



SOBER IN THE COUNTRY



5 December 2019

The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, MP
Premier
Parliament of New South Wales
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Premier

STATEMENT OF OBJECTION TO EXTENSION OF TRADING HOURS FOR TAKEAWAY LIQUOR UNTIL 12AM

We object to legislative amendments proposed following recommendations arising from the Joint Parliamentary Committee's Inquiry into Sydney's Night-Time Economy (NTE) for a whole-of-state extension, until midnight, of takeaway liquor outlets and online courier sales.

We note that the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry were confined to the Sydney NTE, yet these changes will be state-wide.

In June this year, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) reported that the number of domestic-related homicides in NSW had doubled, and little comfort can be drawn from the other crime statistics related to reported domestic violence incidents.

We note your Government's direct commitment to reducing domestic violence recidivism by 25per cent by 2021 was recently extended to 2023.

The availability, supply, promotion and consumption of alcohol are critical contributing factors to the levels of both domestic and non-domestic violence. Recent research suggests that between 40 - 50 per cent of intimate partner homicides are alcohol related.

Many of our members and colleagues are on the unglamorous front-line, attending, treating and consoling victims and their families, as a direct consequence of alcohol-fueled violence and unintended injuries. We can testify to the devastating predictable consequences of inadequate and partisan regulation of alcohol, which is no ordinary commodity and should be regulated appropriately. Alcohol-related harm is a cost to government, as well as to the community.

February 2014 amendments to the *NSW Liquor Act* introduced state-wide reductions in the availability of takeaway liquor sales until 10pm. The 2016 report by the Hon Ian Callinan QC acknowledged the attribution of an 8.1 per cent whole-of-state reduction in domestic assault and 12.3 per cent in regional areas due to this modest 10pm restriction. Unfortunately, despite this improvement trading hours of bottle shops were extended to 11pm in 2017. Since then, evidence from BOCSAR indicates a 5.9 per cent increase in domestic assault across NSW.

Further, there has been a significant increase in online sales of packaged liquor, including from delivery services promising delivery within half an hour, in several parts of the state. Liquor & Gaming NSW's current review of delivery conditions is treating these services as couriers rather than the mobile bottle shops which many of them are. The proposed controls are unenforceable and take no account / make no mention of the domestic violence risks associated with this new form of trade, relying on self-policing by industry.

Direct requests to the NSW Attorney General and the Minister for Health, by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and other organisations, seeking their support to retain the status quo on the licensing hours for packaged liquor for all of NSW attracted no substantive response.

On behalf of the children and women victims of domestic violence in NSW, who in many incidents are our patients, we urge your government, based on the best available evidence, to not increase the hours of takeaway alcohol sales and to introduce rigorous controls over its supply by delivery services. And should the government be determined to proceed with this change we seek ironclad assurances that proper and detailed monitoring of the effects be carefully captured, recorded and publicly reviewed.

We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss our concerns directly with you at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully

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