

**Submission
No 97**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Name: Mr James Greenwood

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Submission to Joint Select Committee on Sydney's night time economy

As a 17-year-old going through his last year of high school, the news of what had happened to the very-similar-aged Thomas Kelly was absolutely devastating on a July night in 2012. I was only a few months from finishing my HSC, and 6 months away from turning 18 years old. I was young for my year and had often held stories as to what the older boys had got up to the previous weekend, particularly in the vibrant Kings Cross district. I was really looking forward to starting my life as a young adult in the big city of Sydney.

At the time, I hadn't really thought much about the so called "lockouts", until I saw an advertisement on a bus on the way home from the city. I was lucky enough to go out a few times before the lockouts had been introduced, and my goodness, how things could change so quickly, the nightlife very quickly started to die, like a poorly watered plant in a warm Sydney's summer.

Currently 23 years old, I still go to the city for a good night out quite often. However, I often hear of how much fun the city use to be. I feel as if the age range of 18-23 should be very enjoyable, and formative in one's life. I feel as if these aspects of these important and fun years have been stolen from me with the introduction of the lockout laws. I'm sure everyone around my age feels the same way.

With the introduction of the lockout laws, there was an exponential increase in the amount of RSA marshals in each venue. While these can sometimes be of benefit, particularly in the quick removal of intoxicated patrons, including myself once or twice, they are of no real benefit. Often Venue Managers, Licensee's and RSA marshals are very quick to evict people for legitimately no reason, with their being a fear of a substantial fine being imposed by either the police force or OLGR. There is never the chance to explain yourself or demonstrate one's sobriety with the threats of a police call, or fail to quit being issued.

While the review of Ian Callinan was meant in good faith, this ultimately was of very little change to the current situation of the Sydney lockouts. Some venues are now allowed to stay half-an-hour later, too little too late, if you ask me.

With the light rail due to open in the next 12 or so months, there will be more and more people around the Sydney CBD during the evening. The businesses of Sydney have been affected enough with this overdue project; the lockouts definitely do not help. As the traffic barricades start to slowly be lifted on George Street, it'll be nice to see the lockouts go to back as well.

Sydney was a vastly different in 2012/2013. While I can understand the pressure that the then Premier was under, particularly with the passing of Mr Kelly, I strongly feel that the lockouts should be wound back, effective immediately. Over the past five years, Sydney has changed.