

Lord Mayor of Sydney

CLOVER MOORE MP

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The Hon. Barry O'Farrell MP
Leader of the Opposition
By email LOP@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr O'Farrell

Call for a NSW Liquor Licensing Permit System

The City of Sydney is committed to a safe night time economy with a diverse range of options available late into the evening for visitors and our local communities.

I write to seek your commitment to legislative reform to achieve a coherent NSW framework—in line with many Australian and international cities—to address the damage to our late night economy caused by alcohol-related violence.

There is considerable community concern about violence and anti-social behaviour associated with poorly managed licensed premises and areas with unsustainable concentrations of venues. Alcohol-fuelled anti-social behaviour results in attacks on other patrons and fights spilling out onto the streets, where police and paramedics are regularly called to respond.

Licensed premises are a significant part of the City of Sydney's night time economy and we work to balance the interests of licensees with the safety of patrons and the needs of the broader community where pubs, cubs and small bars are located.

City of Sydney Late Night Trading DCP

In 2007, the City of Sydney adopted its Late Night Trading Development Control Plan (DCP) to better manage land use planning associated with the late night economy. The DCP provides a best practice model in line with international experience, with similar approaches being adopted by other councils.

The DCP works on the principle that extended trading hours are a privilege, not a right. Premises can receive core operating hours until midnight, with access to extended trading hours on a trial basis. Good operators receive extensions of trials for one, two and up to five years, but poorly managed premises can be limited to core operating hours in order to reduce environmental and social impacts.

I call on you to commit to implementing a compatible liquor licensing permit system in NSW, with annual or bi-annual renewal. This would bring NSW into line with international leading practice.

city of villages

Licensing permits in other jurisdictions

Many jurisdictions nationally and internationally have liquor licensing permit systems. Under such an approach, ***licences are not granted in perpetuity, as is the case in NSW.***

Most permit systems require the licence to be renewed every one or two years. In some jurisdictions, the permit relates only to extended hours, while in others the entire licence is subject to regular renewal. This ensures that licensees who fail to run safe venues do not have their liquor licence renewed, or cannot trade at times when their operations cause the greatest impacts on residents and visitors.

Cities where these systems operate include New York, Amsterdam, Vancouver, Edinburgh and Paris (for nightclub licences). In Queensland, core liquor licence hours are granted until midnight, but extended trading is provided via a permit requiring renewal.

There is no international evidence that renewable permit systems undermine the economic viability of licensed premises. Indeed, a report by the New York Nightlife Association in 2004 estimated that the night time economy generated \$10 billion per year, with an estimated 65 million people visiting New York City bars and clubs each year, making the night time economy one of the most important facets to New York City life.

Residents and police within the City of Sydney find that, under the current system, extremely poor operators can remain in business for extended periods before action occurs. Section 54 and 79 processes under the *Liquor Act 2007* take a long time, during which dangerous venues continue to operate. Often the resulting sanctions are minor, despite significant problems. This causes significant loss of amenity and safety.

The liquor licensing permit system provides a comprehensible and consistent mechanism for managing poor operators, while providing well managed licensed premises with certainty and continuity.

If you would like to speak with a Council officer about this proposal, you can contact Suzie Matthews, Manager Late Night Economy on 9265 9333 or at smatthew@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Clover Moore MP
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