

**Submission
No 76**

MEASURES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL AND DRUG- RELATED VIOLENCE

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I am a young person who is relatively new to Sydney nightlife. Therefore, I will acknowledge that I do not have enough knowledge of past situations to compare them with current situations and discern the effectiveness of the new laws in preventing violence. It is true that in my time out in Sydney I have never witnessed an account of alcohol-fuelled violence, but I would like to take this opportunity to comment on the logic behind these new laws, as well as comment on their visible consequences. I hope that I am not dismissed as being young and naive, and while some of my comments are perhaps not original, I would like them to be considered as an impartial and organic perspective based on simple observations I have made.

Firstly, I would like to note that since the introduction of the new laws (which was followed by a total media frenzy), never once have I heard any comments from the government on their effectiveness. Surely such a controversial law would lead the government to continually convince the population of its effectiveness. The lack of evidence to suggest that these laws have actually produced any change at all, plus this inquiry, leads me to believe that perhaps they have not been effective. As a relatively in-tune citizen of Sydney, I would like to suggest that if this is true, perhaps it is because "alcohol-fuelled violence" as it is now referred to, is possibly one of the most over-dramatised socio-cultural issues I have seen in my time. This reads as a very controversial statement- I do not intend to disregard the key role played by alcohol in the deaths of many young people. In fact, I do support an effort by the government to reduce alcohol-fuelled violence. However, myself and many many young people believe that the new laws are an under-thought over-reaction to a virtually unstoppable phenomena. The bottom line is that sometimes- note, sometimes- people get violent when they get drunk. To me it seems entirely illogical to lock drunken citizens who may or may not coward punch somebody out on the street at 1:30am instead of encouraging them to go inside venues where there are well-trained and very vigilant security guards. The times that I feel most concerned about my safety are the times when my friends and myself are wandering around Sydney at 1am looking for the last place to go, and we encounter many other young and often intoxicated people doing the same thing. It is unrealistic to expect that young people are going to end their nights at 1:30, and it is unrealistic to expect that young people are going to commit to one venue until this time. These are basic logical premises which undermine the effectiveness of your laws and place young people, particularly young females like myself, in unsafe situations.

As a recent high school graduate who has been through the NSW education system I would like to suggest that a more proper solution would be increased education on the awareness of alcohol- an unoriginal though I suppose, but I do believe I might have spent a total of only a few hours learning about this in school.

The final comment I would like to make here is in regards to Kings Cross. The media coverage about these new laws has antagonised Kings Cross to make going there appear like a death wish. Even though I know this not to be true, and I do not find Kings Cross to be any more unsafe than any other region of Sydney, I am concerned that what is basically the most buzzing spot for Sydney nightlife does not have any trains running from it after 1:41am. Being a young person and not having a safe,

convenient and accessible way of getting home is terrifying and is also one very obvious opportunity for violence to manifest.

Finally, while I am not an expert on this, it has also been made clear to me that these new laws have placed a significant burden on the cultural life of Sydney, which as such a fantastic and lively city, is a real shame.