

**Submission
No 488**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Name: Mr Daniel Crocetti

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I was a promotor and DJ for well over a decade in Sydney. Our events toured some of the biggest names in the underground dance scene to Sydney and around Australia as well as nurturing local Australian talent. I want to express my anger and disappointment in this cities heavy handed lockout laws. The way they got implemented without proper consultation. The damaging effect they have had on peoples livelihoods, our venues for live music, and also our reputation globally. As well as the continued assault on culture in Sydney, and heavy handed police tactics at all sorts of festivals, events and random locations.

Through the years I was very lucky to DJ and promote at some of the best clubs in the city, places like Soho, Yu, Sugareef, Candy's Apartment/Underground Cafe, The Cauldron, Suzi Q's/Tantra, Home Nightclub, Civic Theatre, The Bourbon and many others. The people who came to those venues where there to enjoy great music and have a good night on the dance floor or seeing a live band. Most times those nights don't start until midnight, and don't finish until well into the morning. In my 10+ years I spent countless hours moving from club to club either working or socialising, and it was rare that i saw any major violence in these clubs. I felt it was always a very controlled environment that people could have a great time, safe and regulated by RSA and security in all venues.

Since the lockouts came into play, these venues have suffered along with many other late night industries that used to thrive. In the past, people would be free to come and go, and could decide to move between venues if they felt they wanted to and for years places like Oxford street and Kings Cross thrived with the streets filled with people having a great time. Now go to these areas and its [tumbleweeds](#). (and Sydney is supposed to be a 24hr International city)

The night time soul of the city has been quickly destroyed. Live music, night culture, arts, entertainment, restaurants, small business and hospitality are being eroded. One after the other venues shutting the doors, restaurants and surrounding stores closing as the whole community around those areas flatlines. And musicians, bands and DJs look for other places to live and perform. Many entertainment areas are resembling a ghost town, compared to the [bustling nighttime economy](#) that once was. The [open letter from artists flight facilities](#) highlights what has been lost.

These lockouts failed in Queensland, failed in Victoria, and we just have had our head in the sand too long watching it fail in Sydney. Since the laws were introduced, well over 172 bars, clubs and small businesses have [closed their doors in Sydney](#).

In the meantime police and sniffer dogs are descending on public pools, wine bars are being targeted by licensing, festivals are being run out of town with over policing and heavy handed strip search tactics. A city already heavily regulated over the last decade is becoming more and more a nanny state. We're left with a sad soul-less city, building a reputation as a place not to go. (on the other hand Melbourne is embracing the 24hr city) Meanwhile the casinos, are left to trade all night, and we are essentially funnelling all late night revellers into a gambling den.

how is this responsible? The Casino is the [most violent venue in the city](#).

While there are many venues who never had issues that are being shut down by these arbitrary laws that are "supposed" to curb violence. It's also baffling that in fact Sydney was voted [one of the safest city in the world](#) before the lockouts came into play, and Barry o'Farrell was promoting the decline in alcohol related violence publicly before these 2 deaths occurred.

Unfortunately these 2 deaths have been used as a tool to implement these blanket laws that, if they were in place at the time would not have prevented the incidents, as both happened prior to 11pm on the streets.

So how is putting more restrictions on venues helping?

In my opinion these laws have just increased the issues, with young kids "pre-loading" on drinks before going out. Violence on the streets because everyone is spilling onto the street at the same time, with no way to get home, and nowhere to go.

There is so many stats that contradict claims that these laws are working and rather just forcing foot traffic down, and violence to other areas.

- [Foot traffic has fallen in Kings Cross by up to 80 per cent, according to the City of Sydney.](#)
- [Profits at bars in the area had plummeted 40 per cent](#)
- [Live Music Ticket sales are down](#)
- [More than 42 venues, bars and businesses closed](#)

plus more that was brought to light in the [Matt Barrie Expose](#).

As a global city we should be nurturing Sydney as a 24hr destination, open all night, not shutting it down. We should be looking at implementing measures to ensure that we can have a 24 hour nightlife as well as a safe city, they are not mutually exclusive. Everyone including late night revellers want a safe environment. I stand with the [vast majority](#) as shown in this [survey](#) who are opposed to these laws, and would like to see them removed based on consultation with the whole community that it effects implementing solutions that address issues BUT also enhances our late night culture giving special attention to live music venues, rather than Gambling Dens:

- Tougher sentencing for offenders (we are still seeing people get off with a slap on the wrist, yet venues are punished heavily?)
- Inadequate late night transport situation in Sydney - Taxi Changeovers and lack of all night services.
- Improved CCTV scenarios for entertainment precincts along with co-operation between police and venues.
- Density and diversity of licensed premises - with late night trading (not just small bars)
- Education to address a tendency towards violence among certain groups of individuals.
- Research and Education into things like steroids and drugs that are contributing to violent behaviour.
- Night time mayor in charge of protecting the night economy.
- Reversing the freeze on Late night licenses for Live music and Dance venues.

(please note all links above are clickable to see references and information)

Thank you
Daniel C.