



Media Release

14 September 2016

Emergency Service Workers to fight moves to water down lock-out laws

The Last Drinks Coalition says whilst it welcomes the findings of the Callinan Review which confirmed that the reduction in trading hours has saved lives and reduced assaults on emergency service workers, it will campaign against any moves to weaken lock-out laws.

The Coalition of police officers, doctors, nurses and ambulance officers have rejected the Callinan Review's recommendations that the State's highly successful alcohol laws be watered down for live music venues.

The Last Drinks Coalition spokesman and Secretary of the Health and Services Union Gerard Hayes said they were mystified that a report finding the lock out laws had made the streets of Sydney safer, should then call for those laws to be relaxed.

"We need to remember where these laws came from: a recognition that alcohol-related violence was out of control putting community safety at risk, and leaving frontline workers were bearing its brunt with violent attacks.

"Our position on the current alcohol laws remains clear – the only change to the laws should be for them to be rolled out across the state.

"Every hour more of alcohol service after midnight precipitates an increase in alcohol-fueled violence by 20 per cent, compromising peoples' lives and safety."

"These staggering results confirmed without a doubt that the laws had finally succeeded in driving down alcohol related assaults, reducing injuries and saving lives.

"The Government should side with emergency service workers and the community by rejecting these recommendations and putting public safety first.

"We can't afford to allow a return to the days where alcohol-fuelled violence was commonplace on our streets," said Mr Hayes.

The evidence is clear:

- In June this year the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics Research (BOSCAR) reported that Kings Cross had seen a 59.2 per cent decrease in assaults between 6pm and 1.30am and a 93.9 per cent decrease between 3am and 6am.
- In a one year period, emergency staff at St Vincent's hospital could expect up to 26 patients to be admitted between 8pm and 8am with serious head injuries

Shortly after the laws were introduced the number of patients admitted with serious head injuries at St Vincent's had fallen by 50 per cent.

- Before the laws, each Friday and Saturday night Police were forced to bring in up to 40 additional General Duties officers from other metropolitan commands to deal with the drunken violence in Kings Cross. Since the laws were introduced, these extra Police have not been required, freeing them up to undertake important policing work in their own communities.

Visit www.lastdrinks.org.au for more information.

Contact: Marie Bout, 0405 399 164