

**PROTECTING THE NEWTOWN VIBE
PUBLIC MEETING 6 JULY 2015**

SOME THEMES CAPTURED

Shared anxiety

- Newtown feels less safe than it used to
- There has been an increase in behaviour that people have found intimidating and harassing, but that may not be reported or considered reportable
- Security guard culture can add to this
- Exclusion of Aboriginal people
- Departure from queer space
- Cost of housing
- Impact of 'pre loading', ice

Strengths of Newtown

- There is something special here
- Keep it weird
- Keep the ethic of care
- We come here to live, work and play
- The fun, party culture is longstanding
- We love this place
- We want a collective community response

There are multiple solutions/ways of addressing what is happening

- Grass roots
- Businesses should be involved
- We need to strengthen the Safe Spaces program
- "No dickhead" policy
- Improved reporting and gathering of evidence
- More free celebrations, festivals and events in the community
- Stand together as a community
- Change security culture and practice
- Partner with local venues
- Venues and security guards should embrace spirit of hospitality and duty of care

Way forward suggestions

- More cops on King St – positive policing
- Shift security guard culture
- Community reclaim the streets
- More safe spaces/safe space programs

COMMUNITY COMMENTS, QUESTIONS & IDEAS
made during the meeting

- What type of community events can we initiate that strengthen our community and promote respect?
- How can we re-emphasise ACON's Safe Place program?
- Property developments can have impacts on our neighbourhoods, green spaces, etc
- Let's talk about a Tenant's Union, rent strike; consider how property prices and gentrification have affected not only the LGBTI population, but also the Aboriginal population as well
- Violence statistics in the area have been reported as not significantly changing...
- Is it possible to have a bar/pub specific Safe Spaces program?
- Can we introduce a "No dickhead" policy with a specific emphasis on LGBTIQ inclusivity?
- Posters on walls won't change things. "Inclusive" pub did not act. More window-dressing? Must hold venues, businesses, and people more accountable. It's up to us.
- The Aboriginal community is not visible anymore.
- If we want to "include everybody", we have to include everybody – point in focus, people living with a disability
- Inclusive door policies have worked in other licensed venues in the area.
- Community on the streets handing out fliers to visitors to Newtown.
- Change or foster a culture of reporting to the police, or another reporting avenue
- We need a strong response to homophobic and transphobic behaviour
- Community-led responses are strongest
- Community meetings
- We need to be aware of how the city lock-outs affect Newtown.
- The feeling of safety has changed; frightening, intimidating. A feeling of non-safety is not a reportable offense. Night crowds have become uncontrollable. It shouldn't get that bad before things change.
- The energetic change in the streets has changed dramatically.
- An appalling amount of sleeping on the streets and homelessness in Newtown. It's an issue for other services and State Government.
- The stats don't back up the 'feeling' on the ground.
- Involve security teams and guards in the response as part of the solution rather than the problem. Get them on the same wavelength as the venue and the people that go there.
- What constitutes a reportable offence?
- The level of anger and control of the security staff feeds into clientele of venues.
- Hang out on King St as a community, people of different ages including elders, keeping it weird – get up in people's face in a fun, productive way
- It's sad when a local community turns in on itself when faced with an external threat.
- Take ideas from sex worker's book: Mug shots of dangerous/problematic people. Let's get smart about how we use smartphones, name & shame. Other campaigns have used things like whistles effectively to scare people off. We should stand together
- Let's create a sense of eye contact and connection in the streets again.

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- Name & shame is important; repercussions are important; accountability is important.
- Newtown ambassadors on Thu-Sun nights
- Security staff reminded they work in the hospitality industry – and their Duty of Care
- More police presence on King St on a Saturday night
- Smiley cops rather than intimidating cops with dogs
- Police as genuine members of the community
- Review management of the Newtown Festival (Neighbourhood Centre & Council)
- Safe spaces, safe havens, where you're around people that care about you and want to help you
- Community public transport to take people home
- Community roundtable with key stakeholders/partners/residents/collectives

<p>Protecting the Newtown Vibe</p> <p>Comments / Suggestions from attendees – transcribed from comment sheets</p>	
<p>Please NOTE: highlighted words are..... words we couldn't read properly (sorry); personal details have been removed to protect privacy</p>	
<p>Comments/Suggestions:</p>	
1.	<p>Street theatre is invisible in Sydney, and so presumably against the law. Laws can be changed. Street theatre gives a chance to point up issues to stimulate feedback from the passersby. Issues can be serious and deep like the elephant-in-the-bed-sitter of discrimination against Aborigines, or lightweight, like being insulted for your dress code. Street theatre can adapt to include heckles, and members of the audience.</p> <p>There are some Newtown spaces suited to a bracket of three-minute sketches, improvisations, and songs.</p> <p>Can we have some street theatre, please?</p>
2.	<p>Make all "bouncers" female – set up a company to Social enterprise</p>
3.	<p>1.. bring in lockout laws 2.. promote our differences and weirdness 3.. Fight the increases in housing prices</p>
4.	<p>Police officers needs to be more friendly and approachable.</p> <p>Case!</p> <p>I once walked into Newtown Police Precinct to report a car lost. Before I said anything, they rudely said "what do you want". A scare tactic, from then on I was</p>

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	intimidated and really felt put off -
5.	<p>Continue discussions as a Round Table i council, community, business + definitely multi-pronged strategies</p> <p>Get commitment from organisations to support, implement +/- or resource a range of actions.</p> <p>Need to have resident/community representation or consultation / participation.</p> <p>Marrickville Council is very happy to participate, support a roundtable + actions, councillors convenes the Marrickville Community safety committee</p>
6.	<p>I got here late unfortunately</p> <p>My concerns below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The flood of drunken aggressive people on the streets after dark • The icon that was The Imperial completely gone & not safe for diversity anymore • In day light people driving by abusing people walking along the street • Noise at night – vomit on streets • Police chasing people along street at 2-3am.
7.	<p>RE: Solutions for safer & more secure night life</p> <p>A – Get the community to be involved + doing part of the security.</p> <p>By - Employing locals to do the security</p> <p>e.g. if two security people on the door, to hire at least one local take part the particular event.</p> <p>e.g. chick with picko, to have a lesbian/trans person to do security, who have had</p> <p>Also/ Security people need to be part of the Newtown area w// to have detailed training to outside help about on community.</p> <p>Suggestion to have unarmed police presence on the busy nights in Newtown.</p>
8.	<p>Toilets in Camperdown Memorial Park</p> <p>Extend liquor trading hours of small bars to 2am – spreads the crowd out.</p> <p>No Dickhead / look after your mates policy advertised at all venues.</p> <p>This is an economic opportunity, NOT a battle</p> <p>Embrace it!</p>
9.	<p>We need to campaign against the proposal for home unit blocks to be allowed to be compulsorily sold if only 75% of owners want to sell. Some of the many problems that would arise from this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolition of relatively affordable units (probably more ‘upmarket’, ‘designer’ units would take their place, which would be less affordable • Forcing out owner/occupiers from their home (those who do not wish to sell their unit)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resulting in less gardens/green space/ & fees (older blocks with bigger gardens would be razed, replaced with a new building which would probably go right to the edge of the property, with virtually no garden space • Sydney Airport should be closed and relocated. That would free up lots of land for housing and recreation space. This would help take the strain off over development in the Inner West – an area close to the city (Airport) could instead be used to house expanding population close to the city.
10.	<p>Refused</p> <p>A place for young people to live for short period of time for free – (cheap rent)</p> <p>A place safe they can express + support their talent</p>
11.	<p>Keeping things that work and make Newtown ... Newtown!!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Markets, festival (old things) - + Newtown Tapas Enmore trail food things festivals (new things) <p>→ * Scared walking down King St after 10 pm... lack of respect of people</p> <p>→ Local Artist being pushed out due to rent increases → (we recently had to move after being a resident for over 30 years).</p> <p>→ Shops are becoming more franchised → not good ..!!</p> <p>→ Disgusted with what happened at the Town Hall recently!</p> <p>Love the 2 wheel chair guys – motorized love them!!</p> <p>Walk/down King St</p> <p>Lots of hellos/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Police have been wonderful - Bark Hotel security guard - Court Case 9.30 Thursday!
12.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Banner @ entrance of Newtown with “No Dickhead” on it - Saturday night street art festivals every Saturday? - Newtown ambassadors! - We need to build/increase the sense of community & ensure all individuals know they have the <u>POWER</u> to do something about the community. - These meetings should be once a month!
13.	<p>Stop regarding ACON as a representative organisation. It isn't.</p> <p>It is a health service. It doesn't represent queers or the queer community.</p> <p>Violent responses should not be dismissed. The failure of liberalism requires us to 'suspend' its frameworks, and to abandon “law and order”.</p>
14.	<p>I am 70, live in Chippendale but shop/movies/ coffee, etc. in Newtown for last 20 years. I'm hetero & fairly ordinary, but love freedom, so love the Newtown Vibe & facilities.</p> <p>I agree with the comment by the older woman about what is not reportable – shoving, ignoring/ being invisible.</p>

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	<p>Over the past 4 years I have had occasions of limited ability: sciatic events, sprained ankle, bowel cancer op – so have had to walk with a stick – feel very vulnerable – ESP from cyclists on footpaths, as well as *.... from young people who simply do not see us older people, or care about us.</p> <p>The ice epidemic scares me as it is indiscriminate.</p> <p>Suggestions: more police on streets (but <u>not</u> in clumps as they often seem to be – are they scared??)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Police ... cyclists - Skateboarders are good they never threaten me! - Educate security guards and bars & wait staff so they will look out for us older people - More buses? - Generally educate people to be more community minded, to look out for each other, including everybody (older people, Aboriginal, LGBTI, disabled) - ? community volunteer helpers in some way, but not to the extent of vigilantism.
15.	Is the F/book group going to stay on?
16.	<p>We need public toilets – not have to use hotel toilets.</p> <p>Prevent people using our streets, front yards as toilets.</p>
17.	<p>Riding Bike on pavement</p> <p>Danger to public</p> <p>Push Bike can be pushed – if they used the pavement!</p>
18.	<p>No lockouts in Newtown!</p> <p>It's prohibition by stealth.</p>
19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police the streets more. • Stop targeting venues & night life. • Do not introduce lock-out laws & take away our creativity & rights. • Work with businesses rather than make them ant-Newtown. Provide opportunity to put on safe events
20.	Businesses have not had a voice tonight. They do not want to be targeted by the council or police, so they keep quiet. They are also part of the community.
21.	Extend the lock-out law to Newtown
22.	<p>I am part of this community</p> <p>I would like to be involved & I'm sure other GLBTQI would also like to bring this community back.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <p>Community group to organise GLBTQI events (art/music/safety) on behalf of Newtown. The community making the community safe & bringing the weird back to Newtown.</p>

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23.	TOO MUCH TALK NOT ENOUGH ACTION!!! EXEPT FOR CLEANSING OF LOW ECO SOCIETY
24.	Strategic Alliance of Many groups! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advisory Council? - Voice - Representation - Community engagement - Acon -
25.	With such a large diverse and passionate Newtown community We don't have the right structure to ENGAGE – CONNECT → ACTION Can we establish a committee that represents all people, groups?
26.	Strongly second working with security in respect to “vibe” and safety of LGBTIQ, disabled, indigenous and minority-group individuals in local venues.
27.	I am so glad that you are going to address the problem of violence in Newtown from alcohol. Newtown has always felt safe but the later it gets at night now the less safe you feel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security guards must have GLBT training, plus bar staff. • Police patrolling is a must on weekends. • Rainbow colours could be displayed on pubs, gay patrons should feel safe. • I'm glad to be part of the Neighbourhood Centre. • Keep up the good work.
28.	A diverse steering committee for further action... Incl. local organisations But also long term residents, old punks. ... different cultures represented .. African community, Greek, former Yugoslav ... range of age groups. Free community training for security guards ... police?
29.	Bring back the dance party whistle = a 90's icon that started as a safety device for the gay community.
30.	Engage with people who have lived in/loved/ cared for Newtown over the decades who may not be here now. Newtown has a huge support base – across the world!
31.	Living in Newtown now, I have noticed a big change in night life, lots of negative vibes,

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	<p>Bad attitudes towards certain, groups of people, and just general reckless behaviour around our streets, I believe this is the outcome of not enough security around (lock out laws.) “enforcing” safety, and people’s attitude in our community now days,</p>
32.	<p>I try to avoid Newtown on weekend evenings now because I have been abused by homophobic comments. I am intimidated by the number of drunk groups of young people especially groups of drunk men.</p> <p>I don’t see much of a police presence and don’t feel protected.</p> <p>I’ve heard tonight suggestions that people don’t report abuse to police BUT if it’s verbal abuse by anonymous people the police aren’t going to be able to do anything about it. Can we start a register, maybe online or at NNC or other community organisation where people can make reports about incidents of abuse that don’t necessarily warrant police report.</p>
33.	<p>I think trying to improve police reporting would not solve the root cause. Part of a distrust for authority and a DIY approach is unique trait of this community. As such I think the only way to make this happen is for the police approach to the community to change.</p> <p>We don’t want to curb the violence in Newtown by turning into a suburb</p> <p>Drunk people aren’t going to call the cops on other drunk people, and nice Hippies are going to stop coming because they don’t like cops. And without the Hippies there is no one to dilute dickheads.</p>
34.	<p>Inclusion & reclaiming the streets</p> <p>The solution lies in reclaiming the activities that go on in Newtown on Friday/Saturday.</p> <p>Don’t stand by and let it happen.</p> <p>Community groups partnering with pubs to create a more inclusive atmosphere events & gigs that mirror our values.</p> <p>No more clubbing scenes!</p>
35.	<p>I’ve discussed the issues with friends who are adamant they don’t want Newtown to be “punished” by adoption of early closing laws.</p> <p>In the event that police are unwilling to increase patrols, for economic or whatever reasons, it could be worth negotiating with hotel owners to get them to commit to increasing security staff after midnight. This would be cheaper for them than to lose the late night business they currently enjoy, and would be their contribution towards assisting with a community problem that they are contributing to through their late night business.</p>