

Lock-out law roll-back to have devastating effects

Australian Orthopaedic Association

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The Australian Orthopaedic Association registers its unequivocal disappointment following the decision by the NSW Government to remove the 2014 lockout laws, by extending last drinks to 3.30am and bottle-shop trading hours to midnight.

The decision by the NSW Government to bow to the pressure of the pubs and clubs and relax the laws is systematic of the stranglehold alcohol and the alcohol industry has on Australian society.

Australian Orthopaedic Association (AOA) President, Dr Andrew Ellis said, "The likely outcome of the relaxation of laws is that we see an increase in the alcohol fuelled violence levels last seen prior to the introduction of the lock-out laws in 2014. We can also expect to see an increase to alcohol-related road trauma and alcohol-related domestic violence.

"The AOA believes there is no doubt that the NSW Government has heeded the voices of the alcohol industry rather than of victims of alcohol fuelled violence," said Dr Ellis.

The decision to relax the lock-out laws is confusing given when the laws were introduced there were 25 per cent fewer presentations for serious alcohol-related facial injuries at St Vincent's Hospital, and over two years the number of facial trauma surgeries required because of assault more than halved.

"The lock-out laws were successful and have had important public health benefits, with not one alcohol-related assault death at St Vincent's Hospital in Darlinghurst since the laws rolled out," Dr Ellis said.

While the new laws will certainly please the clubs and pubs, it should not come at the cost of a new outbreak in violence, increased strain on emergency services and tragic injuries and deaths.

"The only mitigation is to employ more police, more ambulance officers, more child protection workers, more surgeons, more hospital staff and more emergency workers, how will this be possible with already straining health and emergency service budgets?" added Dr Ellis.

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About the Australian Orthopaedic Association

The Australian Orthopaedic Association (AOA) is the peak professional body for orthopaedic surgeons in Australia. AOA provides high quality specialist education, training and continuing professional development. AOA is committed to ensuring the highest possible standard of orthopaedic care and is the leading authority in the provision of orthopaedic information to the community. AOA actively supports scientific research and orthopaedic humanitarian initiatives in Australia and overseas.