

Are The New Lockout Rules Actually Working?

It has been several months since the new lockout rules came into place for the Sydney CBD and Kings Cross Precinct and many people are looking to evaluate their success.

Recently released statistics available on the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research website show that assaults were already dropping up until March, 2014, and the Australian Hotels Association even went so far as to say the lockout reforms were unnecessary, as assaults inside licensed premises were already falling by over 30 percent by March of this year.

The lockout rules were off to a positive start. The very first night of the lockout, of the 97 venues that were inspected the first weekend of the new lockout laws, only one was found to be non-compliant.

But what started off well did not continue to meet with success. Several factors have indicated that the new lockout rules are not as effective as hoped.

Statistics from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research found that in March there were six assaults in Kings Cross. But just one month after the laws came into effect there had been 45 assaults outside licensed premises in the Cross.

The Daily Telegraph also [reports](#) that the lockout may be responsible for a spike in the number of pedestrians hit by cars.

This is due mainly to patrons making a dash to their next venue, rushing to try and make it before the 1:30am lockout began, or heavily intoxicated party-goers heading home en masse and not being cautious.

The number of casualties was higher in the month following the lockout than it was over the busy Christmas and New Year period.

Critics of the lockout laws point, not without cause, to the fact that the legislation is not well-matched to the problem: attacks which sparked the reforms happened well before the 1:30am lockout time and 3:00am last drinks that have been implemented. One victim of a random assault, Thomas Kelly was attacked at 9:30pm.

And after Daniel Christie was king-hit on New Years Eve, the then-Premier Barry O'Farrell had received over 126,000 signatures to a petition urging reform to curb alcohol fuelled violence by 10 January.

O'Farrell did implement harsher measures to cut down on drunken violence. But the reforms were criticised as pushed through too quickly, and as a response to popular outcry without proper drafting.

Bars and licenced venues that complied with laws to avoid \$11,000 fines or even 12 months prison time. But the streets are a whole different ball game.

Patrons, angry that their business has been hit by the new laws argue that their premises, with trained security guards are much more likely to be able to control a situation that gets out of hand, making them safer places than dimly lit streets.

One such owner, mogul John Ibrahim is even willing to put his money where is mouth is – it has been [reported](#) that he would be willing for venue owners like himself to foot the bill for police calls instead of the taxpayer.

With these changes have also come police powers – revellers out to enjoy the nightlife could be slapped with a fine of \$1,100 if they are drunk and disorderly. This fine is more

than five times the previous amount.

And those who assault the police officer who fines them will be sentenced to a minimum of two years in jail.

Police are pleased and hope that rowdy partygoers will learn from their stupidity if they wake up with a massive fine.

Don Weatherburn from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research says it is still too early to tell if the lockout measures are a success or not.

If you have been caught out by the new laws it may be best to speak with a [professional criminal lawyer](#), who has the experience to get you the best possible results for your trial.