

Re: Response to review of Liquor laws

RW Rachel Williams [REDACTED]


To: Liquor Law Review; [REDACTED]

  Reply all | [REDACTED]

Mon 5:22 PM

Inbox

 Reply all | [REDACTED]  Delete Junk | [REDACTED] ...

 nd head cold, and
nd can't turn it into

a PDF document either. My apologies. Will do the latter for you on my return to work. Thank you.

On 4 Apr 2016, at 5:18 PM, Rachel Williams [REDACTED] wrote:

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this review process.

Arriving in The inner city of Sydney a few weeks before the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000, I have witnessed much change in my neighbourhood and the surrounding areas.

My relative who lives opposite the El Alamein memorial fountain in King's Cross used to marvel at the traffic all through the night there, 'bumper to bumper: you can't slide a cigarette paper between the cars'. My relative is ninety years old and loved being surrounded by bustling nightlife, she has lived there for decades. Now my relative agrees: 'They may have killed the Cross'.

This isn't the first time fear of violence has seen disproportionate legal sanctions against alcohol, with stifling effects on the culture of this city. A century ago as a result of a riot through the streets involving as many as fifteen thousand people, and including the Battle of Central Station where a teenager was shot dead, there was widespread concern about further violence. This fed into the campaign to restrict greatly the then opening hours of public houses and the infamous six o'clock closing was introduced throughout New South Wales. As with the terrible deaths from coward punches recently, the changed opening hours wouldn't have saved the shot teenager, but Sydney was stuck with the six o'clock swill for decades.

As a single female person it is a privilege to live here. Part of the immense appeal has been the night crowds, ensuring whenever I get home on my own I feel safe to walk to where I live. I feel safer here than I do in suburbia. At night I used to hear the bass beats of the many local night clubs. On nights I couldn't sleep, following the example of other less sheepish neighbours, I would at times slip up the street for a shimmy.

None of that is anything but a gift, and if it drifted away through the vagaries of fashion then that would be sad, but to have a city's culture extinguished in order to line the pockets of developers and casino owners is outrageous and worth resisting.

Sydney is a large city, and those in the outskirts can feel the good parts of Sydney happen to other people. King's Cross for many decades now has been where people

from all over Sydney, including the outskirts, can gather and celebrate. King's Cross can be claimed to be owned as justly by and can offer up as many memories for those Sydney-siders living in Mount Druitt and Blacktown, as for those who live in Paddington and Woollahra. If the government kills the nightlife here, then the appeal of King's Cross is made more exclusive, a treasure to be hugged close by residents only. All other Sydney-siders will lose a historic and beloved part of their own city.

Why has there been a one size fits all approach when so very few venues have had issues with violence? Why only very certain areas, why not across the state? Why did a venue of the calibre of Hugo's shut up shop? Violence is not associated with restaurants, small bars, or live music venues so why are these all included and restricted in the current laws? Why is the Casino, a venue renowned for violence, excluded?

According to Bernard Keane in his collection of essays with Helen Razer, 'A Short History of Stupid: The Decline of Reason and Why Public Debate Makes Us Want to Scream', Australia's per capita consumption of alcohol has fallen by a third since 1975, and binge drinking by young people has fallen dramatically. These statistics suggest other approaches to King's Cross and environs are appropriate.

I ask the government to instead implement the following:

- *Twenty four hour public transport
- *Twenty four hour entertainment precinct honouring Sydney's cultural heritage and so including places like King's Cross
- *Encourage live music venues, and exclude these from restrictions
- *Encourage food venues, and exclude these from restrictions
- *Encourage small bars, and exclude these from restrictions
- *Encourage venues that do not have issues with violence, and exclude these from restrictions
- *Increase visible community policing throughout entertainment precincts

Restrict only very large venues where violence is known to occur, such as the Casino.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,
Rachel Williams