

**Submission
No 311**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

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30 June 2019

Joint Select Committee on Sydney's night time economy
Parliament House
6 Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for allowing me to make a submission to the Joint Select Committee on Sydney's night time economy.

As a former long-time resident of Sydney and a person who frequented venues over many years in inner-city Sydney, I supported the introduction of the lockout and last drinks laws as an important measure to address the problems that I was witnessing first-hand.

Prior to these measures, areas such as Oxford Street, Kings Cross and parts of the CBD were afflicted with high levels of violence, drunken crowds and associated anti-social behaviour such as street urination, littering, aggression etc. I noticed the negative change in these precincts over the space of about 10-15 years, corresponding with a significant increase in licensed venue numbers and the liberalisation of licensing laws. As the Callinan review found, prior to the introduction of the lockout/last drinks laws, these areas "were grossly overcrowded, violent, noisy, and in places dirty"¹.

The introduction of the laws led to an immediate reduction in the serious problems stated above, as research has shown^{2,3}. While there are arguments that there has been a subsequent drop-off in nightlife activity in Kings Cross, the counter argument is that concentrating alcohol-related nighttime activities in small areas damages other businesses such as restaurants and those that rely on the daytime economy^{4,5}.

The positive impact of the laws on violence and anti-social behaviour are not surprising, based on research that shows a direct correlation between the reduction of alcohol trading hours and venue density and a subsequent reduction in alcohol-related violence^{6,7}. Based on this, it is vital that in order to avoid a return to the serious problems of the past, the last drinks measures remain in place, along with the introduction of venue saturation measures.

Ensuring there is a circuit breaker when it comes to alcohol consumption is essential. This comes in the form of last drinks restrictions. International cities such as New

York, where licensed venues are far more dispersed across the city and where both alcohol service hours and planning restrictions apply, demonstrate it is possible to have a vibrant nightlife that doesn't rely on 24-hour alcohol service and a free-for-all on venue numbers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

Stephen Pate

¹ Callinan report says Sydney lockout laws could be 'relaxed' - <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/callinan-report-says-sydney-lockout-laws-could-be-relaxed-20160913-grf5ej.html>

² Lockouts and last drinks: The impact of the January 2014 liquor licence reforms on assaults in NSW, Australia - <http://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Documents/CJB/CJB183.pdf>

³ Lockout laws have reduced numbers hospitalised due to alcohol-related violence - <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/lockout-laws-have-reduced-numbers-hospitalised-due-to-alcoholrelated-violence-20150415-1mlliy.html>

⁴ Lean times for Oxford Street - <https://www.margaretrivermail.com.au/story/945386/lean-times-for-oxford-street/>

⁵ A diners' favourite stripped of its past - <https://www.bordermail.com.au/story/486/a-diners-favourite-stripped-of-its-past/>

⁶ Night Time Economy Management: International Research and Practice - http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/131740/InternationalEvidenceLiteratureReview.pdf

⁷ The impact of small changes in bar closing hours on violence. The Norwegian experience from 18 cities - <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2011.03643.x/epdf>