

Independent Review Submission - Sydney Lockout Laws

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To: Liquor Law Review <liquorlawreview@justice.nsw.gov.au>;
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To Whom It May Concern,

I am a stakeholder with a message to convey through the Independent Review of the Sydney Lockout laws.

I am a musician, who performs very regularly in venues across the city. I'm a professional, who has just returned from a tour of Europe, and is devastated by the stark contrast of vibrant European cities vs Sydney. I saw something astounding in London: My friends and I took our pints of beer out on the sidewalk to enjoy the fresh air (Amazing! No security thought to tackle us on the way out and confiscate our beverages). That's not the amazing part. The amazing part was at the end of the night (at around 3:30am), security provided everyone on the way out with a plastic cup to transfer their drinks in to for the walk home! There were plenty of smiles, gratitude and zero violence.

I also enjoyed my time in Prague, Berlin, Budapest and Vienna, where lock-out laws were utterly non-existent (at one time we remained in a Berlin pub until 8:30am!), people could bring their animals to accompany them to dinner and drinks (how lovely!), and there were large, comfortable, indoor designated poker machine-free (!) smoking areas (not one freezing square metre of concrete in the rain, with no drinks allowed...like Sydney). I emphasise "poker machine-free" because currently in Sydney if you're lucky enough to be allowed to smoke with a beverage in hand, you usually have to be seated in the pokie area, and I don't gamble).

Many of my gigs in Sydney finish around the 1am or 2am mark, and so I have had several years to observe our city's nightlife, and have noted significant negative changes since the lockout laws were introduced. Previously, when my gig finished at 1am/2am, we'd pack up, and spend an hour or two chatting with punters, and enjoying a wind-down drink or two. Now, we're lucky if we're still playing to anyone at 1am. Numbers of people attending the gigs has plummeted, and forced us to almost exclusively book our shows in outskirt venues in Newtown, Balmain and Western Suburbs. HOWEVER, most of these live music venues are also closing, as residents complain about the noise (Annandale Hotel, Bald Faced Stag Leichhardt, The Landsdown in Glebe...etc)

Also, I feel very unsafe now, packing up and leaving after a gig. Previously, the streets were crowded, and a walk back to my car meant that I was rarely alone or out of sight. Now, it's a ghost town. The walk back to my car is long, and dark, and isolated. I continue to be amazed when walking through Kings Cross at midnight on a weekend, and seeing less than 5 people. It used to be bustling and exciting.

The city's nightlife is not "safer", it's "dead". The laws have gone TOO FAR, and have assumed that everyone drinking alcohol in the city is a ticking time bomb of violence.

I hope very much, that some of my feelings on this subject may be taken into consideration for this review. I know I speak on behalf of many hundred of working musicians in our city.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Yasa
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