



Legislative Assembly for the
Australian Capital Territory

Standing Committee on Economics,
Industry and Recreation

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into Canberra's Night-Time Economy

Submission number: 022

Submitter: Name Withheld

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [LA Committee - Economics](#); [EMERSON](#); [TAIMUS.WG](#); [CARRICK](#); [LEE](#)
Subject: Inquiry - recent experience of Canberra nightlife [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 26 May 2026 9:28:55 AM

[REDACTED]
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Good morning

I understand the submissions process for the inquiry closed a couple of months ago, however I wanted to share a very recent experience that I think is worth the committee receiving.

I celebrated my 30th birthday [REDACTED] Saturday night [REDACTED] at a private venue in the city [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The venue itself was a private space, but had windows all around it. At about 8pm, one of my guests suddenly went outside, and brought in a man and lady (who we did not know). They had been just outside the venue and were being verbally abused by 3 young boys (teenagers, probably about 16 years old). They were moments away from being physically attacked and my friend had spotted it and intervened.

The 3 boys were abusing them because the man was wearing heels and some more feminine accessories. The boys were under the influence of something, and the look in their eyes was honestly terrifying. We had to bring the man and woman inside and barricade the doors after the 3 boys tried to break into the venue and threw objects through the doors. It was sheer luck that the group of my guests closest to the doors were very calm (and a couple of strong men) because the 3 boys looked like they were ready to hurt someone.

The staff at the venue were great and really responsive, they sent out an alert to their other venues to let them know of the 3 boys and to not let them into any venues. I was really rattled by this experience and it put a dampener on what I thought was going to be a fun, safe and enjoyable night. It made me upset further to hear the staff say that they see things like that happen every weekend now, and that “unfortunately there is a lot of anti-social behaviour happening in the city at the moment”.

The fact that the 3 boys were explicitly targeting someone for their appearance, and because they assumed their sexuality, is disgusting. I had some friends at the party who were gay, bi, lesbian and non-binary. It makes me feel sick that they are not safe or welcome in Canberra CBD. This was not an isolated incident, as I also witnessed another homophobic incident later that evening.

I had friends and family who had travelled from interstate to be at the party. The message

that they received is that it is not safe in Canberra city at night time. It was 8pm on a Saturday evening, in a popular and busy part of the city. This was not an issue about lack of lighting or construction sites. This is clearly a cultural issue that needs to change.

I have lived in different cities and travelled a fair bit. I love a good party and have had plenty of nights out in the last 12 or so years and seen some 'interesting' behaviours. This incident though has genuinely rattled me, and I will not be heading out into the city past dinner time for the foreseeable. I can only imagine how awful the man and woman felt during, and after, the incident. I suspect they will not feel safe in the city for a long time.

I have had some wonderful, fun and safe nights out in the city, but the vibe has undoubtedly changed since COVID and something more systemic needs to change. I am too young to be old and cranky – clearly something is not working if a 30 year old doesn't feel comfortable in the city on a Saturday night.

Thank you

