

**Submission
No 396**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Name: Mr Mike Rapajic

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I heard you were reviewing the controversial lockout laws and as someone who was greatly affected by them I wanted to weigh in. I am a Sydney local, I grew up in Newtown and lived in the inner city until I left Sydney some three years ago. I left in no small part due to the lockouts. Working in a restaurant in Sydney, at first I thought the lockouts wouldn't affect me. I finished work before they kick in anyway. So, who cares? It turned out very different. There is a knock-on effect that is felt by the entire industry. If people can't go out to a club then maybe they won't go out to a bar beforehand, and if they can't go to a bar after dinner then maybe they won't go out to a restaurant beforehand. So we all felt a lot less busy as a result.

The second issue was the lack of dignity felt by all who went out in Sydney. It wasn't just that the bars shut early. It was the inability to get a cocktail, the drinking out of plastic, the roving RSA police, the constant discussion about lockouts and laws and regulations and restrictions instead of excitement about a night out. This slowly poisoned the night life scene in Sydney to the point at which the only people going out were the ones who didn't care about being treated with such indignity. This actually made everything so much worse than the closing hours. People don't wish to be treated like children, and if we do treat them as such the only ones out will be the ones who behave as such.

Not only did this result in much worse patrons overall but a reduction in the tips we took home. If people don't feel welcome and relaxed and happy, they don't tip, so this hurt us, a lot.

After 2 years overseas in Paris and Montreal, two very vibrant cities with much freer regulations, I now live in Melbourne, again a city not burdened by such undignified laws. I hope to one day see my home-town of Sydney be a great place to go out. But for now, I guess I'll stay here.

I hope you make the right recommendations to the local government.

Cheers,

Mike