

**Submission
No 309**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Name: Mr Richard McGrath

Date Received: 30 June 2019

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Dear Committee,

Sydney (NSW) need to find a balance between late night entertainment with alcohol and public safety.

I have been a resident of Sydney since 1991. A frequent visitor to Kings Cross since 1981. I have lived a 10 minute walk from Kings Cross since 1995 except for 1 year. I have held a RSA card since 2003.

In my view the introduction of the laws was necessary to break the cycle of outrageous out of control behaviour that had gripped the Kings Cross area and spilled into surrounding areas.

Observations before the introduction of the new licencing laws the area:

- Lots of young people who were drinking in the streets and parks to access the 'buzz' of the Cross.
- Parents of young people telling me that their kids would drink at home before going out as it was much cheaper than paying high prices in night clubs.
- The Cross always had a reputation to being violent, but this was far more pronounced leading up to the introduction of the laws. I do not know if the statistics bear this out but that is how my experience felt.
- The lack of funds for the frequenters of the Cross meant that they would have to wait for the train service to start before they could get home. It appears that many would not take a taxi home and would not arrange a designated driver or their plans changed over the night.
- Often, I would run through the Cross early on a Saturday or Sunday morning and have bottles thrown at me, people run with me for short periods some times trying to run my line or just yelling out something either encouraging or some form of abuse often indecipherable.
- Licencing of venues seemed to be either lax or operators were happy to serve alcohol to large numbers of people that probably should not have been.
- There were large numbers on the street that did not fall under the RSA as they used the street as their bar and toilet.
- As I got older and, in my view, the general decline in behaviour of a greater number of people the Cross was somewhere that I frequented less.
- The seedy and homeless element.
- I have not seen a band in the Cross since the 80's.

Since the new licencing laws:

- Property prices in the area have doubled since 2008.
- Many venues have been redeveloped for apartments by the owners of the building who either rented to bars or operated bars pre changes.
- I am a frequent user of all of the 2011 post code and find it a pleasant and vibrant area during the day.
- I travel to the USA frequently. I have not seen anything like the Cross except maybe Austin Tx during SXSW but the crowd was drunk IT geeks. Not very threatening. NB USA Police don't seem to be anywhere near as tolerant of poor behaviour as NSW police.
- It is a safer area. There is no doubt.

What I want to see:

- Do not return to pre licencing changes with thousands on the street who cannot be controlled.
- You should be able to get a drink late into the evening.
- I have no objection to ID scanners. Very common to show ID anywhere around the world.
- I am against the idea that the tax payer should subsidise public transport for people who want to go out late into the evening.
- If laws are reduced it should be measured closely against a set of indicators that include violence and anti-social behaviour.
- I would like to see genuine restaurants, not bars masquerading as restaurants, open latter.

This will not in my view find a solution to the balance that is required to loosen the laws and late-night service of alcohol.

It is a start and beginnings are good. Get the process started and set up the measurements that residents and revellers can live with.

I wish you well.