

**Submission  
No 436**

## **SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY**

**Name:** Dr Christopher Morrison

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July 1, 2019

The Hon. Natalie Ward MLC  
Committee Chair  
Joint Select Committee on Sydney's night time economy

Dear Ms Ward

Please accept this submission to the Parliament of New South Wales' Joint Select Committee on Sydney's nighttime economy.

I am a faculty member in the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, a private research university in New York, New York. I completed a PhD in epidemiology at Monash University and I have been based in the United States since 2012. I worked at the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation in Berkeley, California, from 2012 to 2016, then completed a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from 2016 to 2018. I specialize in the spatial epidemiology of alcohol use and alcohol-related harm, particularly injury, and I have conducted research into the public health impacts of retail alcohol outlets across Australia and the United States.

I submit 4 peer-reviewed journal articles that I authored or co-authored and which are directly relevant to the Committee's terms of reference:

1. **Morrison C, Cameron P. The case for environmental strategies to prevent alcohol-related trauma. *Injury*. 2015; 46(7):1183.**

This article describes the theoretical and empirical basis for environmental strategies to shape alcohol availability and reduce alcohol-related injury at a population level. Critically, the mechanisms I emphasize in this paper are based on universal processes that operate across contexts, meaning that the results of analyses in US settings are generalizable to Sydney. Any attempt to disregard the results of studies from international settings for this inquiry must include an explanation of why the economic geography of Sydney is so fundamentally different from all other retail alcohol markets that the findings from other locations do not apply.

2. **Morrison C, Mair CF, Lee JP, Gruenewald PJ. Are barroom and neighborhood characteristics independently related to local-area assaults? *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 2015; 39(12): 2463-2470.**

This research, funded by the US National Institutes of Health, aimed to understand why alcohol-related assaults and other harms are more common in some bars than others, and

to identify the factors that contribute to these problems. This paper demonstrates that assaults are more common in and around bars that are larger and louder and where there is a greater geographic concentration (known as “density”) of bars. This suggests regulation to limit the size and density of bars will lead to fewer alcohol-related assaults.

3. **Lee JP, Pagano A, Morrison C, Gruenewald PJ, Wittman FD. Late night environments: bar “morphing” increases risky alcohol sales in on-premise outlets. *Drugs: Education, Prevention & Policy*, 2018; 25(5): 431-437.**

During our observations in bars in California for the aforementioned NIH-funded study, we noted that bars often changed their internal environmental conditions during the evening and that the conditions in later evenings reflected those that were associated with increased harms. Our interpretation is that bars respond to market conditions to meet demand. Licensing and regulation should account for the possibility that bars will change their internal environments in response to market conditions.

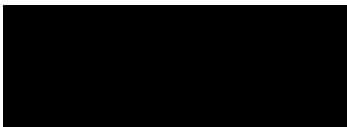
4. **Morrison C, Dong B, Branas CC, Richmond T, Wiebe DJ. A momentary exposures analysis of proximity to alcohol outlets and assault. *Addiction*, 2017; 112(2): 269-278.**

This paper takes a victim perspective and considers whether individuals are at increased risks for violent victimization when they are near areas with more alcohol outlets. We conducted this study in Philadelphia, and the conditions of the alcohol environment are specific to this setting (e.g. licensing types). Nevertheless, the overall finding has clear implications for Sydney. Individuals are at increased risks for non-gun assaults when they are near on-premises alcohol outlets at times when these outlets are most active (e.g. late at night for bars).

I trust you will give this submission full consideration for the *Inquiry into Sydney’s Night Time Economy*.

I am available for further consultation or comment if it would be of value to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

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Christopher N. Morrison, PhD