

National Liquor News - March 2014

Does the whole of the Sydney CBD really deserve the most violent venues restrictions?

Like many, DSICA is watching to see the eventual impact of New South Wales Premier Barry O'Farrell's very substantial changes to Sydney's alcohol regulations and sentencing laws. We support him taking the late night violence issue so seriously and especially testing violent offenders for drugs and steroids.

Since they were announced in late January, the mandatory sentencing elements have already been amended and fewer offences will bring a mandatory jail term. Also, the definition of being affected by alcohol or drugs triggering a mandatory sentence has also been shifted from being 0.15 to being noticeably affected in their speech, balance, coordination, etc.

I predict that this definition will also cause people who aren't on drugs or drunk being accused unfairly. What about people who have a speech impediment or a mild brain impairment that affects their coordination? I hope they can prove they weren't drinking that much or taking drugs.

Part of the Kings Cross precinct restrictions were time limits on the use of glass, products sold in bottles and limits on serving shots and RTDs above 5%. Those restrictions are also imposed on the Level One venues under NSW's violent venue scheme. To be a Level One venue, it had 19 or more violent incidents in the previous year.

The Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing says that special licence conditions will apply in the Sydney CBD Entertainment Precinct, and these conditions could include bans on the use of glass and shots after midnight, along with other conditions. These conditions will be developed through a Plan of Management.

If the OLGR imposes the glass ban, and the spirit bans under the Plan of Management, are they not treating all CBD venues (except for small bars, restaurants and accommodation hotels) as a Level One violent venue?

Wouldn't that reduce the incentives and disincentives the violent venues scheme depends on? What benefit is it to have a safe venue in the CBD when it's restricted like the most violent venue?

What is OLGR's best alternative? Not imposing the Kings Cross spirits and glass restrictions as a blanket measure and keep the incentives under the violent venues scheme.

How does banning the Martini after midnight really make Sydney safer?