

**Submission  
No 476**

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

**Name:** Mr Troy Beman

**Date Received:** 2 July 2019

1 July 2019

Att: Joint Select Committee



To the Committee,

RE: Feedback on Policing at live music event

I would like to make a submission about the heavy-handed policing by the NSW Police Force at the Boy George event at IVY on Saturday the 29<sup>th</sup> June at approximately 2:45PM. I am hoping by voicing my opinion and drawing attention to my experience that the Joint Select Committee for Sydney's night time economy, may be able to support change. I want to better inform the NSW Government and NSW Police on the effect on people who are subjected to body searching at events, based on no grounds.

I am 24, and work full-time as an IT Operations Manager, in addition to working in the music industry as a DJ for the past 4 years. I have no prior convictions or any involvement with the police in the past. I was booked as one of the support acts for the event on Saturday.

My group of approx. 10 people who had come support my gig (which was big moment for me), entered the Angel Place laneway to attend the event. Upon turning into Ash St, we were immediately confronted by 15 to 20 uniformed police officers, additional plain clothed officers (I would estimate 5 to 10) and sniffer dogs. Despite the dogs showing no interest in any of our group, four of us were immediately approached by undercover police officers, who had deemed us to have reacted in a way that seemed suspicious and told us that we had be searched. We were then escorted to Martin Place with our hands clasped in front of us, feeling scared, even though we knew we had no illegal substances on us.

In Martin Place, a completely public area in full view of shoppers and passers-by we were searched. Hands on the wall, belongings spread across the pavement, clothes and shoes removed. I was already nervous about my gig in 1-hour, the police did not seem to care that I was working at event, I also explained I had not been drinking or consumed any illegal substances multiple times. The Police grilled us, aggressively over and over, and would not listen to reason. I decided to take a photo of the unfolding situation and I was grabbed and spoken to in hostile manner by another officer – told to hand over my phone and delete images. I refused.

We were not carrying anything illegal and therefore the search found nothing. We left feeling shaken, ashamed, humiliated and violated. I was really thrown ahead of my set, wanting to put on a good show and it took a while to calm down and get focused. This type of intimidation is what's killing the Sydney nightlife (even if this was a day party) and those who support live music. If every time we try to go out with a group of friends, 40% of them are searched on no grounds, what hope do have trying to reactivate the night time economy and encourage patrons to come along to live music events.

I have observed as a patron and now as a DJ, The steep decline in music events. I now get regularly booked in Melbourne as there is more opportunity and better events – a thriving night life. I have also witnessed LGBTQI+ events being targeted more heavily by the lockout laws and gay/queer events (extreme police presence at Mardi Gras Party at the Hordern Pavillion). I feel that given so many of friends and myself were searched on the weekend – we were targeted and profiled by the police because we are flamboyant queer men. It's not right, something needs to be done. Policing should be to make community safer and be in the public interest. This creates hatred and fear towards the police and the state government. Things need to change. I want our city to be as vibrant as other global cities. I want people to feel safe to go out, enjoy music and have fun. None of this is fun, at all.

Yours with hope that together we can create change.

Troy Beman

