

**Submission
No 87**

MEASURES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL AND DRUG-RELATED VIOLENCE

Name: Name Suppressed
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To Whom It May Concern:

I am a 24 year old Sydneysider who is quite effected by these new laws. As someone who has lived in Sydney my entire life, I feel that these changing laws are tarnishing what makes Sydney a unique and appealing city for people from other states of Australia and other nations. I can say with confidence that this is true for this is definitely true to those in my generation.

Comparative to the rest of the world, Sydney nightlife prior to the lockouts were bustling with life, people from varying walks of life and lifestyles could meet in what is considered a relatively safe environment. Many people I have met believe this is true, and want to stay in Sydney because not only is their lifestyle accepted but they feel like it is a place that is much safer then where they originally were born into, (includes Americans, South Americans and Europeans).

Having lived in Japan, one of the safest countries in the world, and returning to Australia, I began to see the disparity in violence and safety. Not only in the night but also in the day. I believe this is not only attributed to law enforcement as much as a sense of culture that has allowed Japan to be exempt from the law enforcement and security in other countries. Having settled in Erskineville upon returning back to Australia, I believed of all cities in the world, Sydney is the one I chose to settle back into and the great nightlife being a huge weight on that decision. I am an educated female who has spent my life studying, I work hard and believe that I deserver the ability to enjoy my time away from work.

During nights out prior to the lockout, I have seen that there is occasional violence and excessive alcohol abuse. This is something that has been already accommodated for with stricter alcohol laws over the years. While this does take place, I know this is not as common as it is in other cities of the world and have found that this has never negatively effected my ability to have a good time and still feel safe each and every time due to my own choices. Even in the midst of it, Sydney always has felt fairly safe.

Since the new lockout laws have been enforced I have never felt so unsafe in my life in this city. Every night has been a nightmare and has ended terribly. My friends and I feel obliged to drink as soon as possible and are in a rush to find somewhere to go. This ends with everyone not knowing their limits because they know that they won't be able to get a drink of choice later in the night and also that they will be stuck somewhere. Twice, I have been locked out without my items because they were with friends and I have accidently moved outside the venue zone and therefore am without a phone, wallet or ID. In addition to this, I am literally stuck on the street with drunk and drugged up people.

The last time this has happened to me, I had no wallet, phone or jacket I stood on the street and found two others girls in my situation. We were not allowed inside anywhere and we were all feeling very vulnerable. ***The two women decided to go home with random men so they could have somewhere to go. Strangers. Obligated to have sex to feel safe. This is not the Sydney I want to live in.***

What happened to me that night? A prostitute suggested I work with her after she found that I was having a hard time getting away from drunken men trying to guilt me into sleeping with them and then introduced me to her pimp. I had no plans to do so but felt I needed somewhere to let me in, as I was cold and nowhere to go. I ended up staying upstairs with their boss trying to get me into the industry and left when one prostitute lent me her jacket and was able to help me with a taxi. This is not the Sydney I want to live in.

At first with the new laws, people were getting locked out and having their weekend ruined. Then it changed. Being stuck on the streets at that time is much tougher than it ever used to be. Suddenly, the atmosphere became very volatile and literally no one could help you. No bodyguards or businesses to take you in and let you are until someone could meet up with you. Suddenly, it's about waiting in the street and as a female that is not the way it should be. Then drugs started to become more popular. ***Businesses in Sydney may be suffering but the drug trade could not be stronger as everyone is on cocaine, ecstasy and any other form of street drug mix.*** This is so they can increase their high since they aren't allowed alcohol and they will be stuck inside a venue without being able to leave. If you chose to leave your night is over. What people that are not part of the night life may not understand, is you may force people to not socialize in your area, but you will not stop them from socializing. The methods will be come more and more uncontrolled.

Currently, every other person I know is taking drugs they never have taken before. Everyone is moving their fun to suburbs that have less police monitoring and unregulated parties. I feel obligated, as there is nowhere else to go in Sydney.

Many of my international acquaintances have decided Sydney is not worth visiting when I have explained how the laws work here. Other states are much more appealing and yet they don't have half as much variety and venues as we have always had. ***I predict the next stage will have an effect on Sydney's tourism and entertainment industry.***

The day I gave up on Sydney was on the 9th of August. I was having a night at the Capitol Theatre with my partner. After the show, I was looking forward to one quick cocktail and discussion before the night was over. By this time however, all bars were closing in 40mins and the streets were dead. The only places open were large, gaudy bars/clubs which I had no interest in that night. This made me see, Sydney has really changed in the worst way. ***Sydney has become a city for drugs, sexual abuse and clear suppression of their public.***

I would have never considered the other states as a possibility. With such a high cost of living, there needs to be a reason for residents of Sydney to want to live here. ***We are turning into a nanny state and the violence and drugs is the only thing that is consistently growing stronger.***

It may seem like indulgent moaning about not being able to stay out at night or to not have access to alcohol to someone who does not participate in this lifestyle. As an educated, responsible young female, I am here to say that is not what this is about. Take these rights away and you are increasing risk, you are increasing danger and uninhibited possibilities to your citizens.

Yours sincerely,

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Ps (A possible improvement may be to dismiss the lockout laws and instead roll out greater police protection in the required areas at greater risk.)