

**Submission
No 518**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

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I am writing to express the extent to which I believe the lockout laws have negatively affected Sydney's community and nightlife. Sydney, for the past 5 years, has had the second earliest closing time out of 30 global cities, which is among the most restrictive in the world. We have seen a decline in cultural life, and with it, business turnover, for no overall improvement in public safety. The impact we have seen on live music and the music industry, as well as hospitality and tourism is enormous – we have lost hundreds of venues and thousands of jobs.

In my opinion, the introduction of the lockout laws was a knee jerk reaction to undoubtedly terrible tragedies, but that which the lockout laws have failed to address. Alcohol-fuelled violence continues, though now it might be perpetrated at home, instead of inside a venue with security.

In terms of enhancing community safety, it is reported that assaults have risen in parts of Sydney outside of the city's lockout zones of Kings Cross and the CBD, with statistics showing a 12 per cent increase in assaults in areas bordering the lockout zone, including The Star Casino (ABC News 2017). Suburbs such as Newtown, Bondi and Double Bay where nightlife activity has picked up since the introduction in the lockout laws in February 2014, have experienced a 17 per cent rise in assaults (2017). The lockout laws have only resulted in violence being displaced from Kings Cross to surrounding areas. Yes, Kings Cross has seen a drop in violence, but predominantly due to a dramatic drop in visitation to the area in general.

It seems very contradictory to the goals and outcomes provided to instigate the laws that Sydney's two casinos are exempt from these measures, when an estimated 250 violent assaults occur each year at The Star Casino - more than 10 times the rate of NSW's most violent pub (ABC, 2015). To push people toward venues which promote gambling alongside drinking (rather than live music for example), seems inconsistent with achieving community health and safety outcomes.

We need a well-researched, evidence-based, flexible response to alcohol-fuelled violence, using transport, planning and licensing. To have a chance at re-establishing Sydney's reputation as a global city, we need to consider repealing the lockout laws and promoting Sydney's nightlife economy, while taking into account learnings from the past 5 years. The lockout laws have undoubtedly come at the expense of the city's cultural life and hospitality industry, and well-managed late-trading premises are essential to our cultural and economic growth. There is an overarching sense that we live in a 'nanny state', and we have lost the vibrancy of our city. Please consider seriously.