

**Submission
No 53**

MEASURES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL AND DRUG- RELATED VIOLENCE

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The Lockout laws are deeply flawed.

They collectively punish a segment of the community for the selfish actions of another. Excessive drinking and the associated violence will not be stopped by these laws, merely moved around or pushed into darker places.

The laws are actually an abrogation of political responsibility, as all prohibition-based legislation is: a tacit admission that the problem is too hard.

It may well seem that we are achieving our goals, but what has been achieved is a simply drop in current, visible, undesirable behaviour. People have been pushed to the periphery of the lockout zones and it is only a matter of time before someone is seriously hurt in Newtown. What then? Extend the zones? How far should we push the idiocy away before we deal with it?

The problem is cultural, and discussions must be had about parents who want to be friends with their kids instead of teaching them what is right and wrong.

But a bit of history.

As a long-term resident of Potts Point and business owner in Darlinghurst, I was a first hand witness to the Kings Cross zoo. For years the local community called out for action. And by community I means residents and business owners. The venues could only expel people when they were drunk and lets face it, people go out to drink and most people get drunk when they drink.

The problem was the cluster that was created. Whether or not it was a conscious decision is moot. Clusters were created, RSA was, for the most part enforced, and the State, Council and Police then systematically failed to take responsibility for the behaviours on the street.

It only ever takes one idiot to ruin it for everyone, but a functioning society usually singles out this idiot, shames them, or punishes them or puts the fear of greater society into them, and we move on.

Somewhere we forgot that this was our responsibility to the future generation, to set guidelines. Prohibition always fails, and while the drop in anti-social behaviour in the city might look great on report cards, nothing has been fixed, and a hell of a lot broken.

But forget the hospitality community who can no longer socialise after a hard night's work. Forget the musicians and DJs who have lost 30% of their income. Forget the bottle shops and bars who are down 20-50%. Forget the day-time traders going down the sink in the lockout zones.

We are going to start seeing knock on effects.

Chippies and plumbers out of work. Shopfitters out of work. Youth unemployment (because who works in bars) up. Venues left languishing. Sizeable investment not made. Sydney left behind on a global level because it treats its grown ups like a bunch of pissed teenagers.

The legislation is wrong. It has succeeded in the very short term and now, before the knock on effects outlined above take hold, is the time to change it.

Re-open Sydney. Actually enforce a carrot and stick model. Actually have the police, police the streets. Actually arrest and detain hooligans and put the fear of the law into them. Shame them. Haul their parents in and shame them. Ban serial offenders. Check IDs. Do what you have to do. Do what we pay you to.

For the record, we don't pay you to take away our civil liberties.

The ultimate point here is that we are shooting ourselves in the foot. We are attacking our own economy because of a cultural issue that must be dealt with in the hearts and minds of our young adults. It starts in the home, but that conversation seem too hard for us to have.

History has shown, time and time again, that **one cannot legislate against human behaviour** and if you try, the burdens on the community always become too great.

One can only legislate for human behaviour.

I implore you, now that this legislation has settled the melee down, let's get smarter and more sophisticated with our thinking and stop punishing one sector of the community, for the idiocy of another.

Stephan Gyory

Chair - Darlinghurst Business Partnership

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