

**Submission
No 632**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Organisation: The World Bar

Date Received: 2 July 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a brief submission to this inquiry.

The World Bar opened in Sydney in October 2000 soon after the Olympics. At our peak in 2013 we employed 84 people, included a theatre with weekly performances and held free rehearsal space for local acting groups, bands and young film-makers. Weekly live jazz, 10 to 12 band slots per week, and on average 55 to 65 DJ's through the venue in any given week. We entertained up to 5000 people on a weekly basis.

We closed in November 2018 at great personal cost to the three shareholders and their families.

In our experience consistent negative press associated with the lockout laws hung like a cloud over Kings Cross: "the Cross is dead", "420 venues closed"- people put two and two together and assumed the worst. Every article (SMH/Tele et al) since 2013 triggered a slight but noticeable reduction in numbers. This cumulative layering ended ours and many other healthy businesses and created a local recession.

I note Sydney's chef scene, which has recently been at the cutting edge of global cuisine, is also in decline, ([Good Food 1/7/19](#)), citing lockout laws as one of the factors.

This should serve as a dire warning that this pervading negativity is eating away at Sydney's cultural fabric.

A seismic shift in policy is required to generate a *sustained and positive* news cycle. This can be achieved through an open and consultative approach and includes:

- Acknowledging the true value of a healthy and safe nighttime economy and recognizing that the two are compatible.
- Industry consultation and a seat at the table in policy making.
- Standardising legislation across all precincts.
- Banned from One, Banned from All legislation citywide – precisely targeting the small number of offenders.
- Reframing management of venues from a heavy policing/compliance model to one that includes reward for good management and policies that enhance safety.
- Lifting current laws and allow the remaining businesses room to breathe. Reviewing the current associated compliance costs to prevent further closures.
- Support and further rollout for trials such as the SASH trial at Oxford Art Factory that promote positive drinking behaviors.
- Recognizing 'Agent of Change' principles as key to keeping cultural venues intact.

Yours Sincerely,

Steven Ward
Director

The World Bar