

Thank you for taking the time to write to myself as The Greens candidate for Sydney regarding the issue of late night venue lock-outs in Kings Cross, Darlinghurst and the Sydney CBD.

I currently reside in Darlinghurst on a street that borders with Rushcutters Bay. I have lived in the area for approximately 7 years.

The Greens oppose blanket lockouts and last drinks for venues in Kings Cross and the Sydney CBD. The Greens were the only party who voted against the Coalition government's alcohol-related violence measures. Blanket laws like this punish late night venues that operate responsibly and impose on the lifestyle choices of responsible venue goers.

Interpretations of the evidence are divided on the effectiveness of these laws. And whilst street violence in the Sydney area has reduced since its implementation, statistics showed that, despite some tragic incidents that received a lot of media attention, street violence was already declining in Sydney prior to this.

Whilst everyone deserves to have a pleasurable night out without the fear of street violence, a bigger problem facing our society is domestic violence, of which alcohol is generally a significant factor. As a psychologist I have seen many cases of domestic violence and see the profound negative impact this has on the lives of families. This is also an issue which effects not just Sydney, but our entire state and unfortunately, these measures to reduce alcohol related violence does little, if anything at all, to address this larger issue.

Since the implementation of this law, we have seen late night businesses suffer. A recent example is the once iconic gay venue, The Flinders Hotel, which shut its doors earlier this year, citing a loss in business due to the restrictions the legislation placed on their operations.

Sydney is a global city and like most other global cities we need to operate successfully and safely 24 hours a day. The Coalition government's alcohol-related violence measures place significant restrictions on this by forcing late night venue businesses to stop trading after 3am and preventing them from accepting customers after 1:30am.

If the current laws stay in place, exemptions are absolutely necessary for certain times of the year and during certain events, such as New Years Eve and Mardi Gras, where the number of people visiting Sydney for those events dramatically increases.

The current trial period does not need to run the proposed full course prior to a decisions being made. A review can be conducted at any time. An early review will hopefully allow for introduction of The Greens policies and amendments that, based on the evidence, are likely to help reduce the toll of alcohol-related violence.

In order to address the issue of anti-social, alcohol related violence in Sydney, The Greens are proposing the following:

- Enforcement at venues of the Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA), as the current government has failed to enforce this. This will also allow repeat offender venues to be targeted, rather than blanket restrictions that apply to all venues, even those that are acting responsibly.
- Stopping dangerous alcohol advertisement, promotions and deep discounting. Currently shopper docketts offering alcohol purchase inducements, two-for-one deals, deep discounting of packaged alcohol and promotions aimed at young people will continue with very few restrictions.
- Reducing liquor store and venue density in areas plagued with violence.

- Re-establishing the Drug and Alcohol Unit within the Department of Education, which will then have the ability to start addressing the social causes of dangerous alcohol consumption. If the government spent now on drug and alcohol counselling and youth mental health services, they would save more in the long run from the reduction in expenditure on the state's criminal justice, health and prison systems.

- Effective licensing measures, including community participation in regular reviews.

- Introducing 24 hour public transportation services, which will ensure that people are able to get home safely, without fear of being stuck in the city, no matter what time they leave a venue.

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Greens Candidate for Sydney

<http://www.sydneYGreens.org.au>

This website also has a link to all the Greens NSW policies.