

**Submission
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SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

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Imagine we are in a school playground and there are dozens of children playing together. Children of all ages and shapes and sizes. Then in one particular area, where the children particularly like to play, some children get hurt by a couple of bullies. Rather than address the bullies, the school decides to shut down that popular part of the playground, putting tape all around it and letting it grow over with weeds.

In the next issue of the school newsletter, the school congratulates itself for having solved the bullying issue in the playground.

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The lockout laws were instated as a knee-jerk reaction to alcohol-infused violence. In my view, this is lazy policy that did not deal with the problem it purported to solve.

In response to the delusion that lockouts have made our city safer, I would argue that the issue of alcohol-induced violence cannot just be pushed to one side, or under the carpet. The carpet in this instance, being the casino, which is mysteriously kept out of the lockout zone and bizarrely exempt from the violent venues list (despite the Star being ten times more violent than the most violent NSW pub).

What our city needs is:

A coordinated approach between government, venues, planning authorities and the police - like you would see for other major public gatherings such as sporting events - that would effectively allow us to keep our vibrancy, keep our night-time economy, while also keeping us safe.

An overhaul of liquor licensing to better reward good management and cultural activity. Where people watch music or any other live performance, they drink less. They have enriching experiences, they feel connected to one another and are more socially responsible than they would be if they were staring blankly at a poker machine or just slamming down shots. Venues contributing to our cultural capital should be rewarded, supported and encouraged, not penalised.

A 24 hours city needs 24 hour transport. Modelling shows that extended late-night public transport is more effective in reducing alcohol-related harm than venue lockouts, and would lay the foundation to unlock the vast potential of our night-time economy. 24 hour transport is a mandatory requirement of global, progressive, internationally significant cities.

Put simply, the lockout laws have dealt a sledgehammer blow to Sydney's night-time economy. This has been very well documented. The lockout laws have decimated foot traffic in our CBD - up to 80% in some parts of the city and hundreds of venues have shut down. Aside from the devastation to our city's artistic, cultural and entertainment landscape, an analysis by Deloitte showed that the lock-outs are costing our economy \$16 billion each year.

Why is the NSW government investing approximately \$25 million on Vivid Sydney*, in order to boost our nighttime economy for a limited three week period to the tune of \$100 million when - by simply getting out of the way of our night time economy - we could be organically generating \$16 billion? There is no logic to this.

(*It may well be more than this but, inexplicably, this is classified information.)

On the international stage, Sydney is being mocked.

During a recent visit, the world's fastest runner Usain Bolt said he'd rather hang out in Melbourne than Sydney.

US TV host Conan O'Brien ridiculed our lockouts on stage in his recent international tour.

Footage of the Red Hot Chilli Peppers concert where they shame our state's attitude toward festivals has gone viral around the world.

As a result, not only have our artists and creative industry workers fled to other states, tech and creative startups are finding it increasingly difficult to attract young professionals here. Before the

lockouts, Sydney was rated #4 in its attractiveness to workers. Now, we're down at #9, lagging behind cities that have thriving 24-hour nighttime culture and economies.

Red tape for all small business in general has been estimated to cost the Australian economy \$176 billion every year. In NSW, small businesses are spending roughly 14 hours a week on compliance. That is far too much. Venues and nighttime businesses in particular have been dramatically affected by or decimated by this red tape.

I want to see our government properly value late-night venues as community assets. Cultural businesses and institutions should not be vulnerable to the whims of one complaining neighbour or the overbearing influence of the gambling industry. Specifically, I wish to see the 'agent of change' principle integrated into the development process, whereby new developments within 100 metres of established venues be responsible for their own noise attenuation measures.

Nightlife builds culture and culture builds social capital - a sense of belonging and cohesion which is more important than ever before. Equally as important, cultural activity has been proven to build economic capital, helping us to keep up with all the other very important areas of our lives.