

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

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Submission to the 2019 Joint Select Committee on Sydney's night-time economy.

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This Submission has been prepared by members of the 2011 Residents' Association

This submission concerns the 2014 Liquor Legislation and associated suite of conditions commonly referred to as the ‘Sydney Lockouts’, and is primarily focussed on their impact on the night-time economy and wider social issues as they relate to the locale of Kings Cross and surrounding suburbs.

While reading this submission it will also be beneficial to note that Potts Point (which houses Kings Cross) and Elizabeth Bay are among the most densely populated residential areas in Australia.

According to the most recent 2016 Census data¹, Potts Point is 0.6 square kilometre in area and has 9,423 residents; Elizabeth Bay, which adjoins Potts Point, is 0.3 square kilometres and has a population of 5,215 residents. Overall the 2011 postcode area is home to 21,196 residents, of which there are 3,596 family units and 13,050 private residential dwellings.

¹ https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/POA2011?opendocument

Who is 2011RA?

We are a residents action group that advocates for residents and businesses in the 2011 postcode covering Potts Point, Elizabeth Bay, Rushcutters Bay and Woollahroomooloo. We have led and supported campaigns for increased public transport (Save the 311 Bus campaign), to preserve the historic streetscape of the neighbourhood (the 2018 campaign to save the Bourbon Hotel site from redevelopment), to improve public amenity (reopening of Fitzroy Gardens bathroom facility for market patrons, tourists and residents), and in support of community projects (vegetable and flower gardens, the Kings Cross Dog Show, etc).

Our members live in the 2011 postcode area and have history here. We have seen our area grow and thrive, but we've also seen it threatened and sink to depths that we did not think were possible. Throughout all, we have maintained our strong advocacy role to protect and improve the safety and amenity for all who live in, work in, or visit the 2011 postcode.

Background

The area referred to as Kings Cross is really just 2 streets: Darlinghurst Rd running north-south between William St and the El Alamein Fountain; and Bayswater Rd running off Darlinghurst Rd to Ward venue. There are some offshoots: smaller streets (Roslyn St, Kellett St, Springfield Ave), laneways (Earl Place, Kellett Way, Barnacleuth Lane, Pennys Lane), pedestrian areas (Springfield Mall, Llinkelly Place), and the top of Macleay St at the El Alamein fountain, but the Cross ‘proper’ amounts to a total distance of just over 500 metres, and takes a minute, maybe a minute and a half, to walk the entire length. Kings Cross is not a suburb and therefore has no postcode - it is a ‘locale’ defined by those 2 streets and their surrounds, and is part of the suburb of Potts Point, postcode 2011.

Along Darlinghurst Rd Kings Cross are multiple residential apartment buildings, the oldest dating from 1927 and continuously occupied since then as home to singles, couples, families with children as well as providing professional business suites for lawyers, doctors, etc; other buildings on the street provide traveller accommodation. These residences sit above the shops, but are ‘invisible’ because most visitors don't look above the bright lights of street level. Hundreds of people live along this stretch of Darlinghurst Rd, and have done for decades, which clearly refutes the often-heard and misinformed remark that ‘residents complain about the Cross even though they've just moved here’.

Kings Cross was traditionally referred to as ‘the village’ by those who lived here, and the only difference between it and other areas that had a similar descriptor (Double Bay Village, Paddington Village) was the presence of a ‘red light’ industry, a small number of sex-on-

premises, striptease clubs and ‘peep show’ venues, established during the time of the Vietnam War to appeal to sailors and soldiers on shore leave, and which continued to attract the occasional cheeky teenage group and curious bystanders drawn into strip shows. By the early 2000s, these sex venues were struggling economically, with low customer use, becoming more infamous for drug trafficking and as drug ‘shooting galleries’.

Today most of these sex venues have closed, due to a combination of factors: the impact of the digital dating age, easy and universal access to online pornography, and what has to be acknowledged as a growing impatience with their general sleaziness and tawdriness that has gone completely out of favour in modern Sydney. Such venues are simply no longer marketable, profitable or even of interest to the general population of Kings Cross/Potts Point.

The ‘Cross’ (and wider Potts Point) had traditionally been recognised as a sophisticated rendezvous for Sydney-siders seeking good food, latest trends in fashion and a creative artistic and cultural life. Added to that there were some well-known drinking holes, among them the Bourbon and Beefsteak and Aussie Rules Club, both at the northern (harbour) end of Darlinghurst Rd, the Crest Hotel’s Goldfish Bowl and Sports Bar at the William St end of Darlinghurst Rd, and the Mansions Hotel and Hampton Court in Bayswater Road.

Please look at the following image of Kings Cross circa 2000-2007. It shows the residential buildings (**GREEN**) far out-numbering, but co-exisiting with, the licensed premises and small number sex venues (both in **RED**), and other businesses also noted (**BLUE**).

Map 1. Kings Cross (Potts Point), 2000-2007



As well as the residential buildings, hotels and venues, there were mainstream businesses: Westpac Bank and the NAB on the western side of Darlinghurst Rd, the Commonwealth Bank and the ANZ Bank opposite them on the eastern side of Darlinghurst Rd; restaurants, ice-cream parlours, bookshops, small cafes, hairdressers and delicatessens - a typical village street with a good mix of businesses that worked for the community and wider neighbourhood. There was not, as is often mistakenly thought, a profusion of bars and pubs - the area was just too small, too residential, too 'village-like' to support it.

At that time the bars and clubs and sex venues co-existed on a relatively agreeable basis with the surrounding residential and business community, with 'give and take' and an unwritten understanding as to the standards of behaviour that would be acceptable and tolerated.

However we want to avoid painting a 'too rosy' picture of Kings Cross between 2000-2007. During that pre-lockout period there were always the odd rogue operators that wanted to push the boundaries and break their licence conditions in terms of unacceptable late-night amplified noise or unruly patron behaviour. The Police or Council would come down hard on these operators, as they should.

Residents early on had to form working networks with local Police, particularly the Kings Cross Licensing Squad, and with Council Compliance Officers and Rangers, to attempt to rein in rogue operators who broke the conditions of their liquor licence in regard to lax control of aggressive patrons or excessive noise after midnight. This should never have been the responsibility of residents to pursue these actions, but it became necessary to do so.

But it did not prepare anyone for the period post-2008 when these incidents multiplied exponentially to the point where all the police and Council resources were unable to deal with the burgeoning complaints, breaches, reportable incidents and violence, many of which became crime or hospital admission statistics. There were simply not enough police officers or Council Rangers to deal with it.

So, to 2008.

In 2007/8 City of Sydney Council released a Late Night Trading Development Control Plan for Potts Point (Kings Cross), essentially loosening the regulation of premises serving alcohol, allowing them to apply for licenses to trade for 24 hours with increased numbers of patrons, regardless of the massive increase in numbers of both venues and patrons, and the inevitable impact that this would have on surrounding residents and businesses. The constant applications for liquor licenses, and Development Applications to Council to open up new bars and clubs, seemed endless and unstoppable, like a tsunami of grog crashing over the suburb.

Map 2 on the following page shows the immediate and striking impacts that the Late Night Trading DCP had on the tiny postage-stamp size precinct of Kings Cross and surrounding Potts Point, and specifically on the existing residential buildings and businesses in the small streetscape of the Cross.

Residents and mainstream businesses were now drowning in a sea of licensed premises. On this map there is simply not enough room to show all the new licensed premises that sprang up post-2008, with more Development Applications and Liquor License Applications flooding in almost every week.

The same residences are still there in **GREEN**, but they are now swamped by the new explosion of bars and liquor outlets in **RED**.

Map 2: Kings Cross (Potts Point) - post 2008



Impact of the new Late Night Trading DCP between 2008-2012

The impact on the Kings Cross/Potts Point neighbourhood, and its residents, visitors, and existing mainstream daytime/evening businesses, was immediate, ferocious and unrelenting.

Violence, aggression, noise and bodily excrement of all forms became the main currencies of the Cross, fuelled by a never-ending supply of alcohol and the constant march of young, vulnerable and often drunk and aggressive patrons eager to experience this new ‘anything goes’ ‘24-hour alcohol playground’, now heavily promoted by Council as an ‘Entertainment Precinct’ - something like Darling Harbour or Fox Studios, except for one major difference: the presence of a huge and permanent residential population.

This new ‘Entertainment Precinct’ had virtually nothing to do with live music - the music in clubs and bars was almost exclusively electronic pre-recorded tracks played by DJs, and had been so for years, which puts the lie to the frequently heard claim that ‘*the lockouts killed the live music scene in Kings Cross*’. The precinct now had everything to do with extracting the most amount of money from vulnerable patrons through alcohol sales, with scant attention to Responsible Service of Alcohol or the wider impacts on the residents, who now found themselves living above, opposite, behind or next to these new 24-hour venues.

From being once sophisticated, quirky and appealing, the Cross had now become sleazy, dangerous and a magnet for drugs and crime, both organised and purely random. There was nothing ‘classy’ or sophisticated about it, despite the vociferous promotional campaigns to attract more visitors (read: drinkers) to the area.

By marketing Kings Cross as an ‘Entertainment Precinct’ City of Sydney Council and NSW State governments actively and tacitly supported the proliferation of licensed premises. Bars, clubs, pubs and huge ‘beer barns’ competed with and overtook mainstream daytime and evening businesses. The result was years of alcohol-fuelled violence and anti-social and criminal behaviour.

Come with us on a brief pictorial journey over the next few pages to experience the vibrant late-night economy that was the Kings Cross ‘Entertainment Precinct’

The licensed premises began cannibalising mainstream businesses on the street: the New Zealand Ice Cream Co became the Empire Hotel; the Commonwealth Bank became 'The Bank' nightclub, capacity 500 patrons (and the subject of numerous noise complaints as it was directly across the road from a c1927 10-storey residential apartment building); Westpac Bank became the Sugarmill (now Potts Point) Hotel, capacity more than 1000 patrons over 4 levels. Compare this explosion in patron numbers in these 'beer barns' with their original customer base as banks, which had small regular daytime customer traffic, quietly queuing.

Then the premises began cannibalising each other: a venue would open up, trade for 6 months, fail, close down; another would open in on the same site, trade, fail, close etc. This was an ongoing cycle and was simple economics at play, before the lockouts were even introduced. And each time, residents would have to begin from scratch to navigate the morass of contractual legislations attached to the latest and endless applications before Council - this despite Council declaring a freeze on new licences in 2009 due to the area being already 'saturated' with licensed premises, a move that had little force as decisions were often overturned by the Land and Environment Court in favour of the licensee applicant.

To give just one example of what residents were up against: at one stage the owner of a troublesome and notorious venue on Darlinghurst Rd applied to open a new club just metres away from his original venue, even though he had, according to Police records, *over 100 liquor license breaches at the first venue!* Residents could only watch on as their fragile neighbourhood amenity and safety quickly disappeared.

Police and hospitals resources were now stretched beyond their limits, and residents and visitors were afraid for their safety, angry and challenged by the daily and nightly noise and filth created by massive crowds attracted by the apparently sanctioned ‘anything goes’ atmosphere. It became normal to see huge numbers of foot patrol police on our residential streets, along with Dog Squad police, Mounted Police and the black military-style ‘tanks’ of the Riot Squad all on Darlinghurst Rd from late night until dawn, trying to maintain some rule of law.

The following media headlines and articles dramatically illustrate the depth that Kings Cross had sunk to before the lockouts. These are just a few examples, the list is by no means exhaustive:

- Youtube, 29 August 2010: *Trademark Hotel stabbing, crime scene footage* ²
- ABC News, 3 January 2011: *Kings Cross assault victim dies in hospital* ³
- News.com.au, 25 January 2011: *Kings Cross Police warned ‘you will be assaulted’*⁴
- AAP, 14 February 2011: *Kill charge after Kings Cross bashing death of Wilson Duque Castillo* ⁵
- Daily Telegraph, 11 April 2011: *Taxi driver bashed on William St* ⁶

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1e7BCYjmGY>

³ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-01-03/kings-cross-assault-victim-dies-in-hospital/1893856>

⁴ <https://www.news.com.au/national/cops-have-kings-cross-to-bear/story-e6frfkvr-1225993971905?sv=45433084e7bd808699cd7f6638c477e1>

⁵ <https://www.news.com.au/national/wilson-duques-life-ended-after-bashing-that-allegedly-involved-john-hopocate/news-story/a14652f2d0588125b0d498f9a88f89e1>

⁶ <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/citys-mean-streets-turn-on-cabbie-at-kings-cross/news-story/eb24e3733e4ddf157fc3e830f2f9d72f?sv=ed648ca32e2b61faef3b005aa40d8872>

- Sports News, 24 July 2011: *Footballer Jarod Hayne in Kings Cross stoush*^{7 8}
- SMH, 17 October 2011: *Kings Cross nightclub attack: hunt for pair after stabbing*⁹
- Sydney Morning Herald, 3 Jan 2012: *Kings Cross bashing: brother asks for help*¹⁰
- Wentworth Courier, 31 Jan 2012: *Man left with fractured skull after assault at Kings Cross*
- ABC News, 4 Feb 2012: *Hells Angels bikies arrest over Kings Cross brawl*¹¹
- Sydney Morning Herald, 10 Feb 2012: *Stabbed in the face in Kings Cross brawl*¹²
- Daily Telegraph, 10 April 2012: *Man shot in Kings Cross strip club*¹³
- Courier Mail, ABC News, 21 April 2012: *Teens shot as car hits woman in Kings Cross*^{14 15}
- ABC, 24 April 2012: *Kings Cross a war zone, says Malcolm Turnbull*¹⁶
- Wentworth Courier, 21 May 2012: *Security officer charged over Kings Cross nightclub assault*

⁷ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/gunman-fires-at-hayne-and-gasnier-in-kings-cross-20080303-gds3hw.html>

⁸ <https://www.smh.com.au/sport/nrl/case-closed-but-hayne-swears-he-wont-head-to-kings-cross-20110725-1hxdq.html>

⁹ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/kings-cross-nightclub-attack-hunt-for-pair-who-fled-after-stabbing-20111017-1ls0a.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/kings-cross-bashing-brother-asks-for-help-20120103-1pj2m.html>

¹¹ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-02-05/bikies-charged-after-kings-cross-brawl/3812076>

¹² <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/stabbed-in-the-face-in-kings-cross-brawl-20120210-1sa36.html>

¹³ <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/man-shot-in-kings-cross-strip-club/story-e6freuy9-1226321753422?sv=7b9e6635a47f9c717fe4de8d0e411f64>

¹⁴ <https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/national/sydney-police-fire-at-car/news-story/6fb4b3f5309cbc793a28e48acc5dd867>

¹⁵ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-04-21/police-shoot-two-teens-in-kings-cross/3964184>

¹⁶ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-04-24/kings-cross-a-war-zone-says-turnbull/3968008>

- Daily Telegraph, 31 May 2012: *Mass brawl erupts in front of Goldfish Bowl Kings Cross* ^{17 18}
- Daily Telegraph, 1 June 2012: *Girls cheer as diggers bashed by Cross mob* ¹⁹

NOTE:

All these headlines, and the events they refer to, predate the deaths of Thomas Kelly and Daniel Christie. We will repeat that statement because it is crucially important: *All these events predate the 2 deaths that are assumed to be the catalyst for the lockout legislation.*

This timeline of events clearly refutes the common assertion that the 2014 lockout legislation was a knee-jerk response to those 2 deaths. It was not a knee-jerk response: the precinct had been out-of-control and worsening for years, with residents, businesses and visitors in the middle of it (refer back to Map 2), begging for help and often confronting threatening violence. It was literally like a war zone, as Malcolm Turnbull described it in 2012 (see above). At a packed King Cross Community Meeting in late 2011, an angry resident told the floor, and the City of Sydney Councillors who were present, “*It will take a blond-haired blue-eyed kid from the suburbs to be killed before Council and the State government do something about the Cross*”.

And with tragic prescience, just a few months later he was.

¹⁷ <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/national/mass-brawl-erupts-in-front-of-goldfish-kings-cross/news-story/d06fde00523a077ae5c1f444df42bec2?sv=c112e9cecaf5c0661f7aeca65f7f260>

¹⁸ <https://www.news.com.au/national/nsw-act/mass-brawl-erupts-in-front-of-goldfish-kings-cross/news-story/8b2c825bf0871654b2a62524bae3b1d7>

¹⁹ <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/girls-cheer-as-diggers-bashed-by-kings-cross-mob/story-fn7y9brv-1226377870179?sv=6f51b5f960697695b4e1709dbfe92e5>

Despite years of pleading to all tiers of government about this decaying state and increased violence, the community went unheard and unacknowledged, until the tragic deaths of two young men who were violently and senselessly killed on a night out in Kings Cross, 12 months apart. Enough was now enough, the limits of tolerance, patience and common-sense had been breached. The outrage from residents, from wider Sydney and indeed the national community, finally resulted in the NSW Government passing legislation for a suite of initiatives that came to be collectively known as ‘the lockouts’ to protect residents, visitors and workers in Kings Cross and the Sydney CBD.

But the deaths of Tom Kelly and Daniel Christie, while tragic, heartbreaking and completely avoidable, were not the only deaths due to the 24-hour alcohol industry in Kings Cross and the CBD - they simply attracted the most headlines and outrage. The confirmed death toll (there may have been more) from the Kings Cross/CBD 24-hour late-night trading cycle are:

1. Wilson Duque Castillo - **killed in Kings Cross** in 2010 ²⁰
2. Calum Grant - **killed in Kings Cross** in 2011 ²¹
3. Thomas Kelly - **killed in Kings Cross** in 2012 ²²
4. Daniel Christie - **killed in Kings Cross** in 2013 ²³
5. Lucio Rodrigues - **killed in Sydney CBD** in 2013 ²⁴

²⁰ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/kings-cross-fight-turned-deadly-court-hears-20130822-2sdik.html>

²¹ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/five-possible-witnesses-to-kings-cross-bashing-sought-20120103-1piq6.html>

²² <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-10-25/thomas-kelly27s-killer-a-coward2c-father-tells-court/5046106>

²³ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/daniel-christie-dies-following-kinghit-punch-20140111-30ndv.html>

²⁴ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-09/nicholas-lambaditis-pleads-guilty-over-rodrigues-death/6291024>

And of course what this list cannot include are the countless victims of violence who ended up in St Vincent's Hospital Emergency Department on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights - or indeed any day or night of the week during that period - as a result of injury sustained from bingeing on alcohol or from the violence that thrived in the 24-hour trading cycle. We will never know the exact numbers of people who were treated, mended, or who are still undergoing rehabilitation - they are just statistics and never made the headlines like those two tragic deaths.

Add to that the impact on friends and families and extended families, along with the cost in dollar terms to taxpayers for long-term hospital care, specialist treatment, physiotherapy and rehabilitation for some of these victims, and it makes the reintroduction of 24-hour trading seem, particularly as it relates to licensed premises in a small residential area like Kings Cross, like a gross backward option for a civilised society.

One local resident was so shocked by what he saw and heard walking home to Potts Point one early morning before the lockouts were introduced that he wrote down what he saw. We include it on the following page, and it remains disturbing even today.

This is not a theatrical or dramatised version of what happened that night, rather a description of images such as a camera would record.

And please remember, this was a nightly reality for Kings Cross and Potts Point residents.

It's a beautiful, warm Saturday summer night, and all is right with the world. I'm walking home to the Cross after a night out with friends. It's around 2am - so really Sunday morning now.

As I turn off Oxford St into Darlinghurst Road heading toward the Cross, I hear the sound of smashing glass. I walk on and see a group of 7 or 8 well-dressed young men and women screaming and laughing while they smash empty liquor bottles on the Pink Triangle Memorial in Green Park, opposite St Vincent's Hospital. It's disturbing, but it also troubles me that they're just steps from St Vincent's Hospice where ill and dying people are trying to rest or sleep. I can't do anything about it. I walk on.

Opposite the Jewish Museum I pass a young guy, well dressed, sitting by himself in the gutter. He's holding his head in his hands while he vomits violently onto his lap, down his pants, and onto his shoes. He seems strangely unconcerned by this. As the spew runs into the gutter, I walk on.

About 20 feet away and walking towards me there's another young guy, again very well dressed, talking into his mobile phone. As he gets closer I realise he's not using his mobile – he's clutching his hand to his face, and blood is streaming out between his fingers, down his shirt and onto his pants. I can't tell if it's from a wound to his eye, his nose, his mouth, or all of them. I'm chilled. I keep walking.

I'm now opposite St Johns Church on Darlinghurst Rd, and groups of young men and women are literally throwing themselves on the bonnets of moving taxis, already occupied, screaming "*Take me to Bondi!*" and "*Take me to Newtown!*". One young guy, drunk and hardly able to remain upright, runs in front of a fast-moving taxi and falls on its bonnet, shouting, "*This is how you get a cab!*" He yells to the scared passengers inside to get out but his friends drag him away, and the taxi speeds off. I walk on.

I've crossed over William St and I'm trying to get past maybe 200-300 people squeezed onto the footpath outside the Kings Cross Hotel, most of them drunk, many of them still drinking (I think to myself, "So this is what an Alcohol Free Zone looks like..."). I have to step onto the road into the path of vehicles to get past.

I walk down Victoria St behind the Fishbowl Bar, through about 30 young men and women, some alone, some in twos or threes, sitting or lying on the pavement, some leaning against walls or telegraph poles; most are out of it, some seem unconscious, not displaying any awareness of their surroundings. One young guy is spreadeagled on the footpath, face-down, not moving - the others don't seem at all concerned for him.

I turn into Earl Place (my back lane) and there's a queue of about 80 people, many shouting, arguing, screaming outside the entrance to a busy all-night club. In the few seconds it takes me to walk past the two bouncers standing outside I hear one say to the other violently and explosively, "**...if I see him he's fuckin' dead, I'm going to fuckin' kill him, he's fuckin' dead, I swear he's fuckin' dead...**"

I walk 10 more steps to my back door. I'm shaking, and chilled, on this warm Sydney summer night.

The Lockouts and their impact

The lockouts were introduced by the State Government in February 2014, and the positive results felt by the community in just the first 12 months alone were staggering, with a 40% drop in violent assaults and a dramatic reduction in hospital admissions for serious injury. The masses of out-of-control people, where a high percentage were so intoxicated as to be scarcely able to walk or stand, dissipated. Residents welcomed the dramatic reduction in noise, the disappearance of daily leftover excrement on footpaths and doorsteps, and the increased safety as they moved about their neighbourhood.

At a Police and Community meeting in Kings Cross on June 4th 2015, then Kings Cross Local Area Command Superintendent Michael Fitzgerald announced that his station had seen a 48% decline in alcohol-related violence in Kings Cross in the 12 months since the lockout laws were introduced, an enormous and remarkable improvement.

Clubs, hotels and other venues were and are still able to trade profitably, but no longer at the expense of the NSW taxpayers or to the detriment of local residents. The few venues that would not adopt a more reasonable and civilised code of conduct disappeared, like dinosaurs, out of touch with their environment. In their place have sprung new restaurants, cafes, and retail outlets catering for residents and visitors, like the old Kings Cross village, and not dependent on nightly drunken crowds.

But to claim the lockdowns caused the demise of venues is wrong, and we will address this a more on page 28. Venues had always failed, it was a predictable and repetitive business cycle that residents had seen over and over again, years before the lockdowns were introduced, not helped when the economic model was basically flawed to begin with, built 100% around profits from alcohol sales with zero or little interest in the application and practice of Responsible Service of Alcohol or adherence to other basic Liquor Licence conditions even though these were the non-negotiable rules of their contract of operation. As residents we only had to look out our windows to see staggeringly drunk individuals regularly gaining admittance to venues, and similarly staggeringly drunk individuals and groups leaving venues to fend for themselves, or fight it out, on the street. No RSA there.

These venues would of course be targeted by Police, OLGR inspectors and Council Compliance Officers as a matter of patron safety; the licensees would regularly be found to be in breach of their standard operating conditions, they would be fined, and some would close as a result. It was simply poor business practice, not the lockdowns, that caused their closure.

Even earlier, in 2006, way before the lockdown legislation was introduced, a BOCSAR (Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research) study²⁵ had confirmed that reducing liquor outlet concentrations and outlet density were critical to minimising alcohol-related harm in neighbourhoods. At that time Kings Cross had already been declared saturated with licensed premises.²⁶

²⁵ <https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Documents/BB/ab08.pdf>

²⁶ https://www.clovermoore.com.au/eight_point_plan_to_make_kings_cross_safer

Other and similar reports had followed, looking at the cumulative impact, saturation and density of liquor outlets, finding that alcohol-related crime had risen significantly between 2001 and 2006, around 40 per cent in Kings Cross and 20 per cent in Darlinghurst. One report also highlighted *“the disjuncture between the private economic benefits associated with density which are obviously important to those in the liquor industry, and the (mostly public) economic costs of density that are of strong interest to residents and government services”*²⁷. NDARC (National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre) found the major driver of violence and crime was alcohol and its round-the-clock availability.²⁸

The introduction of the 2014 Liquor legislation rules into Kings Cross has resulted in a dramatic improvement in the daytime and evening economy in Darlinghurst Road, and a quietening of the alcohol-based night-time economy. New restaurants and cafes have opened and a diverse range of businesses have been launched including gyms, cafes, health food store, fashion clothing stores, pharmacies and hairdressers. Licensed venues that are trading have simply adapted to the new limits on opening hours and last drinks.

Contrast this upsurge of activity, vitality and safety in Kings Cross with the cost to tax payers, local government and the State of continuing to subsidise the alcohol industry should 24-hour trading be reintroduced. An article²⁹ in 2005 estimated that alcohol cost Australians **\$15.3billion** in 2004-2005 in direct impacts (reduction in labour efficiency, premature illness and death, healthcare costs such as pharmaceuticals and nursing and ambulances, crime

²⁷ The cumulative impact of licensed premises in NSW. Allen Consulting Group, Phase 1 report, October 2012

²⁸ <https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/ndarc/resources/NDARC%20monograph%2063.pdf>

²⁹ <https://www.myvmc.com/lifestyles/alcohol-the-health-social-and-financial-burden/>

including police work and justice administration e.g. in Kings Cross the regular attendance of the Riot Squad) and indirect impacts (loss of life, pain and suffering).

To remove the lockouts or water-down the legislation would only result in the loss of all that has now been achieved. New businesses would be once again at risk of failing if their customers feel intimidated and unsafe due to drunk and aggressive venue patrons, and it's likely the safety of residents, workers and visitors would once again be compromised.

Jo Holder, co-convenor of Darlinghurst Resident Action Group (DRAG), says there is ample evidence for keeping the sound and proven effective lockdown laws in place, and that they have had a “*profoundly positive*” impact on the area, for residents and for business activity. “*Each new review of the evidence confirms what is already known: that reducing the hours during which on-premise alcohol outlets can sell alcohol late at night can substantially reduce rates of violence,*” Ms Holder said, “*The evidence of effectiveness is strong enough to consider restrictions on late-trading hours for bars and pubs as a key approach to reducing late-night violence in Australia.*”

2011 Residents Association convenor, Helen Crossing, has said the lockdown legislation has helped to restore amenity for residents, with reduction in noise, increased sense of safety, and cleaner streets. “*Many of our members are long-term residents who actively campaigned to try to stem the explosion in approvals given for nightclubs and longer trading hours; it is obvious that the noise, vandalism, and violence was directly linked to the cumulative effects of so many licensed premises,*” Ms Crossing said.

Media and ‘hype’ around the Kings Cross lockouts

On the following pages we would like to address the voracious mis-information campaigns that have been waged against the lockouts since 2014, more broadly and very creatively in the last 2 years.

In all the following examples one finds at their core a very simple and clever precept - *‘Repeat something often enough and eventually people will believe it’*, a phenomenon also known as ‘the illusion of truth’³⁰.

³⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illusory_truth_effect

“Hundreds of businesses have closed as a result of the lockouts!”

A recent blog claimed that over 400 businesses had closed in Kings Cross and the CBD due to the lockouts. The claim is fanciful in the extreme. If 400 premises of any kind had closed down in Kings Cross and the CBD we would be seeing a ghost town with tumble weeds blowing down the main strip - which is most definitely not the case today. It is an unlikely and exaggerated figure, and it is also a very damaging lie to propagate, but it suits the proponents of this argument to do so.

The claim also takes no account of the number of mainstream businesses that have opened and are thriving in the newly invigorated daytime and evening economy in Kings Cross.

A report published by City of Sydney in 2012 titled “Kings Cross at night” noted that there were about 350 businesses in total that operated from 11:00 pm, 250 open until 4:00 am and 200 remained open until 5:00am; 189 of these were licensed premises, 19 of which held 24 hour trading licenses. In the peak period pre-lockouts, between 2012-2014, media were reporting estimates of around 350 licensed premises operating in Kings Cross³¹, a figure which, if correct, was obviously too great to sustain in such a small area.

Interestingly, among the list of venues that were noted in various media as later forced to close due to the lockouts is the iconic Bourbon and Beefsteak Hotel, and even more curious is that its closure was announced back in 2010 - four years before the lockouts were

³¹ <https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/national/inside-the-kings-cross-cauldron/news-story/3c4033a76ad5178031e27dc0e23ec0d8?sv=73850245241551a9df4e7b9e4f790e6d>

introduced!³² So it's very odd to see that it's still operating today, and thriving in the new environment. This example alone is enough to instil caution when listening to these exaggerated claims.

Other venues claimed to have closed were in Newtown and on City Rd at Chippendale, well away from the geographic area affected by the lockdown legislation, but again it suited the proponents of this argument to include them in their list.

And the misinformation keeps coming - a recent article³³ in the UK's Daily Mail quotes from a list compiled in 2018 by NSW MLC and Shadow Minister for Tourism John Graham, of *"176 venues that have closed in Sydney since the lockdown law was introduced"* (one must ask, what happened to the earlier claims of *'over 400 venues closed'*?).

And truth is a casualty yet again: of the 14 Kings Cross/Potts Point venues on Graham's list, at least 3 were just sleazy sex-on premises joints and occasional shooting galleries (Love Machine, Porkies, Dreamgirls); the Bourbon Hotel is open, not closed; Trademark is now Holey Moley, and open, and has a bar. Some of the other venues on the list had a history of multiple Police and OLGR (NSW Office of Liquor and Gaming) interventions well before the lockdowns (Beachaus, Tunnel, Goldfish Bowl, Bank); and the Soho Bar was part of the Piccadilly Hotel that lost favour due to an infamous case involving the late night (early morning) rape of a female patron in a laneway behind the premise. Soho owner Andrew

³² <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/kings-crosss-bourbon-and-beefsteak-to-close-indefinitely/news-story/b5daa7bdaf8d9e3ce72a3c61abb6392e?sv=ff71ee853ca84ee31086cc5977dd8b1a>

³³ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7161051/Sydney-lock-laws-reduce-crime-Kings-Cross-no-effect-violence-new-university-data-Queensland.html>

Lazarus said “the lockout laws have destroyed an entertainment precinct”³⁴, but he failed to mention, or didn't care, that the entertainment precinct - and its impacts - was itself destroying a residential neighbourhood. Interestingly, he later claimed the reason for the closure and sale of the property was the major backlash it suffered during and after the court case, not the lockouts.³⁵

Some of the Kings Cross bars and clubs mentioned in the same article had also been the subject of numerous Police and OLGR actions, given repeat fines due to regular infringements of their liquor licence obligations, and had been found to be poorly managed, but the journalist failed to mention this as well as multiple other reasons why venues closed.

For example, Bada Bing and DreamGirls incurred long-term closure orders due to a raft of licence breaches, including staff allegedly selling cocaine to patrons^{36 37} ; and the Piano Room already faced an uncertain future as early as 2009 after its owner, Trademark Hotel, was reportedly placed in liquidation. But like a driver who complains when his license is finally revoked after being caught drunk at the wheel *yet again*, they look for something else to blame - the lockouts will do for that.

³⁴ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/going-going-gone-10-iconic-bar-closures-and-moves-in-sydney-20160314-gnic6h.html>

³⁵ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/convicted-rapist-luke-lazarus-jailed-for-at-least-three-years-20150327-1m91up.html>

³⁶ <https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/news-life/you-can-snort-cocaine-off-my-tits-inside-the-guns-drugs-and-girls-world-of-australias-most-outrageous-strip-club-baron/news-story/034a42aba87104152548492c75bd021d>

³⁷ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/kings-cross-strip-clubs-dreamgirls-and-bada-bing-forced-to-close-20160203-gmk3wt.html>

A walk-through by 2011RA members in 2016 along all Potts Point/Kings Cross streets that house commercial premises counted 18 premises closed or with ‘For Lease’ signs; and just last year in 2018, a similar walk through Kings Cross counted just 5 premises closed along Darlinghurst Rd, a number that has remained just about constant for that strip since the early 2000s.

Another walk along the retail strips in Bondi Junction and Belmore Rd (the main shopping street of Randwick) found similar or a greater number of retail premises For Lease. As well, a recent walk through the main shopping strip along Oxford St Paddington, from the Post Office up to Queen St, noted at least 15 vacant shops for lease.

And most recently the Sydney Morning Herald published an article about shops closing along King St Newtown³⁸, with one group blaming the Kings Cross lockouts for the closures because “*visitors [to Newtown] increased by 304%*” creating a booming cafe and restaurant scene that challenged traditional retailers. So the lockouts are decried because they supposedly cause businesses to close, then decried again because they apparently stimulate other businesses to open. There is a degree of irrationality and hysteria about the arguments. If interest rates rise, or the drought worsens, just blame the lockouts.

The lockouts are not in play in Bondi Junction, Randwick, Paddington or Newtown, so the probable causes of closures or vacant shops there are the fickle and changing moods of the

³⁸ <https://www.smh.com.au/business/small-business/king-street-is-dying-newtown-retailers-shut-up-shop-20190621-p5205q.html>

economy coupled with choices made by business owners. Strangely, these reasons are never considered for businesses that close in Kings Cross - it's always the fault of 'the lockouts'.

The unpalatable reality is that in Kings Cross and wider Sydney restaurants and bars open and become the flavour of the month for a year or more, but always run a risk of falling out of fashion or favour with the public, and without adapting to the changing environment this can then lead to closure. That's simply the nature of the ebb and flow of business, the action of supply and demand, and the customer's right to direct their dollars elsewhere.

As well, the mobile food delivery era is here, and has caused a big drop in the numbers of people going out to dine, replaced by easy and cheap and convenient home delivery. It has nothing to do with lockouts, and is simply once again a changing retail environment.

Some venues in Kings Cross have closed, and as noted earlier they were mostly those unable or unwilling to adjust their business model to fit the new civilised working environment - they resisted making patron and community safety their number-one priority, and they paid the price. We are not sorry to see them go. But as also noted earlier, they have been replaced by an upsurge in new mainstream businesses that genuinely cater for a resurgent Kings Cross village. We welcome and support that change.

“Foot traffic in Kings Cross is down by 84%!”

The claim that foot traffic is down by 84% sounds exaggerated and is essentially unprovable, but even if it is correct it is likely only referring to foot traffic after midnight, as current daytime foot-traffic in Kings Cross is booming as any visitor will see. And if so, this is a reduction that can be applauded as a victory for sanity, safety and common sense.

City of Sydney Council’s own research, reported to residents at community meetings, found that pre-lockouts there were around 25,000 people on Darlinghurst or Bayswater Roads on a typical Saturday night, the equivalent of the contents of Sydney Football Stadium emptying into Kings Cross to party - on residential streets! Mayor Clover Moore wrote in 2012 *“Our research shows that there are as many people on the corner of Bayswater Road at 2am as Martin Place in peak hour - and with the crowds comes antisocial behaviour...”*³⁹ and a spokesperson for the AHA (Australian Hotels Association) acknowledged there were *“20,000 to 30,000 people”* in the Cross *“on any Friday or Saturday night”*.⁴⁰

Mayor Clover Moore, in an ABC interview on June 25 2009, finally conceded *“It’s like New Years Eve on Friday and Saturday night and it’s a real impact on the people who go there, it’s very dangerous for the young people that go there, and it’s also seriously impacting on those people who live in adjacent areas which are in fact, the areas with the highest population density in Australia.”*⁴¹

³⁹ https://www.clovermoore.com.au/improving_kings_cross_at_night

⁴⁰ <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/lord-mayor-clover-moores-plan-to-clean-up-streets-of-kings-cross/news-story/d291f301d388bd3c0caff53f0ae98acd>

⁴¹ <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2008/s2608759.htm>

Clover Moore went on to say in another broadsheet “*just like major celebrations such as New Year's Eve, Kings Cross needs to be run as an event, twice a weekend, every weekend.*”⁴² At that point it appeared that the interests of residents had clearly been buried under the needs of the 24-hour party culture.

Clearly this was now unsustainable for the small geography of Kings Cross, the practical resources for contending with such crowds, the lack of emergency contingencies for dealing with such huge numbers, the constant reliance on massed numbers of police diverted from their task of preventing crime just so they could deal with drunks, and the obvious risk of alcohol-fuelled violence exploding among crowds in a tiny contained area - as it regularly did with often disastrous results. If foot traffic has reduced by 84% it is likely just a return to normal, sustainable numbers for such a small and contained residential/business precinct.

After the death of Thomas Kelly in Kings Cross in 2012, Lord Mayor Clover Moore was quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald saying, “*We did research up there [in 2010] and we observed over a period of **an hour** in Bayswater Road, between 1am and 2am, **80 incidents - significant incidents** - that led to police intervention*”⁴³. We ask, is there any other area or precinct in Australia that would tolerate this kind of regular aberrant behaviour in the name of an ‘Entertainment Precinct’?

⁴² https://www.clovermoore.com.au/making_kings_cross_work

⁴³ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/time-to-end-the-violence-20120711-21wej.html>

In the same report current City of Sydney Councillor Linda Scott (then a candidate for Lord Mayor) said late trading hours and density of premises were the two biggest predictors for alcohol-related violence: *"We should be having every single level of government working to prevent events like this in future,"* she said⁴⁴.

If the 2014 liquor legislation as it currently applies in Kings Cross is relaxed or watered down in any way, vested interests in the alcohol and gaming industries will be ready to take over once again in a bid to secure Potts Point as a 24-hour trading 'Entertainment Precinct', which would likely result in a reversion to the headlines and disastrous pre-lockout environment described earlier. We cannot stress forcefully enough that this would be a complete dereliction and abrogation of the State Government's responsibility and duty to protect its citizens.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ For a recent study on positive outcomes of maintaining reduced licensing hours and alcohol availability, see 'Impacts of changes to trading hours of liquor licences on alcohol-related harm: a systematic review 2005–2015 Claire Wilkinson, Michael Livingston, Robin Room' <http://www.phrp.com.au/issues/september-2016-volume-26-issue-4/impacts-of-changes-to-trading-hours-of-liquor-licenses-on-alcohol-related-harm-a-systematic-review-2005-2015/>

“The lockouts have killed Sydney as a tourist destination!”

It seems that those who oppose the lockouts have very limited imaginations about what tourists and visitors look for when they travel from overseas to visit Australia - there is far more to this country than a night out on the tiles in Kings Cross, something vocal opponents of the lockouts don't seem able to acknowledge. They appear ever hopeful of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy of a failed tourist industry, so they can use that to wind the clock back to 2012, with the alcohol and gaming industries poised and ready to fill the imaginary void. This would be a grave backward step for the whole community.

It's easy to find positivity and support for the 'new' and safe Kings Cross - even a quick look through Tripadvisor found these random comments from visitors about their recent experiences staying in Kings Cross, comments that more than balance the negativity of those who want to return to the old 'alcohol theme park' days:

- From Sydney: *“Time has changed the feel of the Cross and there is an easy going feel in the area - good restaurants. Been a while since I was in the area. It feels cleaner and less a party location. Came to go to Billy Kwongs and walked through the area easily and felt safe. Enjoyed taking in the buildings and the local feel is quite good. Lots of locations to eat.”*
- From Arkansas, USA: *“We are renting right in this area and it is incredible area of shops, restaurants, places of interest and open air markets. Truly a treasure of an area and anyone visiting Sydney should walk through this area. Tons of things to see and do. Lots of outdoor markets and places to eat. Love this area!!!!*

- From Sydney: “*The most densely populated area in Australia! Love this place. So close to the city, great entertainment and great restaurants. Worth a visit any time of year.*”

The obsession that some ‘stakeholders’ have with the non-negotiable concept of 24-hour trading is hard to understand. Their argument could be paraphrased as follows: *forget that Sydney is blessed with miles of golden beaches swimmable all year round, ignore its picture-perfect harbour and iconic and accessible working symbols like the Opera House and Harbour Bridge; dismiss its ring of world class national parks; forget its vibrant theatre and dining scene. None of that matters, because as long as Sydney pubs are open until 5am, then it makes the grade as an ‘international city’.*

We find that thinking very strange, rather illogical, and potentially damaging to the very thing that they profess to be so concerned about, Sydney's reputation as a destination worth travelling to for overseas (and national) visitors.

For the last word on the subject, go to NSW Government’s latest “Kings Cross Visitors Profile” for the year ended December 2018; it found “*the total number of international and domestic overnight visitors to NSW who visited Kings Cross was 1.3 million, **up 10% on 2017*** ⁴⁶”. There is no negative ‘lockout effect’ on local tourism, instead there has been an increase in visitor numbers as proved by the State Government’s own research figures.

⁴⁶ <https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Kings-Cross-Visitor-Profile-YE-Dec-2018.pdf?x15361>

“No other city has lockouts or late-night drinking restrictions!”

This is simply untrue.

The 2016 Liquor Law Review by the Hon Ian Callinan, far from finding Sydney was alone in having a modest restriction on drinking hours, noted that many other ‘international’ cities have similar time limits: Paris, Dublin, Rome, Singapore, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington DC, Montreal, Vancouver and Toronto.⁴⁷

We also ask you to refer to the ABC’s Fact Check at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-16/fact-check-do-other-world-cities-have-lockout-laws/7225790> which assessed claims, regularly made by groups like Keep Sydney Open, that “no other international city worth its salt has these lockouts”⁴⁸. It found the claims exaggerated, and the ABC research team found “many examples of mandated “last drinks” times in large, culturally diverse cities”.

There are restrictions on the sale and service of alcohol that already exist in many ‘international’ cities and states, and we provide some examples of these on the following page. These examples confirm that, internationally, Sydney is by no means alone in having adopted modest restrictions on alcohol sale and service hours, and refute the argument that Sydney is derided internationally and by visitors because of these regulations:

⁴⁷ 2016 Liquor Law Review, IDF Callinan AC, Volume 2, pp 25-26

⁴⁸ Tyson Koh interviewed on Sydney breakfast radio Feb 22 2016 as reported in <https://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-16/fact-check-do-other-world-cities-have-lockout-laws/7225790?pfmredir=ms&pfm=sm>

- In California, USA, *“It is also illegal for anyone knowingly to buy alcoholic beverages between 2:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. In addition, drinking alcohol below the age of 21 is a criminal offence. Customers of restaurants may take home partially consumed bottles of wine.”*⁴⁹
- The New York State Liquor Authority (or “SLA”) allows a liquor/wine store to open and sell alcohol to the public Monday through Saturday until midnight. On Sundays, a liquor/wine store can sell only from noon until 9:00 p.m. Grocery stores and drug stores cannot sell beer on Sundays from 3:00 a.m. until noon.⁵⁰
- In Canada⁵¹, permissible hours for the sale and service of alcohol for liquor sales licensed establishments and Special Occasion Permit* events are:
 - Monday to Sunday 9:00 a.m to 2:00 a.m.
 - New Years Eve (December 31st) 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m.
 - All orders for liquor must be served before 2:00 a.m. (3:00 a.m. on New Years Eve). All signs of liquor must be cleared within 45 minutes after the end time on the licence; for most this is by 2:45 a.m. (3:45 a.m. on New Years Eve). This includes the clearing of all glasses and bottles off the tables. *Some liquor sales licences and special occasion permits may have conditions that further limit the above noted permissible hours.

⁴⁹ https://www.abc.ca.gov/questions/enforcement_faq1.html

⁵⁰ <https://helbraunlevey.com/how-late-can-you-sell-alcohol-at-your-store-bar-or-restaurant/>

⁵¹ <https://www.agco.ca/alcohol/hours-alcohol-sale-and-service>

- In Ireland a pub can legally open at 10:30am in the morning except for Sunday, when opening time is 12:30pm in the afternoon. Closing time Monday to Thursday is 11:30pm, on Friday and Saturday 12:30am, on Sunday 11:00pm.⁵² This is also confirmed by a visit to the VFI website, an organisation which is the Irish equivalent to the Australian Hotels Association (<https://vfipubs.ie/pub-opening-hours/>).

Hopefully the committee can now see through this scare campaign that has painted Sydney as somehow ‘behind’ other cities around the world, disadvantaged due to some small restrictions in trading hours caused by the 2014 liquor legislation. This is obviously incorrect, but it suits the proponents of these scare campaigns to voice them as loudly and as frequently as possible with no regard for the facts.

⁵² <http://www.stevenroyedwards.com/closingtimes.html>

“The lockouts have killed live music”

The live music scene in Kings Cross was already shrinking more than 20 years ago, with the closure of popular clubs like the Manzil Room, coupled with the emergence of the ‘DJ’ phenomenon in night clubs and venues: it proved to be much cheaper to employ a single DJ to play multiple sets of music during an evening, rather than hire and pay for a band, sound equipment, managers and roadies. This was not an attempt to kill the live music industry, rather just an inevitable entertainment trend, but the demise of live music began then, pre-dating the lockout legislation by at least 20 years.

Other live-music venues that closed well before the lockouts were introduced include the Bondi Lifesaver and Selina’s at the Coogee Bay Hotel.

To infer that the liquor legislation introduced in 2014 single-handedly ended the live music scene in Sydney, or in Kings Cross specifically, is to ignore the cultural history of change and development, the fluid nature of the leisure market, the absolutely seismic shifts over the last 20 years in how people access their chosen forms of entertainment (cf. CDs vs Spotify or iTunes; a trip to the movies vs streaming Foxtel or Netflix; live concerts vs DVDs, Youtube and home cinema), and the general economic principles that businesses adopt to minimise their costs and maximise their profits.

“Kings Cross bars and clubs have closed, turned into residential apartments!”

We can find absolutely no evidence to support this claim that was recently made in a local Potts Point business blog. It may be a veiled reference to sites like the old FishBowl and Sports Bar that were on the ground floor of the Crest Hotel on Darlinghurst Rd, where 18 floors of original hotel rooms above the street have now been remodelled as the OMNIA apartments.

However the retail areas that housed the FishBowl and Sports Bar have definitely not been converted to residences, and are both still available for retail use, awaiting successful new business to take up the lease - such as the newly opened Woolworths supermarket now located directly above them and which is a huge benefit to the entire neighbourhood.

Or perhaps it's referring to the old Tunnel Nightclub in Earl Place, a back lane behind Darlinghurst Rd - but it has now reopened after a major refurbishment as an upmarket gym. Definitely no residential development there either!

Both Woolworths and the new gym are just two examples of the growing diversity of Kings Cross businesses moving away from the stranglehold of the 24-hour alcohol economy, an out-dated business model and an unnecessary anachronism in the 2011 postcode today.

It is also worth noting that a trend away from alcohol-heavy business has not been confined to Kings Cross. As just one example, in Bondi Junction the Cock'N'Bull Hotel, a local watering hole for many years, has closed and the site is being redeveloped as an apartment

building⁵³. There are no lockouts at play in Bondi Junction to take the blame for this urban shift, just a business model evolving away from alcohol, and toward community amenity.

As well, the frequent derogatory use of the term ‘gentrification’ to describe the growing number of new residents including young singles, couples and families with children in Kings Cross and Potts Point is disappointing, as though it's something alien and abhorrent to want to move to this area and to want to try to improve your surroundings.

Kings Cross and Potts Point have a long history of so-called gentrification even stretching back to early last century when visitors and residents could often be seen in limousines and furs - the Cross had class! If anything, the neighbourhood has become more down-to-earth and accepting today than it ever has been, as a result of the influx of new residents.

It casts no glory on the small number of noisy critics who want Kings Cross to revert back to a boozy ‘entertainment precinct’ just for temporary weekend visitors, and who single out residents who have pride in their suburb by attacking them with these kinds of labels.

In addition, HammondCare will shortly finish construction of their new 4-storey 50 bed emergency accommodation facility next to St John’s Church at 118A Darlinghurst Rd, to assist with housing individuals in crisis, particularly the elderly homeless⁵⁴. This building will be just 50 metres away from Kings Cross.

⁵³ <https://www.thehotelconversation.com.au/news/2017/12/04/grand-bondi-junction-development-replace-cock'n'bull-hotel/1512383467>

⁵⁴ <https://www.hammond.com.au/donate/darlinghurst>

We know that homelessness is often due to a combination of struggles with alcohol, drugs and mental health, and exacerbated by the cycle of poverty. Darlinghurst is part of a small geographical area with the highest concentration of elderly homeless in Australia, with around 800 individuals in that category. If the lockouts are removed or watered down, these vulnerable individuals in this new facility will be literally just metres away from a 24-hour Kings Cross ‘alcohol and drugs playground’, hardly a positive environment for their rehabilitation or short-term help.

Summary

Given the preceding information and the history of our district from 2007 onwards, let us be very clear about this: our Association cannot comprehend allowing Kings Cross and Potts Point, with its growing residential population and thriving daytime and evening businesses, to be held prisoner once again to the big wallets of the alcohol industry, with its disastrous anti-social consequences and poorly run economics, by exposing our neighbourhood once again to the impacts of the 24-hour alcohol trading cycle.

Kings Cross is on a new path.

There has been an increase in new residential developments to complement an influx of residents into the Cross and Potts Point; families, students, professionals and retirees attracted by the proximity to the city, transport, restaurants, village atmosphere and social diversity that is unique to Potts Point, as well as its new-found safety since the introduction of the lockouts and the suite of liquor legislations.

The daytime, twilight and evening business economy is flourishing (as opposed to having an all-night 'liquor economy'), and this has created a positive commercial environment for new shops and businesses, and a new business confidence, while at the same time allowing residents to enjoy basic amenities like safe and clean streets once again.

Kings Cross cannot be allowed to go backwards, not now. It has survived the worst, now let it prosper without the chains of 24-hour trading stifling it again and dragging it back into the pre-lockouts period of documented violence and death.

The lockouts, along with the other reasonable innovations contained in the 2014 Liquor Legislation, save lives.

We urge you, the Committee, to recommend that the NSW State Government keep the current and very reasonable liquor legislation regulations as they apply in Kings Cross, and to let Kings Cross and Potts Point continue to grow safely.

Helen Crossing

Convenor, 2011 Residents' Association

On behalf of our members and the residents of the 2011 postcode

Photo credits

Page 11: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g16gg6GeF4A>; howlandechoes.com

Page 12: perthnow.com.au; deskgram.net

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