



Matt Barrie [in](#)

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Would the last person in Sydney please turn the lights out?

Feb 3, 2016 967,683 3,527 827

*Ruled by a succession of incompetent governments, everything in Sydney is now illegal- including fun.*



*Picture: Welcome to Sydney (Taylor Square, Oxford Street)*

In 1999, Sydney was at its peak- the Olympic games were imminent and there was unbridled optimism that Sydney was about to emerge as an international city as

the millennium approached. Internationally, Sydney was renowned as an incredibly fun place to live; the entertainment was world class, with great restaurants and venues to visit at any time of night.

Something pernicious has happened in the fifteen years since, and Sydney has not just regressed into a ghost town, but there is an undercurrent of something much more sinister in the way the city is being run.

As I write this in 2016, not a day goes by without the press reporting of yet another bar, club, hotel, restaurant or venue closing.

Walk up Bayswater Road, Oxford Street or the Golden Mile and club after club is closed; not just after 1.30am, but [permanently](#).

A few months ago the perennial Flinders bar in Darlinghurst closed. Then the century-old Exchange Hotel shut down, which held six venues including the Phoenix, live music hall Spectrum, and the upstairs pool hall Q-Bar. Following that, the evergreen Goldfish bar in Kings Cross. Then Soho.



*Picture: Kings Cross, once bustling is now empty at night*



*Picture: The once busy SOHO Hotel lights have turned off for the last time*

Like salsa dancing? Heaven forbid. Good luck finding a venue. You can't even salsa dance in the city anymore with La Cita in Darling Harbour likewise shut down.

Every week, another venue or restaurant closes. [The soul of the city has been destroyed.](#)





*Picture:*

*Hugo's management outlining the reasons for their closure*

Kings Cross, in particular, has been decimated so badly that it will never, ever, come back as an entertainment precinct. Hugo's Lounge closing, which was the swankiest bar in Sydney for fifteen years and voted [Australia's best nightclub](#) five years running, was the last nail in the coffin for the area.

The venue also housed the 130-seat Hugo's Pizza, which had not just won Best Pizza Restaurant in Australia at the Australian Restaurant & Catering Awards, but was also named [the World's Best Pizza](#) in the American Pizza Challenge in New York.

Manager Dave Evans cited [revenue falling by 60%](#) due thirty-six different "stringent conditions" that had been placed on the business over the past two-and-a-half years. The closing of the venue made seventy staff lose their jobs.



*Picture: Hugo's Lounge*

Hungry? Good luck finding a restaurant or vibrant area open late now. Down the road, Jimmy Liks, an upmarket and seductively lit Southeast Asian eatery, wine bar and cocktail bar is likewise bust. A sign hangs out the front “Thank you Sydney for an amazing 14 year journey. NSW Lockout Laws cost good people their jobs and decimated a once great and vibrant suburb!”.



*Picture: Jimmy Liks' management outlining the reasons for their closure*

Even Australia's staple fast food franchise and destination of choice for hungry late night revellers- McDonalds on George and Bridge Streets in the center of the city- has, rarely for the global franchise, [shut down](#).

On Saturday nights tumbleweeds blow across the main entertainment precincts for Sydney- Kings Cross, Darlinghurst and Oxford Street.

The [Late Night Management Areas Research Phase 4 Report](#), commissioned by the City of Sydney, details the damage done to nighttime in economy.

From 2012 to 2015, it was recently reported that [King's Cross foot traffic was down 84%](#) as 42 bars, clubs and small businesses closed as takings fell by 40% or more. Foot traffic in [Oxford Street is likewise down 82%](#). This is already on top of [a drop of up to 60%](#) which occurred from 2010 from 2012 as the increasing regulation kicked in.

Table 5.9 – Maximum pedestrian counts at top 10 hotspots 2010 vs 2012

Precinct	Location	Day	Hour	2010 Person per hour	2012 Persons per hour	Percentage Change
CBD South	George St at Central St	Saturday	12am-1am	7,600	3,544	-53%
Oxford St	Oxford St (IGA)	Friday	11pm-12am	6,900	2,296	-67%
CBD South	George St at Central St	Friday	12am-1am	6,850	3,644	-47%
CBD South	George St at Central St	Saturday	11pm-12am	6,600	3,924	-41%
Kings Cross	Darlinghurst Rd south of Roslyn St	Saturday	1-2am	5,900	2,496	-58%
CBD South	George St at Central St	Friday	11pm-12am	5,850	4,572	-22%
Kings Cross	Bayswater Rd east of Darlinghurst Rd	Saturday	1-2am	5,400	2,236	-59%
Kings Cross	Darlinghurst Rd between Roslyn St and Bayswater Rd	Saturday	1-2am	5,350	2,798	-48%
Kings Cross	Darlinghurst Rd north of Bayswater Rd	Saturday	1-2am	5,250	3,240	-38%
Kings Cross	Darlinghurst Rd north of Bayswater Rd	Saturday	12-1am	5,200	3,694	-29%

Figure: Decline in maximum foot traffic from 2010 to 2012  
(Source: City of Sydney)

In 2010, of people polled about why they visited Sydney at night, 58% of respondents said they were “going out socialising”. In March 2015 57% of respondents said “they were returning home”, up from 3% in 2010.

Chart 8.5 – Reason for visiting the NTE 2015, 2012, and 2010 comparison

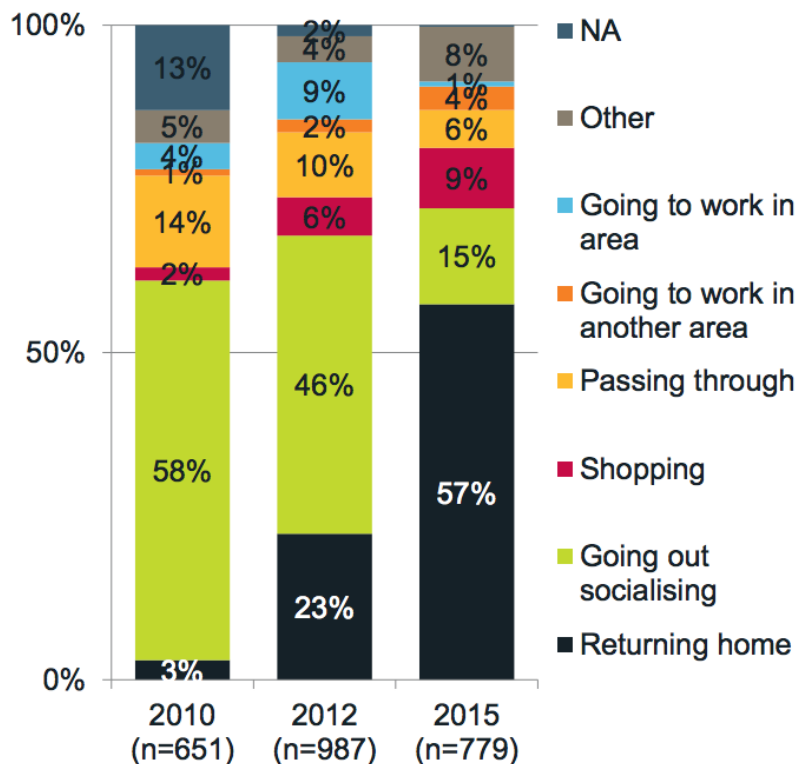


Figure: Poll shows the destruction of Sydney’s nightlife  
(Source: City of Sydney)

It’s now almost a year later in 2016. The overwhelming majority of people are visiting the night time entertainment precincts in Sydney to do nothing at all



except go home to bed.

The total and utter destruction of Sydney's nightlife is almost complete.

A succession of incompetent governments has systematically dismantled the entire night time economy through a constant barrage of rules, regulation and social tinkering.

And oh, how ridiculous these rules have become in Sydney. A special little person has decided that there is a certain time at night when we are all allowed to go out, and there is a certain time that we are allowed into an establishment and a certain time that we are all supposed to be tucked into bed. There is a certain time we are allowed to buy some drinks, and over the course of the night the amount of drinks we are allowed to buy will change. The drinks we buy must be in a special cup made of a special material, and that special material will change over the course of the night at certain times. The cup has to be a certain size. It cannot be too big, because *someone might die*. Over the course of the night, this special little person will tell you what you can and cannot put into your cup because *someone might die*.

It is now illegal to buy a bottle of wine after 10pm in the City of Sydney because not a single one of us is to be trusted with any level of personal responsibility. Apparently there is an epidemic of people being bashed to death over dinner with a bottle of Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc that we have all been blissfully unaware of.

Likewise it is now illegal to have a scotch on the rocks after midnight in the City of Sydney because *someone might die*. You can drink it if you put some Coca-cola in it, but you can't drink it if the Coca-cola has been mixed previously with it and it's been put in a can. Because that is an "alcopop" whatever the hell that means. The only person more confused than me is the bartender. The poor sod is only trying to scrape a few nickels to make it through university; not only are they struggling with their hours being drastically cut back with venues shutting, but the government is now threatening them personally with fines if they break any of the rules.

Most damaging of all a 1:30am curfew where you cannot enter a licensed premises, which deliberately aims to kill the trade of any business that operates at night. Everybody knows that the point of going out is usually to bar hop or visit several venues over the course of the night and that for decades Sydneysiders would be busy at work, dinner or someone's house and wouldn't even think to go out until after 11pm. The Sydneysider's predilection to going out late is backed up by the City of Sydney's own report from 2010 showed that foot traffic in Kings Cross [continued to grow until 11pm](#). This brutal rule pointedly kills market liquidity in an



industry that relies upon bar hopping from venue to venue.

This is backed up in the City of Sydney's [commissioned report](#) on the night time economy from 2012 to 2015 where data on pedestrian counts showed that a "lack of a secondary peak between 3-4am in Kings Cross and Oxford Street suggests that people are leaving the area around 1am, rather than staying in venues until closing times".

This has set off a domino effect which has wiped out Sydney's main entertainment precincts- if one venue closes in an area, it's likely the venue next door will also close, and so on. Once the late night club is closed in a street, the bar where people used to meet before will close because there's nowhere to go after, shortly followed by the restaurants that people usually ate at before going to the bar, and so forth. Until, as in so many places in Sydney today, the area is devoid of any commercial activity.

The damage to the night time economy in the number of businesses closed as a result of these laws across all entertainment precincts is staggering.

Although the City of Sydney uses some statistical tricks to justify the lockouts are working, the truth can be seen in the data.

In the 2010 [Late Night Management Area Research Report](#) the average number of businesses open across all entertainment precincts at 11pm was typically a little less than 1,100. At 1am this dropped to about 750 and at 4am a little over 400.

While at first glance, it might appear that everything is hunky dory when one looks at the [2015 version of this report](#), one quickly notes that something is very wrong when you realise that the City of Sydney has tried to obfuscate the data by reporting over a longer time period in the day and not breaking down the statistics of businesses open by precinct as it does in 2010.

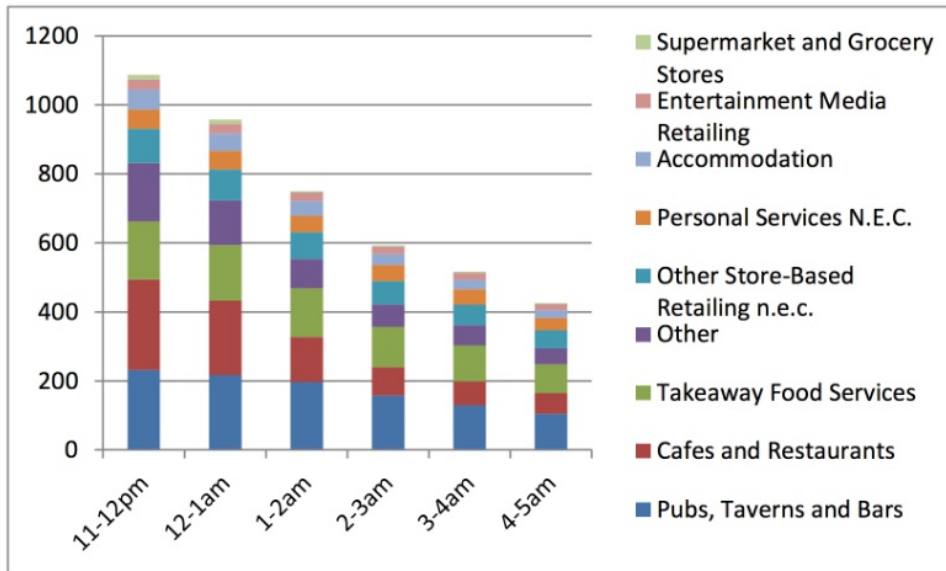
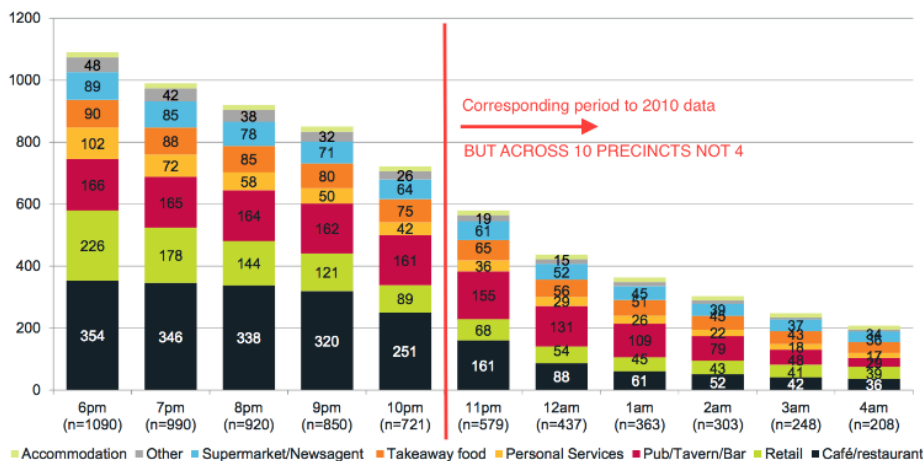


Figure 6.1 Number of businesses of each type open across all precincts

Source: *The Late Night Management Area Research Report 2010*

Chart 7.1 – Average number of businesses open

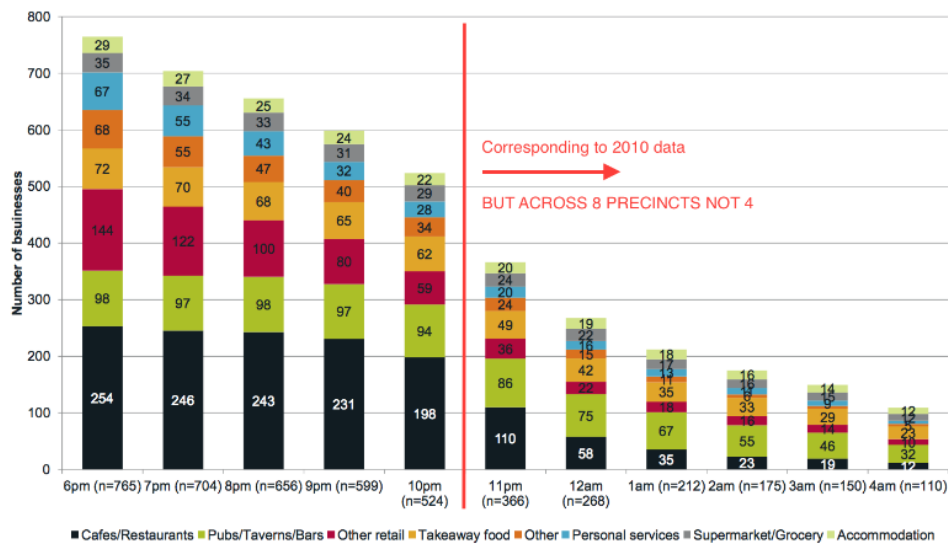


Source: *The Late Night Management Area Research Report 2015*

This fudging of the presentation of the data is compounded when one also realises that the 2010 report measures four precincts in Sydney- Kings Cross, Oxford Street, the Rocks and the CBD South. The 2015 report, on the other hand, measures the number of businesses open across 10 precincts- five Sydney CBD Entertainment Precincts (Central CBD, North CBD, South CBD, Kings Cross and Oxford Street) and five City Suburban Precincts (Pyrmont, Newtown, Surry Hills, Redfern and Glebe).

While the 2010 report breaks down the data by precinct, the 2015 doesn't, which obfuscates the damage. The City of Sydney report has added in six more precincts to prop up the number of businesses reported open.

Chart 7.1 – Number of open businesses open in LGA Study Areas



Source: *The Late Night Management Area Research Report 2012*

Backtracking to the report produced in 2012, the impacts of increasing regulation are more clear. This report measured the number of open businesses in eight areas- George Street, Oxford Street and Kings Cross and five of the City’s main streets: King Street, Crown Street, Glebe Point Road, Harris Street and Redfern Street.

In 2010 there were about 1,100 businesses open at 11pm across 4 areas, by 2012 this had dropped to 366 across 8 areas, but in 2015 the number was 579 in 10 areas.

In 2010 there were about 750 businesses open at 1am across 4 areas, 212 in 2012 across 8 areas and 363 in 2015 across 10 areas.

And at 4am there were a little over 400 businesses open in 2010 across 4 areas, 110 in 2012 over 8 areas and 208 in 2015 across 10 areas.

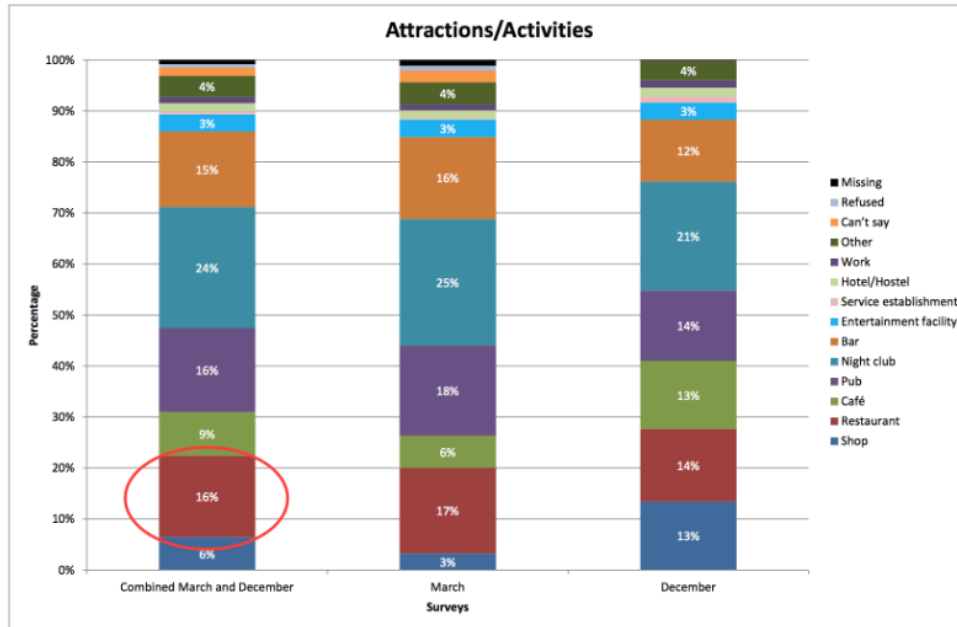
Small businesses trading in these areas at night have been **absolutely devastated**.

Curiously, while the City of Sydney originally used Parsons Brinckerhoff, one of the world's leading planning, engineering, and program and construction management organisations, to write the report in 2010, in 2012 the City of Sydney credits no company or author with producing the report. In 2015 the report credits a small local firm, Urbis.

The inconsistency in the presentation of the data and the continued bolstering of

sample sizes in these reports used to justify that the lockouts are working and businesses are fine doesn't stop there.

Trying to correlate data across the three years of reporting makes no sense. For example, from the 2010 report 16% of people went to entertainment precincts to visit a restaurant.



Source: *The Late Night Management Area Research Report 2010*

In the 2015 report, it says that in 2010 only 6% of respondents intended to visit a restaurant. It appears someone has swapped the “restaurant” label for the “shops” label, and while the report states that in 2015 that 23% of people visiting Sydney at night went to a restaurant, it looks like that correct figure is probably actually only 8%.

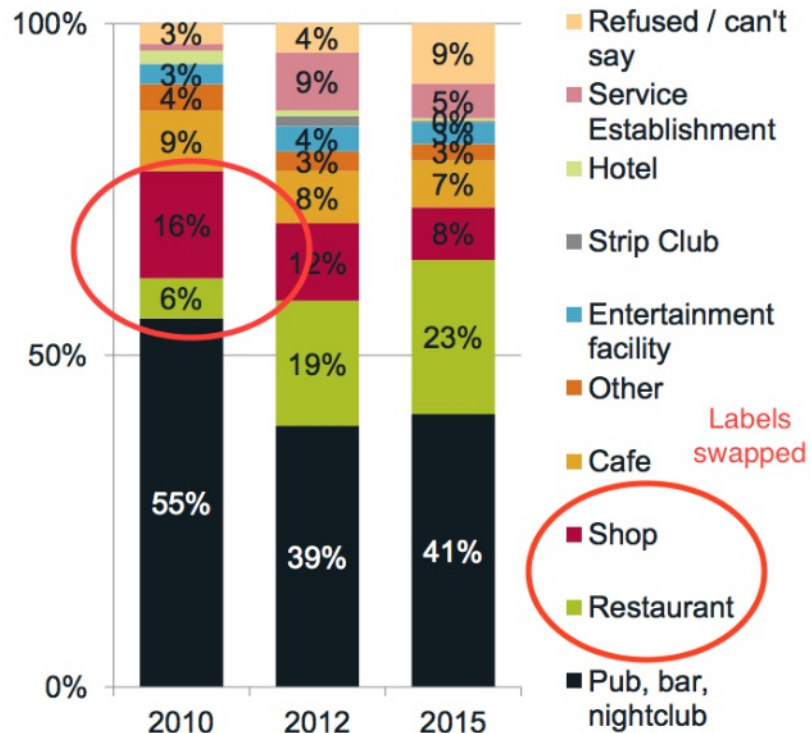


## Attractions visited

Respondents were asked what kind of places they intended to visit in the precinct. multiple responses were collected. Chart 8.7 presents a comparison of the responses received in 2010, 2012, and 2015.

As in 2012, the most common response in 2015 was visiting a pub, bar or nightclub (41%). This is similar to 2010 (55%). Other popular attractions in 2015 included going to a restaurant (23%) or shop (9%).

**Chart 8.7 – Attractions visited in the NTE 2015, 2012, and 2010 comparison**



Source: *The Late Night Management Area Research Report 2015*

Trying to correlate with the 2012 report makes no sense, either. While it agrees with the 2010 number of 16% of respondents intending to visit a restaurant, it states that 24% intended to do so in 2015, which doesn't match with any of the numbers in the 2012 column. There was no aggregate bar graph in the report, either.

## Intercept surveys

- Over half of all respondents interviewed intended to visit a pub, bar, or nightclub (51%) – a slight decrease from 55% in 2010.
- One-quarter (24%) of respondents intended to visit a restaurant – an increase from 16% in 2010.

*Source: The Late Night Management Area Research Report 2012*

Regardless, it's nonsense for the City of Sydney to compare these figures anyway because they are measuring across completely different geographic areas. This shows just how quality the report actually is.

I can imagine these special little people in Town Hall and Macquarie Street giggling away as they pull their little regulatory levers, fudging the statistics and playing their petty little mind games in the media. They're finally getting their nasty revenge for being left out all those years ago from being invited to the party by the popular kids.

Frankly you should be both thankful and lucky the government lets you out after dark at all.

There's a whole Orwellian nomenclature that has been made up to deliberately keep the general public in a constant state of confusion that some terror has swept across the city: "king hit", "coward punch", "alcopop", "alcohol-related violence". Being quite a respectable lot, we've all been guilt shamed into thinking that something in the Australian psyche is ugly and that mixed with alcohol we turn into raging brutes, or that by simply having fun somehow we've been breaking some great moral code, the eleventh commandment: *thou shalt not have fun*.

But that's all a load of rubbish and in actual fact, you've done nothing wrong at all. In fact you've been very well behaved. Sydney [ranks more safe](#) than Bordeaux, France or Lausanne, Switzerland for crime.



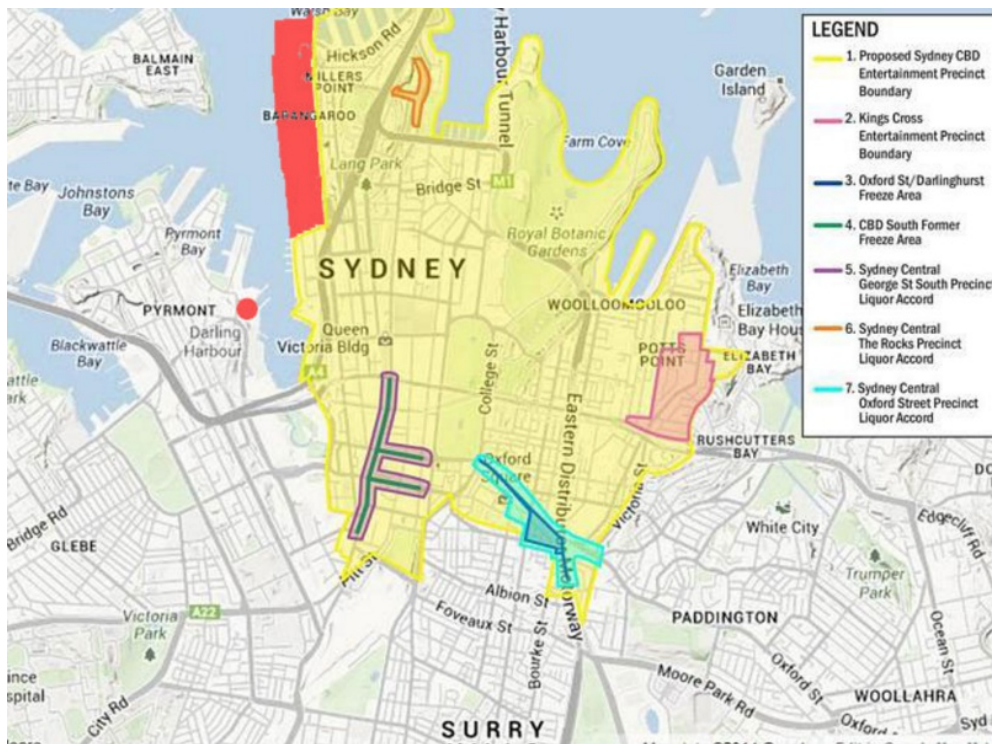
*Picture: Sydney is [safer than Bordeaux](#), France (Source: Numeo)*

If the Government was truly interested in your safety and not purely on a moralistic crusade, there are plenty of other things that are more dangerous to your health. Did you know that on average an Australian [dies every three days](#) in Thailand? You are far more likely to die [falling over, out of bed or off a ladder](#) than in anywhere near a licensed venue in Sydney.

But from all the masterful propaganda you've been fed, you've been tricked into thinking that you have done something wrong, in some way that you are [genetically an idiot](#), or that somehow you have to feel responsible for a couple of random tragic, yet unrelated, events that occurred in the vague proximity of having fun.

Two young men that would be turning in their graves if they knew that their deaths had been hijacked to beat up some moral outrage over the sort of human tragedy that [sells newspapers](#) to put up a political smokescreen, push a prohibitionist evangelical agenda, sell a suburb to developers, and boost the coffers of a couple of casinos.

This agenda is, of course, [being bankrolled by two of the biggest beneficiaries](#) of the lockout, the Star City and Barangaroo Casinos, which both have 24x7 licenses and were conveniently left out of the lockout area.



*Picture: The two casinos and future Barangaroo entertainment district are conveniently left out of the lockout zone*

But it's all a load of crap. Some [bullshit statistics](#) were concocted, cherry picked and distorted and you swallowed it hook, line and sinker. Biased and misleading statistics and issues that were designed to alter the attitude of the population toward a political agenda in an effort to form a consensus to a standard set of belief patterns. This is the very [definition of propaganda](#).

But you can hardly be blamed for falling for it because you're so used to being repressed for no reason and been conditioned to feel guilty. Everything is banned in Sydney.

Travel anywhere overseas and you'll see what I mean.

I was recently in London and went out for a drink one night after work. I was shocked to see people standing around, drinking *outside* the pub. Drinking out of glass! Not just any glasses, *large* glasses (which are- you guessed it- [banned in Australia](#)).

I watched in wonder as someone proclaimed that they had left something at home, and walked across the road, beer in hand and in full view of the bouncers to fetch it. They cheerfully returned a few minutes later with said glass and continued to stand outside the pub drinking.

And do you know what the really amazing thing was?



NOBODY DIED.

In Sydney you would be crash tackled by three bouncers, [fined \\$1100 and banned for 48 hours from the area](#) because you would be in serious risk of, I don't know, being guilt shamed into thinking that you were doing something wrong when you weren't.

Later that night, the London bouncers helpfully provided plastic cups so when the venue closed you could pour your beer into one for the walk home.

To show you how different the small world view of Sydney is compared to a truly great world city like London, Mayor Boris Johnson has put together a Music Venues Taskforce [to come up with ways to protect and promote](#) London's late night culture, including a plan to appoint a 'Night Mayor' tasked with championing the interests of late night venues. Other international cities like Amsterdam, Zurich, Paris and Toulouse also [have night mayors](#) where they improve both the functioning of the city and night-time economy and reduce noise [by removing curfews](#) because people don't get forced out in the street all at once looking for transport. This is backed up by the data in City of Sydney's [own report](#) which says incidents peak at 3am when everyone is forced out onto the street.

I was in Hong Kong a few weeks ago, and again I was so completely blown away by the fact that people could nonchalantly walk across the street from one venue to another, carry drink from the previous venue in a glass in hand in full view of the staff, that I made a video of it.

It is also now [easier to get a beer in Pyongyang](#), North Korea, than it is in Sydney.

What is absolutely incredulous about this is that most of the rules were implemented by the NSW Liberal Party. This is the party founded on the bastion of [economic liberalism](#), which is supposed to believe in the free market and that the greatest possible number of economic decisions are made by individuals, not organisations or governments.

Quoting directly from the [NSW State Liberal Party's website](#), "We believe in individual freedom and free enterprise and if you share this belief, then this is the Party for you [.. we believe in ..] the inalienable rights and freedoms of all people; we work towards a lean government that minimises interference in our daily lives and maximises individual and private-sector initiative".

Instead today's NSW State Liberal Party practices the complete opposite-interventionist economic policies deliberately designed to damage the balance

sheets of commercial businesses that unduly interfere and restrict personal choice and economic freedom in order to achieve nanny state moral outcomes. Where landlords can be commercially punished to the point of insolvency [due to the actions of a tenant](#). Where commercial businesses can be punished to the point of bankruptcy due to the actions of their customers. Where the NSW State Liberal Government bankrupts businesses due to the actions of [completely unrelated parties](#), people that have never been a customer or even walked onto the premises.

Where [asset values are damaged](#) and the owners of properties [say that](#) “the ability to drive an income has been marginalised to a point that the highest and best use [...] are now in constant reassessment by the owners”. Which usually ends up being sold to property developers at distressed prices to build apartments.

The core weapon used by the government to financially damage the balance sheets of businesses is an Orwellian and cunning system known as the statewide [Alcohol Linking Program](#).

Most of us have read about the notoriously “violent establishment” and “alcohol related violence”. What most people do not realise is these the vast majority of these assaults occur away of from the establishment where the alcohol is consumed and that in the majority of cases the consumer of the alcohol is the victim, not the perpetrator.

You might be a little surprised to hear about [how this program actually works](#). When an incident occurs, the police routinely collect the following information from all persons involved in attended incidents:

1. Whether the person has consumed alcohol prior to the incident
2. The person’s level of intoxication based on an assessment of behavioural indicators of intoxication
3. Where the person had last consumed alcohol
4. If the last place consumed was a licensed premises, the name and address of the premises

For instance, if a young lady drinks a few glasses of champagne in Kings Cross, then catches a bus and is assaulted walking home through Bondi, when she reports the assault to Bondi police the officer is compelled to record the incident as emanating from the last place that she consumed alcohol. The perpetrator is rarely caught, but if they are it is usually sometime after the assault, so that perpetrators sobriety is less likely to be noted. Even if the perpetrator was completely sober, it is still recorded as alcohol related violence.

The data collected by the program includes not just assaults, but also 32 other areas of crime including Lost Property, Missing Person and Gaming offences.

This data then feeds into a premises intervention program. If victims start to emerge from a particular premises their business model is attacked with increasingly severe regulatory demands and covert and overt police visits. These regulatory demands are designed to create cost pressure on an establishment as they attempt to comply with the increased regulatory requirements. Hugo's Lounge, a fairly tame venue which was more known for fashion shows and models than violence, faced thirty six "stringent conditions" in only a two and a half year period as a result of these programs.

It's a very cunningly designed program because in effect this system, which is held up to provide the main source of data on licensed premise is effectively a victim blaming mechanism.

If you had an agenda against restaurants, you could just as easily develop a nonsensical Restaurant Linking Program where you record the last place that victims eat. If you had an agenda against buses, you could develop a Bus Linking Program and record the last bus stop victims got off from. It's pure statistical fraud.

The Alcohol Linkage Program as designed more accurately measures crimes against "sinners" (being people who drink) than reliable statistics on crime due to venues.

It's also very cunning because it provides a mechanism for an Orwellian state government led by evangelical christians to implement a framework of religious policy.

By now you are probably just as confused as the millions of Sydneysiders about why all of a sudden the fun police arrived and closed down their favourite venue.

But that's because many voters for the NSW Liberal Government are probably unaware of the deeply held views by the leaders of the current government.

As [Sean Nicholls](#) from the Sydney Morning Herald [reported at the time](#), "As Mike Baird moved into the Premier's office this week so did a significant influence: *Jesus Christ*. Mr Baird is a proud and committed Christian who once considered becoming an Anglican minister. His rise to the top has seen a concentration of powerful religious conviction among the upper echelons of the new government.

*Mr Baird's chief of staff, Bay Warburton, has held the job since late 2011. I've*

*served Jesus in a number of different jobs and now I'm serving Jesus as a chief of staff,' Mr Warburton said. 'And Mike, who's [was previously] the Treasurer - he believes he's serving Jesus as the Treasurer of the state'.*

*A notable addition to cabinet is his close friend Rob Stokes, the new environment minister, who holds a diploma in Bible studies. During Wednesday's swearing-in ceremony Mr Stokes omitted the words "under God". He later said the decision was guided by Matthew's gospel in which Jesus frowned upon the swearing of oaths. New finance minister Dominic Perrottet - a former protege of one-time "religious right" faction leader David Clarke - attended Redfield College in Dural, a school run by the conservative Catholic order Opus Dei.*

*Mr Clarke, whose wife Maria-Louise is an Opus Dei member, remains parliamentary secretary for justice. Throw into the mix the deputy Premier and Nationals leader Andrew Stoner (since retired)- who attends the evangelical C3 church - and the Baird/Stoner government is shaping as the most devout in living memory."*

In an interview on Christian Radio Station [Hope 103.2](#), Premier Mike Baird said that his faith always comes before his job and that [he believes it is dysfunctional](#) to separate his job as Premier of New South Wales from his faith. So much for separation of Church and State. Thankfully the interviewer noted that one "couldn't go to the Bible for *every* decision".

Christians notoriously blame the victim, whether it be rape or assault. NSW Police [Commissioner Scipione](#), also a well known teetotaling evangelical, is on the public record expressing views that equate to believing that girls who drink are responsible for putting themselves in a position to be raped. As Nick Ralston and Saffron Howden [reported in the Sydney Morning Herald in 2011](#), "*In another foray into the state's social and moral landscape, Mr Scipione says the rise in binge*



*drinking among girls and young women is making them vulnerable to sexual assault, liaisons they may regret, psychological trauma, sexually transmitted infections and even a threat to their fertility.”*

What better way for an unelected official to implement an unannounced religious social reform across an entire society than to develop a framework of police intelligence that is based on imposing social quarantine on potential victims? What a better way to divert the public from the effectiveness of policing than to blame the victims for their predicament and not the safety of our streets.

**The statistics have been rigged so that the police are policing to reduce sin, not safety.**

Instead of the police patrolling the streets making the city safe, any patron of a venue in Sydney would have noticed over the last few years, that often there are more police inside a venue than patrons. Many of which would probably be rightly confused about why they are patrolling the streets of Double Bay on a Saturday night rather than a crime hot spot (although one group of officers told me it was a welcome change watching glamorous people instead of being abused and spat at in actual crime hot spots).

Ironically, these same police who are enforcing this ridiculous policy are also being discriminated by it at the same time. Police at the best of times have a tough and stressful job to do, and are well underpaid. I am sure that many of them would like to have a drink to relax after the night shift, but now like many other shift workers, cannot because the venues lock their doors at 1:30am.

The war on sinners doesn't stop there.

The Gay & Lesbian community has been particularly hard hit. Oxford Street, the social mecca for the community and the world famous Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras, is likewise now a wasteland with sea of shut down venues and *For Lease* signs after an [82% drop in foot traffic](#) from 2012 to 2015. On top of this, venues have also been told by licensing police that LGBTI day clubs are now banned. I have been told off the record that any venue that allows a day club to operate has been instructed in no uncertain terms by licensing police that it runs the risk of its liquor license being revoked.

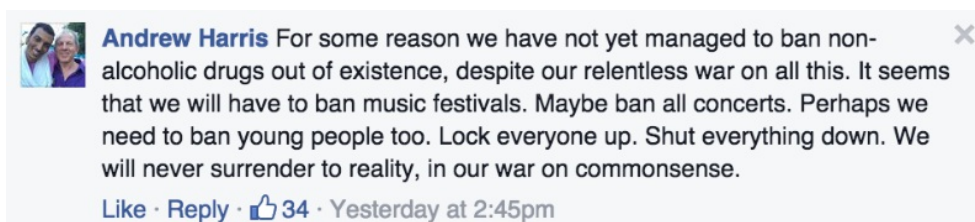
Shayne Mallard MLC, one of the few members of the Liberal Party who actually sense said in regards to [police abuses at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras](#), “Frankly police in this state have been getting more and more aggressive over past few years. From abusive sniffer dog squads at railways & events, to under utilised



and unneeded riot squads almost goose stepping down the Oxford street parade route after the parade is finished, followed by black riot squad trucks lights blazing to intimidate party goers. What sort of Police force is it becoming?”.

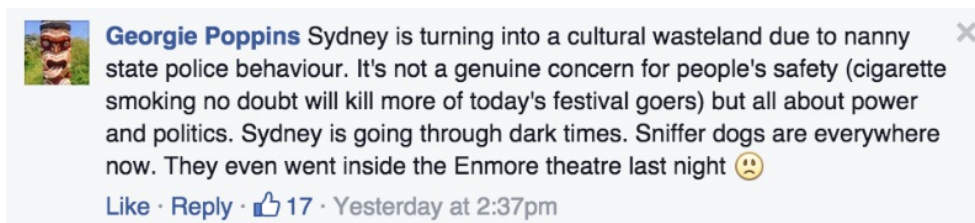
[Another principle](#) upon which the NSW Liberal Party was founded is “those most basic freedoms of parliamentary democracy – the freedom of thought, worship, speech and association”. Just don’t plan to associate anywhere where you might be looking to have a bit of fun. Not just content with bankrupting commercial businesses operating in entertainment areas for no particularly plausible reason, the NSW Liberal Party decided to take the the War on Fun to the next level. Late last year, they [banned parties on boats with more than one DJ](#).



Not to be outdone, they’ve now decided to go all out and are [threatening to ban music festivals](#), even though festival goers in New South Wales are already [being strip searched on a routine basis](#), ‘without any rules, transparency, or information provided about rights’.

Concerts are now in the firing line.



 **Andrew Harris** For some reason we have not yet managed to ban non-alcoholic drugs out of existence, despite our relentless war on all this. It seems that we will have to ban music festivals. Maybe ban all concerts. Perhaps we need to ban young people too. Lock everyone up. Shut everything down. We will never surrender to reality, in our war on commonsense.  
Like · Reply ·  34 · Yesterday at 2:45pm



 **Georgie Poppins** Sydney is turning into a cultural wasteland due to nanny state police behaviour. It's not a genuine concern for people's safety (cigarette smoking no doubt will kill more of today's festival goers) but all about power and politics. Sydney is going through dark times. Sniffer dogs are everywhere now. They even went inside the Enmore theatre last night 😞  
Like · Reply ·  17 · Yesterday at 2:37pm



 **Serkhan Ozturk** People think of my country Turkey as a police state (and it very much is) but go for a night out in Istanbul or wherever and you can stay out as long as you pretty much want in the entertainment areas and police aren't coming in with sniffer dogs all over the place. What a stupid job. I feel so sorry for the dogs being used in this horrible way.  
Like · Reply ·  24 · Yesterday at 4:19am · Edited

*Picture: Comments about police with sniffer dogs now patrolling inside concert venues (Source: Facebook)*

As well as swimming pools, as can be seen in the outrageous photo below.



*Picture: Sniffer dogs patrolling women in bikinis at Andrew 'Boy' Charlton Pool (Source: Instagram)*

What exactly is being targeted by all this activity? According to the [Late Night Management Areas Research Phase 4 Report](#) which looked at data in March 2015, in total 1,465 incidents of antisocial behaviour (ASB) were recorded across all precincts. Over half (52%) were recorded as non-serious incidents; the definition of non-serious incidents being- and no, you cannot make this up- “[incidents of singing or playing](#)”. Yes, we live in a state with if you walk down the street singing or playing the police will record it in a crime register.

I saw on Facebook one poor fellow who tried to organise a few friends on New Year's Day for some [good old Australian fun in the sun with some floaties](#) at a Sydney beach. He was promptly harassed by police with "potential legal action" because "you have not applied for an Aquatic Licence to hold this event and you have not outlined your water safety plan. If any person is killed or injured during this event the organisers may be held responsible and can be subject to legal action".

I had never heard of such a license and looked up what would be required to organise getting some mates down the beach on a sunny day on some lilos. According to the [application form](#), you would need an Aquatic Activity Operational Plan detailing safety procedures, rescue craft, qualified personnel in attendance, communications procedures, a risk register and a risk management plan acceptable to Roads and Maritime, evidence of community and stakeholder consultation appropriate to the type, scale and location of the aquatic activity (this will be assessed by Roads and Maritime), written authorisation from other unspecified but relevant agencies or consent authorities (including, but not limited to local councils, Marine Parks Authority), written authorisation from the occupier or trustee of any foreshore land intended to be used in connection with the proposed activity, and by the way, after you have done all this, please submit your application to us at least six weeks in advance.

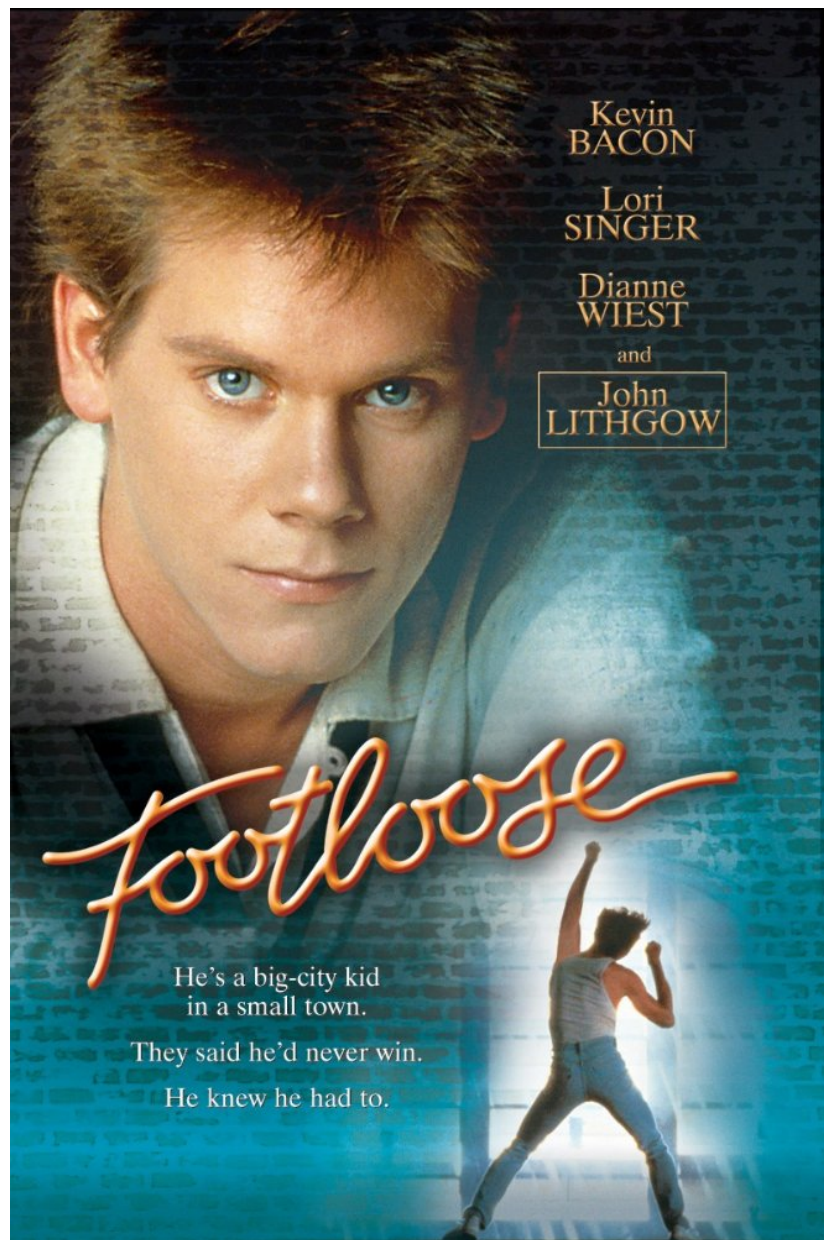
This has clearly been designed to bog down anyone attempting to put on an event with open ended bureaucratic quagmire so the event would never happen.

Sydney used to be a laid back place where we're welcome the world to come [throw a shrimp on the barbie](#). Now if you do that and someone takes offence to the smoke, the NSW Government will fine you [\\$1,100 for the first offence, \\$2,200 for the second](#) and probably put you on a registered barbecue offenders list.

In Sydney, you can't even have a beer in the sun enjoying a game of lawn bowls anymore without the [NSW Government wanting to shut it down](#). You can't go for a workout in the park without the Government imposing a curfew [because thirty or forty people complain](#) in a city of over 4.8 million.

Yes, you are living your very own version of *Footloose*, the iconoclastic 1984 movie starring Kevin Bacon, where a city teenager moves to a small town where rock music and dancing have been banned by a bible-thumping Minister. Who would have ever thought this could have happened in cosmopolitan Sydney?





*Picture: Yes, you are living in a nightmare called Footloose 2.0*

With the war on dancing, drinking, music, parties, barbecues, fitness and lawn bowls in full flight (all I would have said to be very “Aussie” activities), the war on kebabs was the obvious next target. Egged on by the NSW Libs, and despite operating until 4am on weekends for over a decade with no problem, the City of Sydney is now [banning the sale of kebabs after midnight](#). Yes, there is now a [lockout law for kebab eating](#).

In 2014, the NSW Liberal Government amended the Liquor Act in such a way that it deemed a pizza bar as a “high risk venue”. [According to the legislation](#) a “high risk venue” is any place that serves alcohol, is open past midnight at least once a week and has a capacity of 120 people or more.

- (2) A **high risk venue** is a venue situated in a prescribed precinct comprising:
- (a) licensed premises:
    - (i) on which liquor may be sold for consumption on the premises, and
    - (ii) that are authorised to trade after midnight at least once a week on a regular basis, and
    - (iii) that have a patron capacity (as determined by the Director-General) of more than 120 patrons, or
  - (b) licensed premises specified by, or of a class specified by, the regulations, or
  - (c) licensed premises that are designated by the Director-General under subsection (4).

*Figure: A “high risk venue” is one with a capacity of 120 or more patrons.*

This Orwellian nomenclature is really just a euphemism for a “venue we feel like shutting down” and a trigger for a series of nonsensical rules and regulations to apply that aim to squarely damage trade by making the venue unpalatable for any customer to visit.

None of this, of course, has anything to do with how the business itself is being operated.

This is how the current NSW Liberal Government thinks about small business. Far from their [stated belief of](#) “we work towards a lean government that minimises interference in our daily lives and maximises individual and private-sector initiative”, the government is actively shutting down any small business that it can find that doesn’t agree with its small minded evangelical 1950s view of the world.

Venue owners are too afraid to speak out against the draconian rules while they are operating their businesses due to the [three strikes policy](#) of the Office of Liquor and Gaming NSW.

This is modeled on the three strikes policy of the United States, [which doesn’t prevent crime](#) and has seen absurd tragedies such as the jailing of someone for 25 years to life for bouncing a cheque, or a homeless person for stealing toilet paper from a building site. It’s also been [struck down as unconstitutional](#) by the US Supreme Court.

The three strikes policy of the NSW OLGR is designed to allow licensing police enough discretion to close any venue at any time they wish. The terms of offence can be so broadly interpreted that you could walk into any bar in Sydney and find people who are [intoxicated](#)- this enables the licensing police to intimidate the licensees into compliance. If they don't comply they risk losing everything, and over time the over regulation creates financial fatigue on the business eventually resulting in it being closed.

**LIQUOR ACT 2007 - SECT 5**

**Meaning of "intoxicated"**

**5 Meaning of "intoxicated"**

(1) For the purposes of this Act, a person is "intoxicated" if:

- (a) the person's speech, balance, co-ordination or behaviour is noticeably affected, and
- (b) it is reasonable in the circumstances to believe that the affected speech, balance, co-ordination or behaviour is the result of the consumption of [liquor](#).

*Picture: Anyone could walk into any bar in the world and find an "intoxicated" person according to the Liquor Act*

The licensing police also use bullying tactics. One venue operator who did not want to be named told me privately that after being burdened with meeting after meeting, being forced to hand over the names, addresses and phone numbers of all his wait staff and repeated requests for receipts of all food and beverage transactions through the till, that he was threatened with arrest for not turning up to yet another voluntary meeting.

The NSW State Liberal Party has strayed so far from its roots that it's closer to the Taliban than centre-right liberalism. No wonder voters are [completely exasperated](#) when going to the polls. This is the party that touts itself on its supposed pro-business, pro-economy and pro-liberal views.

The puritanical policy settings from the NSW Liberals are more like pre-World War I temperance league values, but in 2016 they are put in place by stealth policy measures firmly pushed by quiet evangelicals like Premier Baird. Not confident enough to have them exposed as democratic ideas, for which they may or may not get elected today, evangelical temperance advocates achieve their goals by deceiving the voters with fear and misinformation. Joseph Goebbels himself would have struggled to use the one punch rubbish in the media more manipulatively as propaganda to push an agenda.

I think that many voters, such as myself, are right to feel hoodwinked. When I voted I thought I was voting for the economy. I didn't see the fine print for fundamentalist Christian government next to the tick box.

There is a word for this form of government that is rapidly ramping up in New South Wales and it's called [Totalitarianism](#). "A [political system](#) where the [state](#) recognizes no limits to its authority and strives to regulate every aspect of public and private life wherever feasible. Totalitarian [regimes](#) stay in [political power](#) through an all-encompassing [propaganda](#) campaign, which is disseminated through the state-controlled [mass media](#), a [single party](#) that is often marked by [political repression](#), [personality cultism](#), [control over the economy](#), regulation and [restriction](#) of [speech](#), [mass surveillance](#), and widespread use of [terror](#)" [according to Wikipedia](#).

Sounds awfully familiar, doesn't it?

I seriously would not be surprised if next week the NSW Liberal Government banned the flying of kites. This is what it must have felt like living in Kabul, Afghanistan before Sharia, Fanaticism and the Taliban came along. At least one council has [already banned](#) kites in a pre-emptive strike.

The NSW Liberal Government disguises banning things as policy because it makes them look tough in the news and distracts the public from the fact that they actually have no policy other than religious dogma and trying to buy off marginal seats for the next election. It is furiously selling any asset that isn't bolted down, and in many circumstances [even those that are bolted](#) to pay for it all. If it were technically feasible, the NSW Government wouldn't just move the [Powerhouse Museum](#) to Western Sydney, it would relocate the Harbour Bridge and Opera House to Western Sydney along with it.

Rather than expending a little bit of energy trying to figure out something beneficial to the economy like, I don't know, say actually *growing* it, The NSW Government finds it far more easy to just ban something, introduce yet another fine or [increase a fine on an existing rule](#) which doesn't exist anywhere else in the world (except New Zealand, who copied us), and is known to be [stupid and counterproductive in the first place](#) by 350%. This is merely taxation by stealth.

All of this ridiculous nonsense ends up damaging the economy, and that's not to mention the constant erosion of civil liberties. Although these politicians are supposed to represent the will of the people, in the absence of real economic policy they instead repress the will, ban and fine the people.

The way things are going, I would not be surprised that in ten year's time if you wanted to have a nice bottle of [1959 Grange Hermitage](#) with dinner, that you would need to go to the doctor to get a prescription, go on a registered alcohol offender's list, say three Hail Marys and wear a high visibility vest. It would come delivered between the hours of nine and eleven am and on the Monday before in a plain plastic bottle with a picture of a diseased liver on it. No, [I wouldn't be surprised](#), because they are already thinking about this.

But the joke that the government has been playing is starting to wear thin. All these ridiculous rules started as an annoyance, became an inconvenience but are now not just gross infringements on our civil liberties, but incredibly damaging to the economy.

When tourists used to visit Australia, they used to marvel at our easy go lucky

attitude and laid back lifestyle. Now they go home and call us the “[world’s dumbest nation](#)”. Not just anyone said that, those were the exact words that Tyler Brûlé, editor-in-chief of [Monocle](#) and columnist for the [FT Weekend](#), used.

Tyler recently said “I need to be able to open a pop-up shop in Surry Hills and walk on the pavement with my wine glass. To me that's actually important”, before astutely adding “it is not going to bring about the collapse of society”.

News Limited even ran a poll asking its readers whether they agreed with his characterisation, and [78% of respondents agreed](#).

You’ve got to think of the damage being done to the tourism and entertainment industries when the editor of one of the world’s greatest culture & style publications says that.

He’s not alone. [Russell Brand](#) and a slew of other overseas personalities now call the ridiculous rules and what has become of the city a joke. I’d buy Russell and Tyler a drink, if only I knew where I could take them if they came out here.

Almost [every single day](#) there are articles being published illustrating just how badly Sydney’s reputation has been damaged by the evangelical cabal. “[Sydney has lost the plot. Tourist blasts overbearing nanny state](#)”, “[Wake up to a nanny state nightmare](#)”, “[Welcome to Australia: the World’s most over regulated nanny state](#)”, “[Sydney, it's not me, it's you: The fight against the 'nanny state'](#)”, “[Lockout Laws, Overregulation And The Fun Police: Why State Governments Need To Get A Grip](#)”, “[Late night street activity in Sydney plunges, report finds](#)” and “[Sydney would you chill the \[expletive\] out over these nanny state vibes?](#)” are just a small sample of what is now almost a daily occurrence.

One of the only people seeming to make sense in the NSW Government, Senator David Leyonhjelm has launched, unbelievably, a [NSW Senate Inquiry into the Nanny State](#). This Senate Inquiry, set up to investigate measures introduced to restrict personal choice 'for the individual's own good', has had more submissions than any other NSW Senate Inquiry before it.

You see, what the NSW Liberal Government doesn’t get is that some of us actually meaningfully contribute to the GDP of the economy. We go to work, in fact we work our asses off trying to pay the mortgage or the rent, because the government is too incompetent to stop Sydney house prices being the [second most expensive in the world](#) and Sydney the [most expensive place in the world to live](#). And you see, not everyone knocks off work at 5pm sharp in some 1950s daydream world and can make a quick trip to the pub if they want a drink before being home for dinner.



Some of us work [bloody hard](#), and would appreciate a beer or scotch occasionally after work. I work in the cutthroat, highly competitive, globalised technology industry, and many of my team, like last night, routinely like to work until late at night.

“Why am I being penalised because I work hard? If I stay at work until midnight I can’t go out and get a drink anymore. The bars have either shut down, can’t be bothered to open any more or won’t let me in because of the lockout. Even though Silicon Valley is boring, I may as well go there now because it can’t be worse than Sydney”, I heard only last week.

This universal attitude struck particularly hard with me because not so long ago I called one of the top recruiters in Silicon Valley to ask about whether they could fill a senior role for me. The call lasted less than a minute “Look, as much as I would like to help you, the answer is no. We just turned down [another billion dollar Australian technology company] for a similar role. We’ve tried in the past looking, nobody from Silicon Valley wants to come to Australia for any role. We used to think maybe someone would move for a lifestyle thing, but they don’t want to do that anymore. It’s not just that they are being paid well, it’s that it’s a backwater and they consider it as two moves- they have to move once to get over there but more importantly when they finish they have to move back and it’s hard from them to break back in being out of the action. I’m really sorry but we won’t even look at taking a placement for Australia”.

Anyone young and intelligent is fleeing the country. In the tech industry the brain drain is accelerating.

It’s not just the obvious damage to the entertainment economy that all these petty and nonsensical laws are introducing, it’s the damage to the entire economy. And this is incredibly ironic coming from the party [whose ideology is supposed to believe that](#) “that businesses and individuals – not government – are the true creators of wealth and employment”

It’s not just the economic damage to the immediately affected bars, pubs and clubs, the musicians, entertainers, hospitality staff, restaurants and cafes. It’s the whole economy around it- newsagents, take-away stores, pharmacies, places of accommodation and tourism. Taxi drivers have anecdotally told me their takings are down by 40% or more - and that’s the drop because of their nighttime take disappearing, and before the impact of Uber.

The 2am lockout in Victoria was cancelled after independent auditor KPMG found that it had actually increased violence. Even a senior policy advisor to Premier

John Brumby admitted that it was only implemented in the first place due to [moral panic](#).

The Queensland 3am lockout and 5am closures were shown by the Queensland Auditor-General to cost the state economy \$10 million. I emailed the NSW Audit Office in July 2014 asking if they were tracking the effect on the economy as both Victoria and Queensland did, but was told curiously that they had no plans to.

Now two years into the lockout in NSW, I would estimate the damage to the NSW state economy would now be into thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars.

This is remarkable, because one would think that with the world [potentially on the verge of another Great Depression](#) that the NSW Liberal Government would be desperate to do anything it could to boost the economy.

I am very surprised that the operators of these damaged businesses don't sue the Government for compensation given the change in regulatory environment.

Whilst recently [embracing the sharing economy](#), the NSW Government implemented a \$1 tax per on trip on ride sharing in order to [fund transfer payments to affected taxi plate holders](#) from the change in regulation.

The birth of rationalism was a long time ago, the Spanish Inquisition was a long time ago. But not, it seems, in Sydney, where the NSW Liberals govern with an excess of moral and social based laws not science based laws. Stoney Roads said it best- [weird laws](#) that date back to medieval times that are being randomly implemented without hesitation, judgement or general consensus of the population.

As libertarian senator David Leyonhjelm [wrote](#), "In the meantime, some of the politicians who want to tell you how to live can barely manage their own lives. Many had their rites of passage at the Cross but now want to deny others the same opportunity. Others just seem worried that somebody might be having a good time. Far more disgusting than what goes on at Kings Cross is people being thrown out of work by nanny-statists and politicians seeking to impose their hypocritical standards on us all."

The NSW Liberals espouse lower taxes, greater freedom and smaller government. All we have seen is increased fines & taxes, less freedom and larger government as more and more it intrudes into what we do in our everyday lives. The NSW Liberal Government should step back and leave these issues to the individual, which was the basis of liberalism and the ethos of their party in the first place. Otherwise they

should change the name of the party to something more accurate, like the NSW Evangelical Party.

The world is moving ahead, rapidly. Sydney is not just being left behind, it's regressing into the dark ages.

On Friday, February 5th, [the two year freeze period ends](#), and a review of many of these harsh and stupid rules will be conducted by someone “who in the opinion of the Minister possesses appropriate expertise, knowledge and skills”. This will be done by a single person who, with bullshit data, and no submissions from the public, people or businesses affected determine that everything should be closed forever more with no right of appeal.

**47 Review of amendments relating to “lock outs” and cessation of liquor sales at 3 am in Sydney CBD Entertainment precinct**

- (1) The Minister is to appoint a person who in the opinion of the Minister possesses appropriate expertise, knowledge and skills and who is independent of the Government to review the amendments made to the *Liquor Regulation 2008* by the amending Act that relate to “lock outs” and the cessation of liquor sales at 3 am and any other provision prescribed by the regulations, to determine whether the policy objectives of those amendments remain valid and whether the terms of those amendments remain appropriate for securing those objectives, and report to the Minister.
- (2) The review is to be undertaken as soon as possible after the end of the period of 2 years following the date of assent to the amending Act and the Minister is to report to the Premier on the outcome of the review as soon as practicable after the review is completed.

*Figure: A single person, with fudged data and no submissions from the public, people or businesses affected determine that everything should be closed forever more with no right of appeal.*

Sydney, once the best city in the world, has become an international joke thanks to the NSW Liberal Government.



*Picture: Social Media is awash with comments about what is happening to Sydney*

No wonder everyone's apparently [moving to Melbourne](#).

Mike Baird has turned Sydney into Detroit.











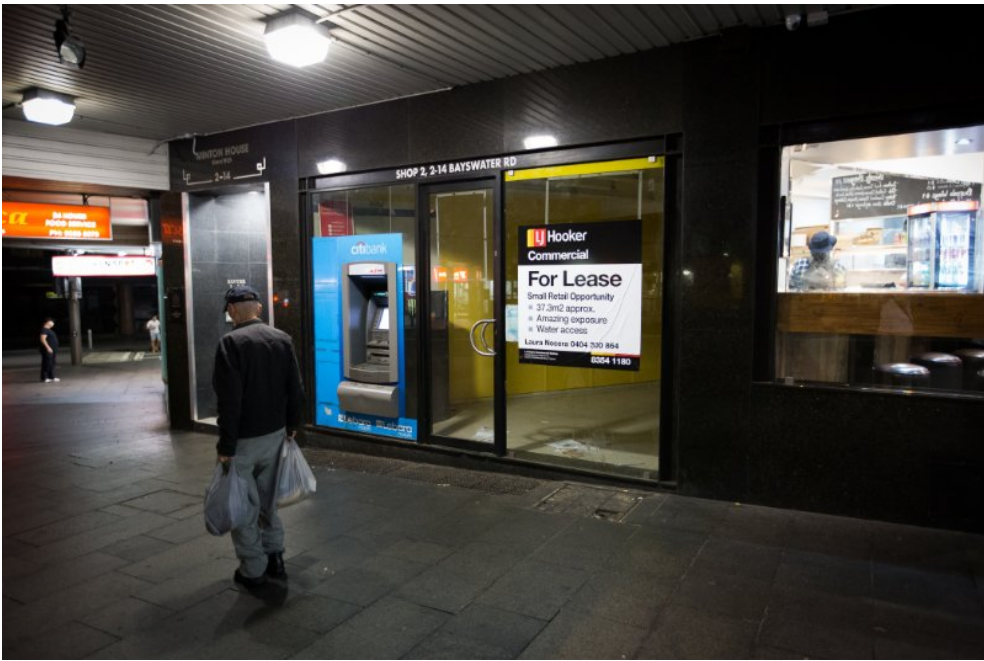




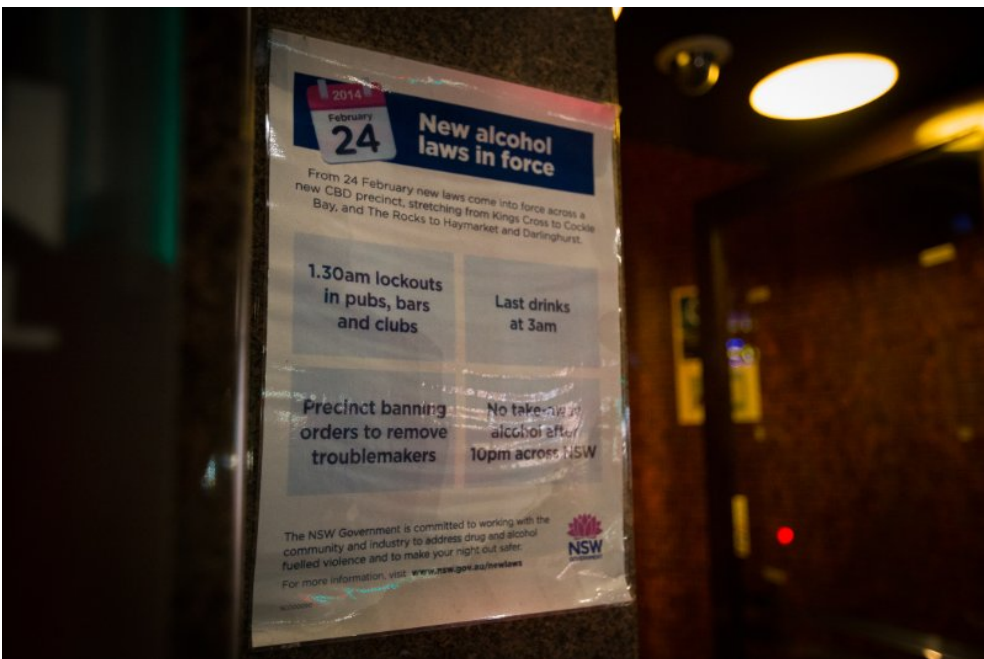
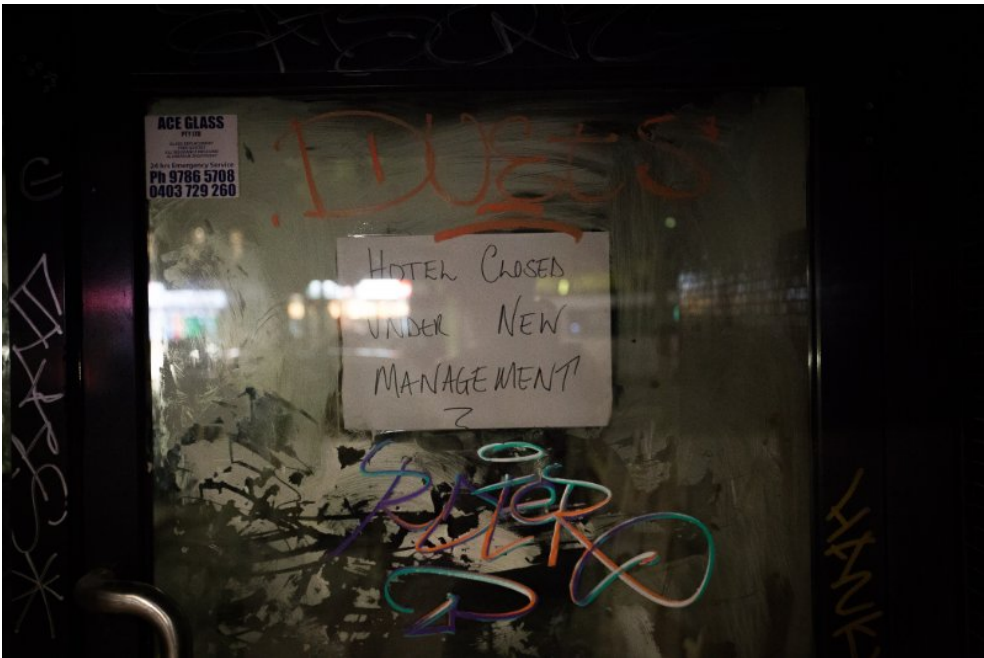
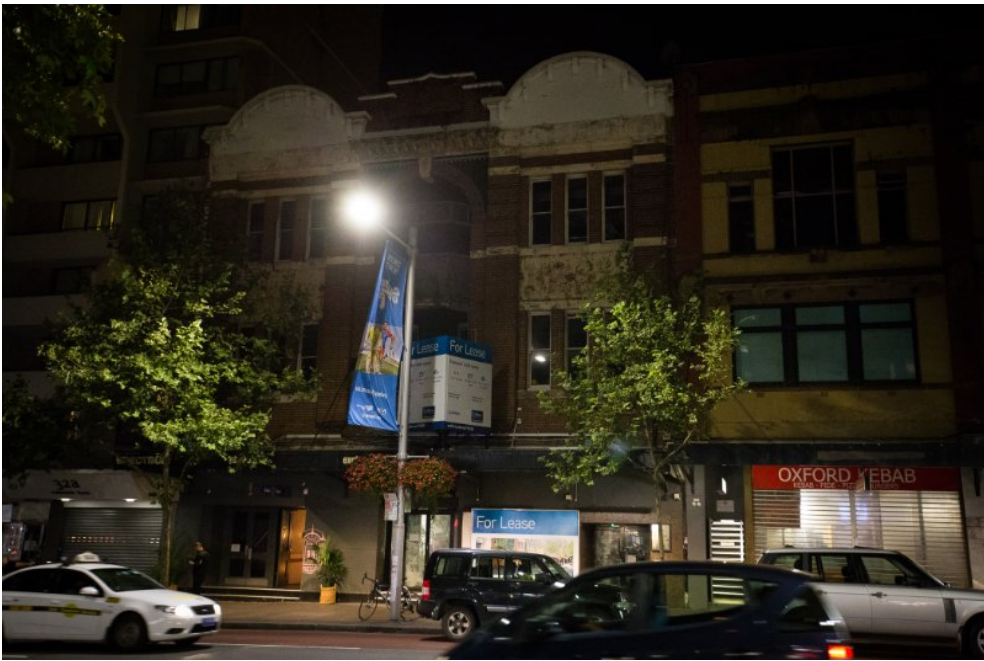




























PS: [This is how Sydney used to look.](#)

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Written by  
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