

Liquor Law Review

Liquorlawreview@justice.nsw.gov.au

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Dear Review Panel,

I am a 31 year old resident of 10 years in the Inner West (primarily Newtown), which sits just outside of the “lockout” zone. As a long-time resident and patron of venues, I feel it is important I share my view with you.

Firstly, regarding safety – whilst the lockout laws have been extremely effective at ‘closing’ Kings Cross, the statistics don’t really provide evidence of creating a ‘safer’ environment there. In fact, if we’ve reduced foot traffic by 84% (according to the City of Sydney) but only reduce violence by 40% (according to the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research),¹ - on that basis, per person frequenting the area, we’ve actually *decreased* their safety. While I am not as familiar with actual numbers on crime in other areas, I can personally attest to a major shift observed in the nightlife of the Newtown area. This area, once a relatively peaceful place to have a drink, has been inundated by people wishing to overindulge in drugs or alcohol. This has been a gradual, but pervasive shift. There have also been some very high-profile and disturbing images of renewed violence in Pymont, just outside of the lockout laws. Ultimately, I agree with many other people that have realised that the underlying issue is that [Australia doesn’t have a problem with alcohol. Australia has a problem with violence.](#)

Regarding the lockout law boundaries – do we honestly believe it is “better” to funnel young individuals who would like to drink after 1:30am to a casino?? This does not seem to be in anyone’s interest, except for Crown Casino or James Packer et al. The choice to exempt the casinos poses a raft of questions. Is it simply to enhance economic value? Or are there more nefarious agendas at play? The NSW government has been no stranger to corruption, and this unusual choice, without any pretext of justification apart from casino profits, reeks of overt corruption, if not at least of pork-barrelling.

Finally, these new lock out laws are simply unworkable in a vibrant, international city like Sydney! How do global cities such as London, Rio, Amsterdam, Madrid, Berlin, New York and Melbourne deal with this problem? What is so different here that we cannot allow consenting adults the freedom to drink, dance and be merry? And, not even from the comfort of their homes (unless they’ve had the foresight to buy alcohol prior to 10pm)? Some differences, which could work here to improve safety without compromising individual choice:

- 1) 24 hour transport. One of the amazing things about Melbourne, Berlin and London is that you can go home (or out) at any hour. There is constant public transport. We lack this, and it is an easy problem to fix. We do not want drunks driving home. Neither, however, do we provide them a safe, affordable option. To compound matters, taxis openly refuse fares and have a 3am changeover, which is likely the worst time to be undertaking a mass exodus of the only transit system for late-night Sydney. Fixing public transport will go a long way to getting drunks home, safely.
- 2) Friendly policing. If we have police on corners to assist travellers and the inebriated return home, it acts as a major deterrent to crime, and provides an effective mechanism to assist

¹ <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/businesses-find-hope-in-sydney-lockout-review-while-kings-cross-residents-fear-return-of-violence-20150113-12n5zu.html>

those needing a small hand on their way. This will be costly, however the costs may be offset against reduced hospital bills and property damage.

- 3) Target problem venues. Some venues are more prone to violence and misconduct than others. Perhaps these venues can have more stringent regulations placed upon them (such as the current lockouts/drink restrictions), but selectively. This will help prevent "hotspots" of crime and violence developing.

In short, I am strongly against the lockout laws, and even more so against the 10pm halt to liquor sale laws. Personally, I think no lockout would be preferable, but consider that a time like 3am might be a more reasonable hour (as it will have little effect on the majority of people). If we must curb individuals' ability to buy take home alcohol, 2am seems reasonable to me, but the previous midnight closure worked fine.

Kind regards,



Elisabeth Wilkinson

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