better way to move forward to a safe and vibrant Sydney is:

- Better late night public transport both in and out of key entertainment precincts in Sydney
- Individual accountability in terms of punishment and sentencing for violent crimes including one punch attacks. More focus on the perpetrators rather than the victims. What can we learn from who these people are and why they react in this way after drinking? This is not normal behavior.

- A more collaborative, less confrontational approach between police and licensed venues
- Improved CCTV in the streets, where these one punch attacks have occurred
- Education initiatives and campaigns to reduce negative outcomes from alcohol. We can learn a lot from Victoria's 'Step Back – Think' campaign. Our government has spent so much money on anti drinking, anti drug campaigns that have not engaged with the youth effectively. Infact in some cases they have been laughed at, by the target market they are attempting to influence. Rather than allocating hundreds of thousands of dollars to big advertising agencies led by forty-something creative people that don't spend much time out in nightclubs and bars and therefore don't really understand the culture, lets turn to the content creators in the space of youth, music, nightclubbing and festivals and collaborate with them on effective campaigns that will create real impact.
- If the Lockouts remain, the Casinos should not be exempt from them. Should someone have to die at the Casino for the laws to apply to them? They have just as many violent incidents than the Kings Cross venues.
- The removal of the ability for the Casinos to be the major funders of the Thomas Kelly Foundation, which has campaigned for these very laws to exist, laws which the Casinos stand to benefit from.
- Strengthen Section 77 for violent aggressors and perpetrators
- Monitor / review the number of venues that focus on happy hour half price beers while UFC or cage fighting or violent sports like Rugby League are played on screens in the venue. More venues that deliver more cultural aspects to nightlight culture – late night live music, bars or late night eateries with a focus on culinary delights or world class wine lists, or late night visual art spaces / installation spaces.

- The implementation of a late night council or a nighttime Mayor, seeking insights and guidance from cities where this approach has really worked.

Thank you for your time in reviewing this submission. Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this submission with me, I am contactable by my email address or [REDACTED]

Sincerely,  
Jane Slings