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# Liquor Law Review

JS Joanne Spiteri 



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To: Liquor Law Review; 

Sun 3/04

Inbox

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a 46 year-old Sydney woman who has been going to clubs for almost 30 years. I am a passionate music lover. I met my boyfriend at 6am at a club, over 17 years ago. If the lockout laws were in place in 1998, we may never have met.

Lockout laws are blaming the masses for the actions of a few. Lockout laws do nothing to solve the issue of violence at all. There needs to be mandatory education against violence. Laws against violence should be enforced.

Nightclubs are more than just dispensaries for alcohol. For many they are the only place to meet people like themselves.

It's necessary for everyone to have a common space where inhibitions can be broken down and new connections made. This process takes time so it is equally necessary that this common space stays open all night.

Going home after clubbing now is much harder to do safely. If I want to go home after 1.30am, and my partner wants to stay at the club, I have to go to the car on my own. Nobody can walk me to my car, as they can't get back into the venue. And, as the streets are so vacant now, I am much more concerned that if I'm attacked, nobody will hear my screams, and come to help.

The amount of clubs that have shut down is detrimental to the economy. Less people go out, and other businesses go under. The Newsagent in Oxford St shut recently, after decades of business. So many take-away food shops have now permanently closed.

With so many clubs now permanently closed, there are so few places to dance in. I am part of a community who are passionate about music. With less places to go, there are more non-music focused people coming to the clubs we like to go to, and making it much harder for us to enjoy ourselves.

Friends are leaving NSW in droves. In the past year, over 10 friends have moved to Melbourne. And every time one of the last few clubs we go to closes permanently, more friends move away.

The number of people going out in the lockout areas has fallen way more than the incidents of violence. This means, per capita, that violence has risen.

Employment for the young was already problematic before the lockouts. Recent figures show youth unemployment worsening, especially in the Eastern Suburbs of NSW. An area that is notoriously wealthy. With businesses going under, who will employ the youth?

If the lockout laws stay, in 20 years time, Sydney will be the Florida of Australia. Only the old will live here, gambling away their lives. Parents will be upset that their children will move away after school, as there is no entertainment. There will be no world famous musicians from performing in pubs and clubs, as there won't be any pubs and clubs left. Bands like INXS would never have been discovered without pubs and clubs.

If my boyfriend and I were in our 20s, and the lockout laws had been implemented, we would have moved to Melbourne. As we are both in our mid-40s now, and have entrenched lives here, it is harder to consider. But, if either of us lost our reasonable paying jobs, we would move to Melbourne. This was something we rarely discussed prior to the lockouts. Now it's a regular occurrence.

Those who approve of the lockouts look to how Newcastle fared. Remember, the population of Sydney is significantly larger. A lockout is not the way ahead for a city to stay world class. I wouldn't call Florida a world-class city, so why would anyone want to turn Sydney into Florida?

I have travelled to numerous places in Europe and the USA over my life. Vibrant cities like Berlin and Barcelona don't have lockouts. Tourism is a huge part of their economies. I thought that tourism was important to Sydney. Friends overseas no longer want to come to Sydney. If they come to Australia, Melbourne is now their main focus.

We are now spending a lot less of our hard earned income in Sydney. We tend to go to Melbourne as much as we can, as there is much more freedom there to enjoy life.

Let music focused venues remain open 24 hours a day. Have public transport running 24 hours a day. And punish the violent 24 hours a day.

Sydneysiders work hard and deserve to go out on the weekend. Whether that involves dinner with matching wines, or a dancing to some excellent music whilst sipping a cocktail, should be up to them, not the government.

Adults who want to have a good time shouldn't be chastised for it, and they shouldn't be penalised for the misbehaviour of a few stray idiots.

All solutions should encourage more people into the city at night because a vibrant nightlife is not the cause of social decay; it is the cure.

When you are considering what to do about the lockout laws, please think about all of this. And what sort of city you want Sydney to be.

Yours Sincerely,

Joanne Spiteri

