

## **MEASURES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL AND DRUG- RELATED VIOLENCE**

**Organisation:** Sydney Business Chamber  
**Name:** The Hon. Patricia Forsythe  
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The Hon. George Souris MP  
Chair of the Law and Safety Committee  
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Dear Chairman,

### **Response to Inquiry into measures to reduce alcohol and drug-related violence**

The Sydney Business Chamber (SBC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Law and Safety Committee's inquiry into measures to reduce alcohol and drug-related violence. The SBC is a division of the NSW Business Chamber and represents Sydney's leading organisations from the corporate, public and not-for-profit sectors. The Chamber advocates for Sydney to be a competitive and sustainable global city. The majority of Chamber members are based in the CBD and all are located within the Greater Sydney Basin.

The SBC shares the NSW Government's commitment to reduce alcohol related violence but recommends that measures to reduce such violence be implemented against the background that Sydney is a global city that must provide a viable night time economy.

The SBC acknowledges recent initiatives by the NSW Government to address alcohol fueled violence including the introduction of risk-based venue licensing, the introduction of small bar licenses, and the intent behind trading restrictions in Sydney's CBD and Kings Cross. As a global city, the physical safety of visitors and residents alike are paramount to the reputation and standing of Sydney as a place to live, visit and do business. Feedback from SBC stakeholders within the Sydney CBD Entertainment and Kings Cross Precincts suggest that since measures were introduced there has been a visible decrease in alcohol related violence and anti-social behavior.

While the SBC is broadly supportive of recent measures introduced by the NSW Government, great care must be taken to ensure that these measures effectively reduce alcohol related violence while at the same time minimize the impact on businesses in the designated zones, and the entertainment offering of the city. The visitor economy is one of Sydney's largest export industries, and is heavily reliant on a vibrant and accessible night time economy. To ensure that this vital industry is not affected, the SBC recommends minor adjustments to measures introduced to tackle alcohol fueled violence.

The SBC acknowledges the Government's willingness to accommodate industry concerns in tackling alcohol fuelled violence. We commend the Government on addressing business concerns around the provision of late night transport after mandatory lockouts are enforced and the 3:00 am cessation of alcohol services in the Kings Cross Precinct. Through coordination with the taxi industry, and the provision of regular free public transport services, the Government has effectively addressed business concerns around lack of adequate transport during these periods.

Feedback from SBC stakeholders has however suggested that businesses involved in hospitality and entertainment within these precincts have been adversely impacted by some elements of these measures. The Potts Point Partnership, which represents the business community in and around the Kings Cross precincts, has noted a significant downturn in restaurant patronage since the introduction of alcohol trading restrictions, due to the lack of late night entertainment options.

A potential solution to help address this issue would be to simplify and streamline the exemption process for the easing of licensing restrictions. Good regulatory practice suggests that rather than a blanket approach, restrictions on good operators with low records of anti-social behavior should be eased. These exemptions should be revoked if there is an increase in anti-social behavior. Similarly the blanket freeze on new liquor licenses and approvals for existing licenses, limits and restricts good operators from offering entertainment and hospitality services that would enhance the precinct and the night time economy. Accordingly, approvals should be explored through a detailed individualised risk assessment rather than a one size fits all regulatory framework.

Separate management plans for licensing restrictions in the Kings Cross and Sydney CBD precincts have also been identified as placing unnecessary and unfair compliance costs on operators. The SBC recommends one compliance regime for the precincts. Any additional compliance conditions should be placed on operators based on the level of risk posed by the premises regardless of location.

The SBC wishes to thank the Inquiry for providing the opportunity to comment on this important matter. The contact for this matter is Ash Salardini:

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Yours sincerely

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**The Hon. Patricia Forsythe**  
**Executive Director**