

**Submission  
No 85**

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

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To whom it may concern,

As a resident of Melbourne and regular visitor to Sydney I was shocked and appalled when the new lock-out licensing laws came into force in Sydney. As was the case in Melbourne when this was trialled, the onus of responsibility and the greatest impact was felt by the smaller venues, particularly those with a focus on music. In Melbourne the process was seen to be a farce and the trial laws were dropped after a successful legal bid by a group of concerned venues whose livelihoods were at risk because of the law.

In Sydney it is a very similar scenario, with the very narrow area of restriction, obviously chosen as it was considered a trouble spot, venues such as Good God Small Club have been hit very hard by these draconian laws. To consider that the nearby casino (which is in the restricted vicinity) has an exclusion seems to heavily imply that if you have enough money then you can do what you like, while small businesses struggle and run the risk of closing down, or at the very least becoming very financially risky.

Alcohol fueled violence is obviously a terrible thing, but the lack of consultation with venue managers such as the aforementioned Good God, combined with the very lengthy trial timeline makes for a very dangerous mix, particularly when it comes to culture.

To have venues like the casino exempt while having massive turnovers of patrons during the night, while forcing small venue operators to shut out their potential audience so early (particularly if one is going out dancing) seems highly unfair.

Perhaps a better option might be to enforce the licensing restrictions based on merit of the venue. If they can prove that they have a record of non-violence, as most music related venues do, then they should be exempted too.

When I come to Sydney these days I really do feel that things have changed, and not for the better. Music is a big part of the culture industry and Sydney was considered to be a place to go for music. Now the new lock-out laws have changed that.

Hopefully clear-minded thinking comes along and things can be rectified, for the sake of those that love culture and those who put their livelihoods on the line to provide it to us.

Best regards,

Jason Heller