

**Submission  
No 40**

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

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To whom it may concern,

I am a 29 year old woman who moved to Sydney after being raised in Adelaide and spent a few years in the UK furthering my music career. Upon my return in late 2012, I commenced a Masters in Arts Management in 2013, to be completed June 2015. I was ready to re-establish myself here in Australia and I wanted to make Sydney my musical base. My home.

Sydney is renowned for its nightlife. It's tourism. When many foreigners dream of being somewhere, they think Sydney. The beaches. The Opera House. The bridge. Our food and coffee. Our friendly people. Our thriving nightlife... Or at least they did.

As a traveller and as an artist, I can assure you, those who go out aren't all out to just get smashed, pick a fight or cause trouble. People go out for the music. To connect to people. To dance. To celebrate life. To connect. It is scientifically proven, that music, brings people together. It reduces violence - this is not just a cliché.

This is where other facts must be considered:

More people attend music events every year compared to sporting.

Most of the violence happens outside of clubs; not where the music is, but where it isn't.

These 'king hit' attacks that caused the rapid and carelessly planned changes, happened before midnight, not after.

These laws are punishing more than those being disorderly:

You're punishing artists who make their small living off of performing, they already struggle to make ends meet whilst bringing joy to many.

You're punishing the many workers who need to work late hours to fit in other commitments like family, university or who are struggling to make ends meet.

You are limiting our thriving music and tourism industry. The MILLIONS this brings into our state and economy.

Most of these issues could have been addressed by better infrastructure and transport, so people can leave in peace.

Lock outs have not been successful in other states, look at QLD and VIC as examples.

The streets are now more scary to be on. I do not go out anymore in the Kings Cross area.

The violence moves to other areas, where there is less of a police presence and means of monitoring those who are being unruly.

The one measure I do agree with, is the harsher penalties for steroid abuse and dealing of steroids. As someone who has been threatened by a male under the use of steroids (admittedly not in Australia) was terrifying. The bravado that traditionally was more common at sporting venues has moved to our venues. Which combined with alcohol, is dangerous. It makes for many young volatile males who have no control of their temper.

May I make some suggestions:

In the short term:

Arrange for better transport - trains out of the CBD until 4am.

MORE night buses. There are simply not enough.

Punish violent offenders with curfews, where they cannot be in the CBD/KX between 8pm-5am for a period of 3-12 months.

In the long term:

Address the cultural problem of drinking and violence.

This was addressed in our sporting community and our athletes helped campaign for safety before and after matches. I remember this as a youth, in SA. It really did deliver the message. We didn't punish those attending sporting events.

So why do we neglect our arts culture, when more people are engaged by it than in sports? How about we get our industry people behind anti-violence? Our ARIA award winning producers and DJs. Our international touring bands? Our radio hosts?

There has been so much community banding together to promote anti-violence and also to keep our nightlife alive! Why can't these groups work with the government to help bring down violence?

We need to engage with our police force, the youth, those in the arts industry and social scientists who understand a lot more about human behaviour. Punishing those who do the right thing doesn't fix the problem, it breeds contempt. It makes those who do follow the law, less likely to respect it. I've already seen many examples of this already.

As someone who is an artist, loves my music, loves socialising and loves Sydney, I would love to be able to feel inspired about making my decision to move here. Right now, New York, London or even Melbourne, could potentially be a better place. I would hate to move because we cannot address our cultural violence issues, rather than embrace the community to help bring about change.

Lauren Neko