

**Submission
No 116**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Name: Aidan Millar-Powell

Date Received: 12 June 2019

To the Hon Natalie Ward MLC and committee,

I am a long term resident of Sydney, growing up in the western suburbs and attending The MacDonald College in Nth Strathfield. I was born in Westmead hospital 1989 and have watched the city evolve throughout this period.

Sydney has always been a great place to live, and I do mean 'live' not just exist. A vibrant culture and a strong connection to the international community was always a strong point that made Sydney enjoyable for someone coming into 'the big city'. However, that is sadly no longer the case as not only are we isolated geographically, but now socially and culturally as well.

I have always been part of the alternative community, spending a lot of time in Newtown and the inner west through my teens and early adulthood.

One of the major things I personally noticed when the lockout laws came into effect, was the cancellation of an electronic music night called 'Distortion'. This night primarily focused on dubstep music and was a major gateway for my social circle. [REDACTED] I was always struggling to make connections. This night helped me foster new friendships that I continue to enjoy to this day. However, when it was cancelled, there was a huge group of people that simply had nowhere to go on a Friday night, including myself.

After the lockout laws really started to affect small businesses in the city, there was a major influx of people not necessarily aligned with the spirit of Newtown. That's not to say anyone should be labelled as unwelcome, because Newtown is a place for everyone to enjoy.

However, what was happening in Kings Cross and Oxford St, merely moved towards Newtown. The problem of violence wasn't fixed, it was merely shifted geographically. The people who go to Newtown aren't necessarily the same people who want to go to the Cross and if they are: they're going to these two places with very different approaches to their evening.

The obvious reaction, that is fairly typical of this country, was to simply increase the police presence in the inner west. This is not a solution but the Liberal government knew that and have used this situation to their advantage to increase the police presence in this here nanny state.

Perhaps even more striking was the general death of night time 'vibrance' throughout Sydney. There is a certain amount of momentum and compounding interest that comes from a wide range of night time events and that ended with the lockouts.

That compound interest also spread to Newtown, despite the initial increase in numbers. Eventually people stopped frequenting these spots and now the streets are dead. It is not enough to have one or two known spots for everyone in Sydney, but this government seems to think that is enough.

It is impossible to talk about the lockouts without discussing the endless noise complaints and the local residents lobbying for the closure of venues in Sydney

I won't say much on the subject but I will say this: It is petty and irresponsible for someone to abuse the privilege of our police force and the legalities surrounding noise complaints. Noise complaints are designed to tackle genuinely disruptive and abnormal behaviour, not the swathe of small businesses operating long before these people took up residence.

There is quite a bit more I would like to say about the culture of this country and how the lockout laws are merely a symptom of a much deeper disease, eroding the idea of variety and choice. We are a country of simpletons, with the few select destinations that are meant for smart and progressive people being ruined by country bumpkins who are culturally and intellectually bereft. Their conservative crusade on the liberty of the people is criminal, with a plethora of evidence to not only suggest corruption at the highest level but prove it as well.

I digress.

We simply cannot afford to have these laws in place. We just don't have the population to support such extreme measures of control. We only have a few small sectors of business and barely

enough art to go around, now we want to kill tourism to a major city and fun for the residents? It's absurd.

From where I'm standing, there are three main problems with Sydney's nightlife for which simply extending the trading hours will not alleviate:

1. The obvious: 1:30 curfew. This arbitrary time limit on fun affects the entire evening. Going out is not a quantifiable experience, it should be something done with a carefree attitude. Putting a time limit on this makes it difficult to actually enjoy the little time left in the night. As a result, fewer people venture out and if they do: they aren't met with much of an evening at all.

2. Noise complaints: this has to stop. Melbourne introduced laws to stem this tide of petty nonsense and it's time we grew a spine and did the same thing. Those same laws will sadly no longer work in Sydney as every new venue will have pre-established residence nearby and it will be a nothing measure. Although, nothing measures are what we do in this country.

3. Sniffer dogs and the general war on drugs: this is obviously an issue outside the scope of this committee, but it is something that I wish you would consider at least mentioning in your final report. It's not enough to let the plebs free if the guards are standing over our shoulder holding our tissues when we sneeze, telling us to blow and then putting us to bed with a lemsip and hot water bottle.

This all adds up to a nanny state that forget one simple fact: we are adults. This world is not for the conservative christian brigade to come marching through and tell us how to live. However, that is exactly what the Liberal government is doing. Martin Luther would be spinning in his grave.

In closing, I would like to share with you my reaction to visiting literally everywhere outside of NSW: I wanted to move to all of the places. My first venture was to New Zealand, then Adelaide, and more recently Europe. The people I told about my experiences living in Sydney were embarrassed at the mention of a curfew. Not to mention my astonishment at the friendly nature of literally anyone outside NSW (but that's an issue for another time).

Thank you for considering my words. I hope you are able to filter other experiences such as that of my own into a report that puts an end to this ridiculous crusade.

Kindest Regards,

Aidan Millar-Powell