

**Submission
No 505**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Name: Mr Adam Niewand

Date Received: 2 July 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to you with regards to the Lock Out Laws in Sydney. My concerns, however, are much broader than this. They are in relation to license regulations for bars, cafes, pubs, small bars and restaurants. They are in concern for the nightlife in Sydney, our vibrancy, our sense of fun and adventure and our freedom to make choices as adults.

I want to make something very clear. The "Lock Out Laws" and the overwhelming rejection by the community to these constraints is not just about our rights to party till dawn which the government seems intent on blasting from loud speakers as the only issue. An issue that the government likes to make little of – silly, young party people want to booze till dawn. How ridiculous!

This is even the half of it.

What we want is to be able to go to a restaurant for dinner after a night at the theatre. We cannot, because restaurant kitchens all close by 9/9:30pm due to license restrictions.

We want to go for a glass of wine with friends in a small bar after dinner and not to a night club, but we can't. We finish dinner at 11pm – all small bars are serving last drinks because their license expires at midnight.

We want to go to a friends place instead of the Casino after dinner, but we can't take a bottle of wine because the bottle shop closes at 10pm and we haven't finished dinner by then.

These are just a couple of examples of how our freedoms are limited and our choices taken away from us. This doesn't even touch on the thousands of jobs lost, business shut down, precincts made extinct because of these draconian laws that are destroying our city.

I have been directly touched by all of these things. I have friends who have lost their livelihoods; I myself work in the event industry and know scores of people who have lost their jobs, their future prospects for work in the industry and people who have been forced to move, to find work.

This is not good enough. We must find a real solution to stop the violence and acknowledge that we have a violence problem in this country. Enforcing a blanket on everything and blaming the hospitality industry for violent members of our society is not the answer. Work harder to find solutions.

I don't have the breath to talk about the Casino and the governments hypocrisy around its exemptions to all rules. That speaks for itself – enough is enough.

I would also request that the issue of entertainment precincts vs residential precincts and the rights of both are addressed as a matter of urgency. I own an Event Management business, we are 4.5 years young, but I've been in the industry for over 14 years. I ran Gala Event at the MCA Rooftop at the end of the year, where we were asked numerous times by police to shut the band down at 8:30pm!!! They stated that, it's not a legal requirement, however, it would make everyone's lives much easier if we didn't have music. This was a \$150K event! If we can't manage business events successfully in the very heart of the CBD at Circular Quay, then our businesses are damned.

I'd like provide you with to stories from my submission to the liquor law review in 2016 which highlight the ludicrousness of these laws. I hope this aids in the understanding of the deeper problem.

February 2015

I work in event management. I had an event in Melbourne that wrapped up just after 9pm on a Tuesday night. I had plans to meet my mother for dinner in the city at 9:45pm. Yes, we had a dinner booking for 9:45pm on a Tuesday night! It was a wonderful evening at one of my favourite restaurants. We had a wonderful catch up, a cocktail to start, a lovely bottle of wine, beautiful food and non stop laughs.

When we finished our dinner around 12:30am, we then wandered around the corner to the Supper Club, where we had martinis on the roof top. Yes, a roof top! Open, serving drinks and food with a gorgeous view of the city. We had such a great time, we didn't leave until 3:30am.

No one got hurt. A lovely adult evening had on a Tuesday night.

Compare this experience to a month later...

March 2015

I had friends visiting from Melbourne. We booked in for dinner at a local favourite restaurant in Surry Hills for 8:30pm (Kitchen closes at 9:30) A wonderful evening ensued, great catch ups, good food, good times. The discussion turned to what to do next after our dinner. We weighed up the options. We'd like to go somewhere for a wine and more chats after dinner. Unfortunately, because hardly any small bars have a license past midnight, anywhere we'd like to go is not an option. Not one of us is interested in going to a nightclub as our only option, so we decide to all go back to my place afterwards.

This is fine until I realise that I don't have enough supplies at home. Plenty of wine, I'm good like that, but one of my guests only drinks beer and I'd need to buy some. Then I realise that it's 9:55pm, bottle shops must close at 10pm and we haven't yet had main course. I leave the table, run out to the bottle shop, and make it just in time. Purchase beers etc. and then, embarrassingly, bring the loot back to the restaurant and have to stash it under the table. My visitor's completely perplexed by the absurdity. There ended our night 'out' in Sydney. We of course, had a lovely time back home until the wee hours as this is what we do now in Sydney.

What harm would be done by our group going for a wine to a small bar after dinner? Why could I not go to a bottle shop after dinner?

I want our government to take charge of the situation and truly devise a solution to allow our city to have a nighttime economy again. Employ a nighttime Mayor.

Please understand that I agree, we all agree, that there violence issue in this country, but it's not an alcohol or being out late issue. It's a serious systemic violence issue that needs to be resolved.

If you go to Portugal for example, the bars don't even open until 10pm, night clubs 1am. All of the bars allow you to take your drinks outside and everyone gathers on the streets. They drink together, peacefully until 7 or 8am in the morning. No one gets aggressive, there are no fights – I have never felt safer. Why is it so different in Sydney? This is what we need to find out.

In summary, I am asking for our government to:

- Review Liquor licenses and trading licenses for restaurants
- Review Liquor licenses and trading licenses for small bars
- Remove the 10pm bottle shop enforced closing time
- Remove the lock out laws
- Employ a nighttime Mayor
- Establish a 20 year plan for Sydney City nighttime economy
- Set up a nighttime economy taskforce
- Establish entertainment precincts where the businesses have their rights as number 1, and residential precincts where their rights are number 1. If you live in an entertainment precinct then you need to deal with the fact that there is life, noise, music and all that comes with this.
- Give us back our freedom to make our own decisions
- Address 24 hour transport issue
- Remove sniffer dogs and random strip searches as common practise
- Put harm minimisation first
- Aim for kindness and overall happiness for your constituents

Thank you for you time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Adam Niewand

