

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Organisation: Last Drinks Coalition

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Keep Sydney Safe Submission to the Joint Select Committee on Sydney's night time economy

Keep Sydney Safe, otherwise known as the Last Drinks Coalition, is a coalition of unions representing thousands of emergency services workers across NSW.

Keep Sydney Safe believes in evidence-based policy solutions. The evidence shows that the most effective way to reduce alcohol-fuelled violence in the Australian context is by placing restrictions on the late-night sale of alcohol.

At the time, the 'Last Drinks Coalition' strongly supported the regulations around liquor sales and licensing brought in by the government in February 2014. The suite of measures included the 1.30am one-way door policy (referred to as the 'lockout laws') and a 3am 'last drinks' policy.

Emergency services workers commended the government for having the courage to introduce these measures in the face of strong opposition from the alcohol industry.

Five years since the introduction of these measures, the incidence of alcohol-fuelled violence in Kings Cross and Sydney's CBD has drastically improved.

The facts about alcohol related violence in Sydney

Sydney's successful laws have dramatically reduced alcohol related assaults - Kings Cross has seen a 59.2% decrease in assaults between 6pm and 1.30am and a staggering 93.9% per cent decrease between 3am and 6am. In Sydney CBD assaults have fallen by 20.2%. (Source: BOCSAR)

Serious injuries resulting from alcohol related violence have been significantly reduced - St Vincent's Hospital saw a 24.8% reduction of seriously injured patients during high alcohol

period and the number of patients admitted with serious head injuries was reduced by 50% between 8pm and 8am. (Source: Medical Journal of Australia)

Sexual assaults have been halved due to Sydney's successful alcohol laws – Incidences of indecent and sexual assault in Kings Cross, the primary victims being women, have both reduced by almost 50%. (Source: BOCSAR)

The successful alcohol laws have made the rest of Sydney safer - 40 additional police officers brought in from other areas every Saturday night to deal with Kings Cross drunken violence have been freed up to undertake important policing work in their own communities. (Source: PANSW)

There is strong public support for early closing hours - 82% of Australians believe pubs, clubs and bars should close at 3am or earlier. (Source: FARE)

Sydney's nightlife is strong and growing – the number of venues in Sydney grew by 1.8% to 4,872 and overall sales increased by 6.3%. Employment in the night time economy had also grown by 8.7% and turnover had increased by 6.5%. (Source: Council of Capital City Lord Mayors)

The current alcohol measures in place since 2014 have proven absolutely effective in reducing alcohol related violence in Sydney's CBD and Kings Cross.

We recommend the government maintain these life-saving alcohol measures.

All elements are essential to reducing alcohol fuelled violence, and assisting emergency service workers perform their job in responding to the violence that still occurs.

Any winding-back of these elements would undermine the entirety of the life-saving measures. In particular, the 3am cessation of service and the midnight restrictions on shots are crucial to the effectiveness of the measures.

We also recommend the mandatory linked ID Scanners be implemented across the Sydney CBD precinct, and other precincts as considered appropriate; an increased investment in emergency service resources, as well as a periodic, phased in approach to any changes to the laws (noting again that it is the view of this coalition that no changes should be made at all).

Keep Sydney Safe's submission has been provided by the Police Association of NSW, Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation of NSW, NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, and the Health Services Union of NSW – who also have each provided individual submissions to the Inquiry to be considered alongside this joint submission.

Further research and data can be found on <http://lastdrinks.org.au/>

On behalf of Keep Sydney Safe Coalition, we thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide a submission into this important inquiry.

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