

**Submission
No 351**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

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Quite simply, the Sydney lockdown laws have made it an embarrassment to live in Sydney. When I have friends come to visit from overseas, or even just from Victoria, they are shocked at the rules that have been imposed on our nightlife. Not only are these laws sucking the culture out of our communities, they are also affecting the perception of Sydney on a global scale. Instead of being perceived as a forward-thinking, progressive and diverse cultural destination, the city is more commonly being seen as an over-commercialised, elitist and creatively restrictive nanny state.

Having lived in Copenhagen for 6 years, my recent return to Sydney has been disenchanting, to say the least. As a resident, I do not feel inspired by this city, which, in my opinion is what a great city should do for its residents. Instead I feel as though my desire to either be an artist or be involved in the artistic community is thwarted. The lack of a vibrant, diverse and inclusive nightlife has created a sense of stagnation and apathy when it comes to going out and exploring the city.

What's more, there is no sense of camaraderie amongst the members of the community and the facilitators of the nightlife, rather it feels as though as door is being slammed in your face whenever you go out (literally). We are being treated as delinquents before we even step into a venue. It is demoralising and incredibly frustrating to be looked down upon in this way and assumed to be a burden to society when all you want to do is be involved in it and feel a sense of belonging.

Where can we belong at nighttime if we feel shunted from the few venues that are open? How can we feel safe, creatively stimulated and connected to our fellow residents with these doors closed? How can residents and visitors alike feel welcome in the city when it feels dead and uninviting during the times when it should be coming to life? These are questions that desperately need to be answered if Sydney wants to maintain any kind of loyalty from the generations who comprise the future of this city.