

**Submission
No 516**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Name: Mr John Whitling

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To the committee, I am delighted to be able to make a submission towards your inquiry on Sydney's nightlife. This inquiry is long overdue and necessary to the evolution and regeneration of the city's nightlife.

Careful consideration should be taken to address the issues encountered since the introduction of the lock outs - particularly the impact of the one size fits all approach adopted across the CBD. I believe this has been particularly harmful to local well-run businesses and the utilitarian approach adopted by the government took zero consideration to the running of individual businesses. For an economy to prosper and thrive, a plan is the way forward, not a stop sign.

Whilst inevitably incidents in higher risk precincts have declined, the knee jerk blanket 1:30/3:00am rules actually mean patrons are all leaving venues at the same time across the impacted zones. It also puts people at risk who may become separated from friends once the lockout kicks in at 1:30am. This is quite dangerous, especially if phone batteries die and groups become isolated. Licensed premises should be assessed not by the standards of all, but by the way they're run and the impact they have on the community they dwell in.

In my hometown in the UK, premises have staggered closing times from 11pm-6am. This contributes to a smoother 'exit' time of premises across the city and enables police to resource more effectively and efficiently. I believe this is something the committee should consider.

What this lockout has done is push patrons to the suburbs where there are less restrictions and impacted their operations. It's closed businesses and it's punished law-abiding people because of the actions of a minority.

The inability to purchase a bottle of wine by Joe Public after 10pm being one of the 'punishments'. If a shop assistant in a bottle shop is RSA trained, how is this different to a hotel RSA-trained bartender? Invariably, if someone is going to have a big night, their alcohol will have been purchased some time before closure and when the person was sober, negating an intervention by the staff member.

The people in our city wanting to drink a bottle of wine after 10pm, or the friends wanting to celebrate past 3am for a big birthday are restricted by a blanket rule imposed as a knee-jerk reaction to events that did not occur on a licensed premises. I believe consideration should be taken to this fact.

Sydney needs to evolve to compete as a global city - to attract talent, artists, musicians and we must have appropriate spaces to nurture. We can't do that in a restricted environment - not just being licenced premises. Transport must support growth by evolving to patrons needs - operating for longer over weekends and for key events. Planning rules must consider what was in an area first - there are far too many upheld complaints from new residents of an area about noise. Live music venues and bars were there first, they set a precedent and contribute to the vibe of a neighbourhood. Some of these closed or restricted in their trading as a result of complaints.

We need a change before this city becomes a no-go zone after midnight.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss further.

Regards
John Whiting