

**Submission  
No 486**

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
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Partially  
Confidential

████████████████████ I am an over 50 year old male with previous experience in the Night Time Economy in the late 1990's. I am researching the potential to restart this business.

I submit the following in regards to addressing the terms of reference for the Committee inquiry and report into Sydney's night time economy, including any measures required to:

- (a) maintain and enhance community safety;
  - (b) maintain and enhance individual and community health outcomes;
  - (c) ensure existing regulatory arrangements in relation to individuals, businesses and other stakeholders, including Sydney's lockout laws, remain appropriately balanced;
  - (d) enhance Sydney's night time economy;
- and any other directly relevant matters.

### Safety

After leaving Sydney in 2000, I worked for 9 years with disadvantaged youth, working closely with ████████████████████ we engaged anti-social youth (particularly skaters) in actively participating in place-making (input into where skate parks and how skate parks were developed) and cultural activation (we helped them to organise their own calendar of events). This had great outcomes for the youth and community, acknowledged and praised at all levels of government in the area. It was based on social inclusion and acknowledged that Community Safety is enhanced by place-making and cultural activation.

Sydney's lockout laws have had the opposite effect as it has dismantled place and cultural activation, most notably to myself, as a gay man in a marginalised group, in the Oxford Street precinct with fewer nightclubs, hotels, special events such as dance parties and shorter hours.

Community safety is enhanced when the community is brought together in a cultural gathering to enhance connectedness. The nightclub and dance party culture have had curfews imposed on their activities so that what once would be an 8-9 hour experience offering has been reduced to a 6 hour experience with a limit on being able to move between cultural events to enhance the bonding.

This has led to new behaviours such as pre-loading drinks at home (an unsafe and unhealthy practice) or not going out at all, which is detrimental to the night time economy and evidenced by many reports of reductions of total numbers of participants in the Night Time Economy, especially in Kings Cross and also in my home town of Newcastle.

When I was producing dance parties [REDACTED] [REDACTED] we started the night at 10pm and went to 7am. There were two crowds an early and a late, the early crowd would likely go on to a hotel to wind down or home, the late crowd had already been to a hotel, nightclub or another party and wanted a safe place to finish their dancing. This was good for the economy as the disposable income was shared between several venues and their employees over a longer period of time than currently.

The party I am producing [REDACTED] this November will go from 9pm to 3am (with earlier last drinks at 1:30am and 3am close imposed by venue, most likely an economical decision), this means that it is unlikely people will go to a hotel or nightclub before attending the party and their options to go anywhere else after close are extremely limited. Also with earlier closing times there are less wages going to employees.

I live in Newcastle where the night time economy (Lockouts and earlier closing times have been in effect longer than Sydney) is now so bad that the only gay hotel in town was closed down a year ago. Being gay, I have been attending nightclubs in Sydney

often so that I can make that connection with my “tribe” (group of like-minded people), part for recreation, combating social isolation and cultural expression and also part for research/promotion for my upcoming event mentioned above.

With the presence of Lockout Laws and earlier closing times I have experienced difficulties such as diminishing choices in Entertainment and the night time transport. In terms of transport, firstly there are very few connecting buses to Central from Oxford Street, so I mostly have to walk. Second, on Friday, Saturday nights I have two realistic choices to catch the train home, either at the last train at 1:47am or the first train at 4:48am. This is most inconvenient and frustrating, adding to my anxiety. Luckily I do not drink in excess, but I do see sometimes irate 'drunks' frustrated with the poor transport options on that later train causing a ruckus, fortunately I have not seen any violence.

Sydney is missing an opportunity to enhance it's current night time economy by more frequent and better coordinated night time transport options.

In the late '80s I used to live in London for 5 years. I was a young gay man and enjoyed going out most nights to nightclubs during the week and spending weekends at home usually, this was normal behaviour in my social group. These clubs would end at around 1 or 2am and there was a very well organised Night Bus system which worked extremely well, supporting a thriving night time economy, not just on weekends. I visited London again in the last few years, the night time economy is still thriving and the city has moved further to 24 hour open for business with some night buses being replaced with 24 hour timetabled normal buses every day to service the night time economy.

In the '90s I moved to Sydney, the night time economy, even up to 2000 when I left, was 24 hours on the weekends. As mentioned the dance parties [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I produced went until 7 am, often I would go for a drink after work [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (or some other options), there seemed to be less

violence or anti-social behaviour around in those days (perhaps you have access to these figures to compare). Now there is no 'gay' drinking venues to go at these hours due to the Lockout laws. I have always thought that if there is less anti-social behaviour in the daylight hours then it would be in the best interests of the community to keep late drinkers inside until the sun comes up, like in the 'olden days'.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Balance of existing regulations

Firstly I think that the Lockout Laws should be repealed, they are a 'sledgehammer' effort with collateral damage to responsible drinkers like myself and 100's of employees as well as small businesses to address issues of a minority group who display anti-social behaviour when intoxicated. I feel that education programs both population-wide and better targeted approaches are more effective than these indiscriminate interventions and are better suited to address these issues of over-drinking and violent behaviours in general rather than just those in the Night Time Economy.

If they are not repealed then there is a need for better balance to allow enhancement of the Night Time Economy, by later trading hours and perhaps an extension of the lockout hours and last drink hours, maybe in a measured way, i.e. only later hours for well established venues who are very good at controlling negative outcomes.

As potentially an independent promoter, hiring the event space at a hotel, I would welcome the introduction of more compliance and working with the venue required to mitigate health and safety concerns as I have in my over 20 years of event management experience [REDACTED]

Also more responsibility on licensees to promote more responsible drinking and

behaviour and perhaps friendly coordinated safety officers on the streets and in venues to assist in health or safety concerns (but not like the AFL security debacle, a more measured approach). It has also been suggested that the liquor licences should be reviewed and perhaps KPI's imposed on renewing of licences.

With current research showing that violence has been reduced in the Kings Cross and CBD both by spreading the violence to adjoining areas and big reduction of people going out at night, it is evident that these lockout laws are having only a slight influence on violence at the large expense of the Night Time Economy and the many employees this affects.

What is the purpose of restricting movement between venues after 1:30am or 2:00am [REDACTED] |

imagine that it is to prevent anti-social behaviour and violence during the transit on the streets between venues. There is already an obligation of the premises to refuse entry of any who is intoxicated, etc and the ID system in Kings Cross seems to work well.

Perhaps better transport options are needed such as the proposed shuttle between venues by City of Sydney and others, this could be part funded by the venues which it will service. If there are more people on the streets and more shops and cafes were open then there is less likely to be anti-social behaviour.

Also there should be investment in campaigns and strategies to change the behaviours from anti-social and violence to respecting others. These issues of anti-social behaviour were less prevalent in the '90s because society have allowed a proliferation of social media normalising anti-social behaviour unchecked and unaddressed, starting with the Corey Worthington's infamous party out of control to the fake but alarming infamous “chk-chk-boom” girl in Kings Cross or the recent girl who was 'posting' her speeding thrill before a crash killed her and injuring others in the car.

These anti-social behaviours need to be addressed in some form if anti-social and violent behaviour is to be curbed in a whole of community solution rather than a sledgehammer effort to weed out a minority of offenders in late night venue precincts.

Please note: The Australian Government INTERIM REPORT: SALE AND SERVICE OF ALCOHOL (TERM OF REFERENCE B) CHAPTER 2 (6 May 2016) partly concludes:

2.73 The committee is concerned at what appears to be the normalisation of restrictive legal measures directed at entire populations, rather than at the individuals who break the law.

2.75 The committee encourages all relevant parties to cooperate to ensure the vibrancy of the cultural and entertainment scene in the Kings Cross and Sydney CBD area is maintained and strengthened, including through the continued existence of late-trading venues, as is befitting and necessary for a city of Sydney's international stature.

#### Enhance Sydney's night time economy

This can be achieved by:

repealing the lockout laws;

if not then change the current laws in the following way:

- exemptions for 'good' venues
- a balance of early morning venues and businesses available including live music/DJ (obviously this only needs to be a small subset of the venues to make this work)
- reconsider blanket 'last drinks' times, extending some but not all maybe;



these need to be backed up with strategies such as:

- better transport options to get people home, extensions of train services (especially to Newcastle for me) and transport from venues to trains
- a free shuttle bus between venues and entertainment precincts
- development of new alternative entertainment precincts to avoid 'saturation zones'
- State led health campaigns targeting over-drinking, responsible drinking, responsible behaviours and non-domestic violence, not just in these targeted areas but the whole of community.

Also please review the Newcastle Lockout Laws and Night Time Economy, I seriously would have liked to started my business up in Newcastle but in the current Night Time Economic climate this is not possible and it is very tiring travelling to Sydney so often, especially when you have to wait until 4:48 a.m..for the first train home.