MEASURES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL AND DRUG-RELATED VIOLENCE

Name: Name Suppressed

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The following a submission from 2011 Residents' Association with regard to the Measures to Reduce Alcohol and Drug-Related Violence (Inquiry):

The changes announced in January by Premier O'Farrell and implemented from 24 February 2014, the 'Newcastle-style' reforms of 1.30am lockouts in pubs, clubs, taverns, etc and 3am closing and associated measures, have been outstandingly successful. After a period of 7 years of rapid expansion in the number of pubs, clubs, bars, alcohol outlets, and extended trading hours which resulted in massive, out-of-control crowds of drunk and disorderly people entering Kings Cross precinct, a semblance of order has been restored. Residents note a drop in violence, in noise, and in refuse. Touting Kings Cross as an entertainment precinct and allowing AHA to push alcohol consumption unfettered proved an enormous social mistake and resulted in the deaths of two young men, (and others that did not gain the same publicity) and injuries requiring hospitalisation. The changes need to be introduced state wide.

The evidence relating to emergency admissions from St Vincents Hospital has shown a clear reduction in the number and severity of alcohol related harms (estimated to up to 50%.) The broader crime figures for alcohol related assaults can only be released by BOCSAR after a longer time period of about 2 years, so are currently unavailable. We believe changes that have been made must stay in place until these figures are available.

Studies need to be undertaken to assess any displacement or dispersal to adjacent boundaries. (Reported as Chippendale, the exempt Casino precinct, Double Bay and Coogee.) The social impact of dispersion means that crowd size is reduced which is likely to have a positive impact in reducing violent and anti-social behaviour.

Residents are concerned about the Terms of the Review: (1) Terms are restricted only to hearing about the impact on "industry" and are not "consistent with the expectations, needs, and aspirations of the community"; (ii) The review is narrowly focussed on "violence" only not on the chronic alcohol related harms that include unintended injuries.

It is crucial that the opinions of residents are taken into consideration during this important review. The 18,000 or so residents who live in the 2011 postcode who pay rates and taxes are entitled to live in a safe neighbourhood free from alcohol related violence.

Asking industry and AHA controlled businesses only for their input is like asking the advice of a fox about access to the chicken coop.

The last 7 years of violence and consistent breaches of DA's have proven that these business owners have little capacity to self-regulate or act in the interests of the community or broader society. A few people have been able to make a lot of money at the expense of many others.

The situation became untenable and resulted in the introduction of laws that are now in place. The changes to legislation must remain and businesses that claim they are going broke and that jobs are being lost as a consequence need to redefine themselves. They are not the first or last business whose probability is affected by changes in legislation.

The good news is that new businesses providing employment are beginning to emerge. They not only are successful but they are contributing to the community in a positive way.