

**Submission
No 399**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Name: C/r Linda Scott

Date Received: 2 July 2019

Joint Select Committee
Sydney's Night-time Economy
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Committee

Re: Sydney's Night-time Economy

I write to make a submission to the New South Wales Parliament Joint Select Committee: Sydney's Night-time Economy. The City of Sydney will make a submission to this committee, and I endorse those recommendations. I am further compelled to write individually on behalf of those businesses and cultural hubs that have been irrevocably damaged.

We must reshape the policy in order to meet the demands of our global and creative city. I welcome this opportunity and congratulate the parliament on the bipartisan nature of this committee.

Alcohol abuse and alcohol-fuelled violence are definitely serious issues which face our City, and they deserve a sensible, sensitive and evidence-based approach to deal with them. The current policy framework that has been in place since 2014 cannot concurrently meet both targets of reducing alcohol related violence whilst supporting and growing the night-time economy in Sydney.

Although alcohol related violence has reduced in the city centre, it is not dissimilar to the state-wide trend over the last few years. In fact, there have been increases in violence in lockout adjacent areas of our city. BOSCAR investigations identified that night time violence in proximal displacement areas and distal displacement areas were both up by 12% and 17% respectively. These implications may suggest that the lockout laws have simply redirected violent behaviours elsewhere.

But what is ultimately clear is that the introduction of the lock-out laws have resulted in a city-wide economic hit. According to a [Deloitte Access Economics report](#) released early this year the city's night-time economy, which is currently valued at \$27 billion a year, could be worth up to \$43 billion.

If we want to create a global, 24 hour city, with healthy communities, we must create a city that fosters diversity, activity and culture at all hours. The current laws do not do so, they are a sledgehammer solution to the complex and nuanced issues concerning the culture of violence.

As a City of Sydney Councillor I have seen firsthand impact on our business and cultural communities. Restaurants and venues have closed their doors, young people cannot find jobs, and streets are deserted in winter. Evidence has shown that vibrant, activated night time streets are also less dangerous for individuals travelling through or homeward bound.

Over the years, I have received correspondence from residents, community members and businesses which have discussed, and indeed many have denounced, the policies which have significantly altered the city's nightscape. Often I would receive correspondence asking for assistance with struggling businesses and bars, asking me to make representations to the state government on their behalf. Many of these businesses have since ceased trading.

In fact, as of May last year, Sydney has had a net loss of 176 venues since the lockdown laws were brought in. Other states are benefiting from our current policy vacuum, with Victorian arts revenues outperforming New South Wales for the first time ever.

Tourism Australia notes that over this time the Sydney economy has retracted by 7.1 percent, and a loss of over 490,000 young people (35 and under) from visiting Sydney. Domestically Sydney has also seen a 12 per cent reduction in domestic visitors, choosing to stay in Sydney.

It is clear that lock out laws have not worked. Worse still, they have made our City a less fun and less accessible place to live, work and play. In order to ensure that our City remains the vibrant and global City we want it to be, we urgently need to change these lock out laws and take a targeted and evidence-based approach to keeping our City streets safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Scott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Linda Scott
Deputy Lord Mayor
City of Sydney

2 July 2019