



**Media Release**

22 November 2017

## **Emergency services workers demand Premier intervene over Minister's capitulation to booze lobby over Newcastle liquor laws**

Police and ambulance officers, nurses and doctors demand Premier Berejiklian immediately intervene over NSW Liquor and Gaming Minister's Paul O'Toole's and complete capitulation to the booze lobby over Newcastle's incredibly successful liquor laws which have cut violence and saved lives.

Last Drinks Coalition spokesperson Scot Weber said that emergency service workers were absolutely appalled that Phillip Crawford, Chair of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority (IGLA) who reports to the Minister, announced he would review the Newcastle liquor laws at the request of the powerful Australian Hotels Association (AHA) with no consultation of the community or emergency services stakeholders and not public hearing.

"This is a disgraceful and duplicitous act which Premier Berejiklian needs to immediately halt."

"The Newcastle liquor laws are a case study in how effective liquor regulation can transform violent, blood soaked streets into a vibrant nightlife precinct that families and people of all ages can enjoy."

"Now, at the behest of the AHA and completely out of the blue, Minister O'Toole is overseeing a snap review of those laws with the barely concealed agenda of watering them down."

"The people of Newcastle and NSW have every right to ask, in whose interests is this State being run? The community or the liquor industry?"

Mr. Weber said this latest announcement followed a very worrying trend where the Berejiklian Government had been throwing effective liquor regulation overboard to appease vested interests at the expense of community safety.

"Earlier this year trading hours were extended under the dubious proposition of supporting live music, despite the fact that every extra hour of liquor service after midnight increases the rate of street violence by 20%."

"In September the Berejiklian Government announced it was bringing back alcohol 'shots' to allegedly support small bars, despite knowing they rapidly increase intoxication."

"Now, Minister Paul O'Toole is taking an axe to Newcastle's moderate and successful liquor laws, which over nine years of operation have saved lives and spared hundreds of young people severe injury, at the request of his mates in the AHA."

"The only group who stand to win from this review is the liquor industry. Once again it will be the Newcastle community and emergency services workers who lose."

"Premier Berejiklian must intervene immediately to halt this sham review and support the peace and safety of the people of Newcastle."

**Tony Brown, the Community Advocate who campaigned with over 150 residents and Police to create the successful 'Newcastle Solution' is available for interview and comment on 0448100699**

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## **The facts on the successful Newcastle liquor laws**

- Since 2008 there has been a 72% reduction in weekend night-time assaults with a commensurate reduction in work for ambulance, police and hospital admissions.
- This translates to 6000 less assaults.
- The John Hunter Hospital Maxillofacial unit reports that there has been a 40% reduction in serious facial injuries since 2008.
- One pub has closed (due to fire).
- There has been a 110% increase in the number of licensed premises – mostly small bars and licensed restaurants in the CBD.
- This has significantly increased local jobs in the industry.
- A Newcastle Council Survey found overwhelming community and patron support for the measures.
- The Newcastle suite of modest restrictions to trading hours etc has been recognised internationally as a model for sustained crime reduction.

**Source:** NSW Police Association

**The Last Drinks Coalition is comprised of Police, Ambulance Officers, Doctors, Nurses and Emergency Services workers committed to reducing alcohol related violence and its consequences.**

Visit [www.lastdrinks.org.au](http://www.lastdrinks.org.au) for more information.