

LOCKOUT LAWS: SEPARATING FACTS FROM FAKE NEWS



Following public outcry over the violent and senseless deaths of Thomas Kelly and Daniel Christie and severe injury to a number of other young people in Sydney's CBD, life-saving alcohol control measures were introduced to the city in 2014.



Since their introduction, we've seen:

- dramatic reductions in non-domestic violence, especially in entertainment precincts
- reduced rates of alcohol-related serious injury
- 60 per cent reduction in serious facial injuries requiring surgery

During recent NSW Legislative Council debate about Sydney's lockout laws, Hon Robert Borsak of the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers party made a series of false and misleading claims about the alcohol control measures when introducing his *Liquor Legislation Amendment (Repeal of the Lockout Laws) Bill 2018*.

SEPARATING FACT FROM FAKE NEWS

FAKE CLAIM 1

“Alcohol-related assaults in the Kings Cross precinct and the Sydney CBD were already falling in the five years prior to the introduction of the lockout laws.” **MISLEADING**

THE FACTS

- ✓ **12 months following the introduction of the 1:30am last entry and 3am last drinks there was a 37 per cent reduction in violence compared to 10 per cent the year before.**
- ✓ **In the five years prior to the lockout laws, there was an average of 5.6 per cent reduction per year in alcohol-related non-domestic assaults in the Kings Cross Police Area Command, compared to a 23.1 per cent reduction per year in the four years since the laws were implemented.**
- ✓ **From February 2015-16, there was a 23 per cent reduction in assaults followed by an 18 per cent (February 2016-17) and 15 per cent reduction (February 2017-18).**

FAKE CLAIM 2

“Businesses have been decimated in the Kings Cross precinct and the Sydney CBD since the lockout laws came into effect.” **FALSE**

THE FACTS

- ✓ **Sydney has the strongest and most concentrated night-time economy in Australia, with year-on-year growth since 2011.**
- ✓ **The number of establishments in Sydney's night-time economy reached an all-time high in 2016, and again in 2017.**
- ✓ **Employment and revenue in the Sydney night-time economy have not once decreased since 2011.**

FAKE CLAIM 3

“Foot traffic in Kings Cross has fallen by 84 per cent and 176 licensed premises have closed in the Sydney CBD and Kings Cross precinct since the restrictions were brought in.” **MISLEADING**

THE FACTS

- ✓ **Pedestrian traffic did not change significantly outside of lockout times. The measures were successful in reducing pedestrian traffic after 1:30am.**
- ✓ **Between 2012-2015, there was a reduction of just four businesses operating across Friday and Saturday nights in Kings Cross. Since the lockouts, at least 70 new businesses have opened.**
- ✓ **Over the period, the number of liquor licences in the City of Sydney increased by 3.7 per cent.**

FAKE CLAIM 4

“In most global cities, patrons can enter venues up to 24 hours per day... Sydney patrons are locked out at 1:30am.” **MISLEADING**

THE FACTS

- ✓ **Many international nightlife hotspots have mandated early closing times, most commonly 2am. Sydney has a 1.30am or 2am last entry or 'lockout', and a last drinks time of 3am.**
- ✓ **Vibrant global cities with early closing times include:**
 - LA: all licensed venues must close by 2am.
 - Dublin: bars and pubs close at 12.30am, nightclubs close at 2.30am.
 - Ibiza: 3am shut-down in the 'west end' party strip.
 - New York City: venues must close their doors by 4am.
 - Glasgow: pubs must close by 12:00am, nightclubs close by 3am.
 - Bangkok: licenced venues must close by midnight.

FAKE CLAIM 5

“...additional police officers engaged in high-visibility operations, combined with 24-hour train and bus services ...would, in my opinion, be a far more sensible approach than locking people out.” **FALSE**

THE FACTS

- ✓ **Public transport currently operates 24-hours in Sydney with special late-night services from the city on the weekends.**
- ✓ **Increased transport and police presence are important measures to support safe and inclusive environments, but alone they are not enough.**
- ✓ **Last entry and last drinks are part of a wide-ranging and diverse package of measures, including increased police and public transport services, all designed to reduce alcohol-fuelled violence, increase vibrancy and support a more sustainable and inclusive Sydney.**

Hon Robert Borsak said his statement was about “freedom of choice”.

There is no free choice in cities that are unsafe.

In order to have free choice, that choice must be safe and inclusive.

Freedom is about more than the individual and these laws help protect that freedom.

NB: Sources for the evidence here can be found at www.naapa.org.au