

# NSW 24-Hour Economy Strategy

A new state of night



24-Hour  
Economy

# Executive Summary

Welcome to *A New State of Night, the NSW 24-Hour Economy Strategy*. The refreshed Strategy builds on the work done by the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner over the last few years and sets out a new vision for the state's vibrant nocturnal landscape – one that includes regional communities, focuses on improving amenities for night-time workers, and puts an emphasis on data and measurement.

Through the Strategy, communities across NSW will flourish from the cultural, economic and social benefits of a thriving and connected 24-hour economy.

The Strategy builds on previous success where we celebrated the unique and authentic stories of Greater Sydney across the 24-hour spectrum. It also recognises alignment and commitment from NSW Government across the portfolio of arts and culture, tourism and live performance. We now plan to elevate Sydney and NSW as a global night-time economy leader. Underpinned by a revised strategic framework, the Strategy organises opportunities and incorporates measures for success.

Offering an updated blueprint for the work the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner will deliver across the state, the refreshed Strategy has adapted to tackle emerging challenges in the 24-hour economy.

Its five strategic pillars set out key actions and outcomes to grow NSW's 24-hour economy as follows:

- **An Enabling Regulatory Framework**  
Regulatory and legislative amendments aimed at bringing back vibrancy to enable diverse, sustainable and safe night-time economies across NSW.
- **Vibrant, Coordinated Precincts and Places**  
Fostering collaboration among stakeholders to support precinct building and place-based economies.
- **Night-time Workers, Culture and Industry Collaboration**  
Collaborate across government and industry to support night-time workers, businesses and cultural entrepreneurs to thrive in the 24-hour economy.
- **Safety, Mobility, Access and Inclusion**  
Enabling ease of movement to and from precincts while championing the wellbeing and safety of all within the night-time economy.
- **Authentic Storytelling**  
Celebrating the unique stories of our districts and promoting the experiences they offer to locals, visitors and workers.

The realisation of our vision and the successful execution of the actions outlined in this Strategy rely on the establishment of clear indicators and measures to evaluate its impact.

To achieve this, the Strategy will leverage the Data After Dark platform (page 66) and the Implementation Plan (page 67) to articulate specific measures and indicators aimed at tracking the delivery and effectiveness of the Strategy. This systematic approach ensures accountability and enables informed decision-making through the implementation process.

An economy that shuts down at night is only achieving half its potential. We are starting to see the economic and lifestyle benefits of a vibrant 24-hour economy across the state. By working together, industry, local councils, NSW Government agencies and the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner can truly activate NSW as a 'New State of Night'.

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# Statement of Intent

## Building solid foundations: Enriching the 24-hour economy with First Nations storytelling

The stories of First Nations peoples convey the culture and experience of First Nations people. Storytelling includes ways of knowing and experiencing the world, whether it be through spoken word, art, design, music, knowledge and other cultural expression. First Nations stories are connected to Country, the places we live, work and play on. They are old and new stories, of culture, kin and community. There is an opportunity for the 24-hour economy to activate Indigenous storytelling within our night-time landscapes. It must be done in a way that builds upon the solid foundations of respect.

In our advisory role to the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, we held discussions with First Nations people and applied our True Tracks® Indigenous engagement approach to develop a Strategy that enables respectful First Nations storytelling. One of the aims of the Strategy is to empower First Nations people to tell these stories. With true engagement with Indigenous people, there is potential to open up untold stories. By incorporating these narratives into the 24-hour economy, we can not only enrich the cultural tapestry of our precincts but also revitalise spaces where Indigenous voices have historically been silenced.

The inclusion of First Nations stories has many benefits: it deepens the audience's appreciation of Australian culture, fosters greater respect for First Nations knowledge, and promotes a unique cultural vibrancy. It also makes Indigenous audiences feel welcome to attend spaces where they previously felt unwelcomed. Safety and inclusion in our night-time

spaces must consider First Nations people. First Nations people must be able to see themselves reflected in precincts. We must create events, spaces and venues that focus on Indigenous storytelling.

The Strategy aims to activate meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities in the planning and implementation of night-time precincts. The keys are in the Strategy – valuing First Nations stories, developing relationships, enabling Indigenous leadership and involvement, fostering collaboration, consulting with people and following cultural protocols to respect integrity and sharing the benefits with First Nations peoples.

The inclusion of First Nations stories is the responsibility of all parts of the 24-hour economy, including government, businesses and partners. All levels must think about enacting cultural protocols. Governments and businesses must work together to develop capacity of First Nations peoples.

As we move forward, we must not only consult with but be led by and co-design with Indigenous communities. This ensures authenticity and respect in our cultural engagements and programming. This Strategy creates a pathway for government, business and First Nations people.

First Nations communities are the nation's original storytellers. Let's come together to celebrate and elevate First Nations culture in our 24-hour economy.

*Terri Janke & Company (2024)*

# Acknowledgement of Country

NSW Government acknowledges NSW's First Nations peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout NSW and recognises and respects their continuing connections to lands, waters and communities.

NSW Government pays respect to Elders past and present, and to all First Nations peoples, and recognises the continuation of diverse cultural, spiritual and educational practices.



*DEM MOB and Izzy at 4Elements HipHop Festival (4ESydney) | Credit: Benny Clark*

# From the Minister

As NSW's first Minister for the Night-time Economy, I am pleased to publish the state's refreshed 24-Hour Economy Strategy, with its new focus on night-time workers.

Arguing the case to rebuild Sydney's night-time economy is a mission I've been working on since my first speech in Parliament. Since taking office last year, it has been a key priority of the Minns Government, and we have started making progress in rebuilding our CBDs and town centres after dark.

After a decade of lockouts and lockdowns we are starting to turn our 24-hour economy around. We have cut outdated red tape that restricted disco balls in karaoke bars. We have stopped new neighbours shutting down established live music venues through serial noise complaints. We've cut licensing costs for venues that host entertainment, provided funding for venues and artists, and supported local businesses and councils to organise and tell the stories of their unique precincts. This important work supporting vibrancy will continue in the refreshed Strategy.

The key new direction in this refreshed Strategy is the broadening of our focus to all night-time economy workers. Initially, government's focus was on the hospitality and entertainment sectors which – given the enormous damage of lockouts, lockdowns and overregulation – was entirely appropriate. But now as those sectors rebuild across the state, it's time to turn our attention to the broader night-time economy and its 872,620 workers.

These nurses, doctors, paramedics, police, drivers, retailers, cleaners, security guards and workers in manufacturing and construction make up 21% of the NSW workforce. They are often paid less and have less secure work. They have fewer transport options, and even struggle to get a coffee before they start work or a decent meal when they finish. This growing group of essential workers deserves safe environments and adequate services. Meeting their needs represents an enormous opportunity for the night-time economy. But this requires us to plan as well for the night as we do for the day.

As the Strategy outlines, this work will begin by focusing on key precincts with high concentrations of night-time workers including the Port Kembla Industrial Precinct, the Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct, the Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct and the Western Sydney International Airport.

Another important new element in this Strategy is the use of data. It is crucial that as we open the night-time economy we track conditions on the ground. A key element in winning public trust to reopen our nightlife was the promise that it didn't come at the cost of safety. The Data After Dark platform will measure patronage, business and employment metrics and importantly, safety. This data will be reported each quarter to inform strategy and implementation.

There is so much opportunity to re-build and grow our 24-hour economy. Up until now this has been a pro-community, pro-business, pro-council Strategy. Today, we also make it a pro-worker plan.

**The Hon. John Graham MLC**  
*Special Minister of State,  
Minister for Roads,  
Minister for the Arts,  
Minister for Music and  
the Night-time Economy, and  
Minister for Jobs and Tourism*



# From the Commissioner

As at the date of publication, NSW is the only jurisdiction in the world with a 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and accompanying Strategy. Other jurisdictions (in increasing number) have appointed nightlife mayors or night mayors. These roles tend to focus predominantly on night-time governance and night-time economy. Night-time economy is generally accepted to be commercial activity that occurs between 6pm and 6am. As such it's a broader concept than 'nightlife and entertainment', with the community of practice sometimes differentiating night-time economy as 'core' (i.e. pertaining to food, drink and entertainment) and 'non-core' (i.e. everything else including retail or transportation).

In this context, a common misunderstanding is that the goal of a 24-hour economy is simply to achieve 24-hour licensing. While that might be an outcome of a 24-hour economy strategy, it is not the focus. This is because 24-hour economy thinking pertains to asset utilisation (i.e. the ability to optimise and achieve efficient output from an asset). In the present case, that's the state of NSW. The ambition then becomes one of establishing flexibility for that ecosystem – including venues, airports, modes of transportation, libraries, shopping centres, gyms and so on – to trade to meet the demands or amenity needs of its users (i.e. the citizenry). And of course with due regard to safety, workers' rights, sustainability and quiet enjoyment of private property.

This thinking has been challenging for NSW. Our regulatory framework in some regards still has its penal colony roots showing, stemming from a time when our first non-Indigenous residents arrived and were locked up at night. But that was nearly 250 years ago. In order to be a world-class state that provides equity of amenity to its citizens irrespective of the hours they choose or are compelled to work; for us to meet the challenge of climate change; for us to achieve a stable operating for businesses that comprise the going-out economy, we need to optimise our regulatory system and the way the many participants in that ecosystem operate, with 24-hour economy thinking in mind.

The original 24-Hour Economy Strategy, published in 2020, was only for Greater Sydney, but I was always aware that the principles of our work could be applied to all parts of NSW, and so I am excited that this refreshed Strategy is published with that ambition now formalised. Furthermore, I am grateful for the work of Terri Janke and her team, who have shaped the Strategy's approach to First Nations participation and storytelling. It was an omission of the original Strategy and I am grateful to the Elders and other First Nations people who gave generously of their time and knowledge in steering our team in the absence of that express direction.

I also welcome the new areas relating both to sustainability in the night-time economy and the 24-hour workforce. Reducing waste and our carbon footprint will be critical to thriving night-time economies. Making sure our night workers enjoy the same access to services and amenities as the 9am–5pm community will provide broader benefits for the community and the sector.

I am deeply grateful to the many colleagues inside and outside of government who have contributed to this refreshed Strategy. As an Office, we work with over a dozen state government agencies, scores of councils, and industry representatives from retail, music, sport, culture and beyond.

I am hugely optimistic about the future of our state and our 24-hour economy. I invite you to join me in delivering the work under the Strategy.

**Michael Rodrigues**  
*24-Hour Economy  
Commissioner*



# Introduction

## From lockouts to liberation

This is the second 24-Hour Economy Strategy to be published by NSW Government. The first, published in 2020, established an Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and laid building blocks to revive a sector hamstrung from an era of over-regulation and a lack of government coordination and collaboration.

Since the release of the original Strategy, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a fundamental impact on the way the 24-hour economy, and major urban areas themselves, operate. The sector was hit hard with a decline of 93,000 jobs in the core night-time economy industries across NSW between 2019 and 2022 (Anna Edwards, *Measuring Success of the 24-Hour Economy Strategy, 2024*).

The appointment of Australia's first Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy acknowledges the important role the night-time economy has to play in achieving the NSW Government's goal of becoming Australia's first trillion-dollar state by 2030 (NSW Treasury, 2019). Capitalising on NSW Government's record investment in public infrastructure, the Office continues its strong focus on night-time precinct development in urban areas across NSW.

The outcomes we have achieved lay to rest tired clichés about NSW's – and in particular Sydney's – nightlife being dull. There is more work to be done to bring more vibrancy back to our state, and our plan of action is set out in several recommendations. However, we start from a position of strength: namely the resurgence over recent years of our night-time economy.

NSW has been leading the pack in its night-time economy recovery nationally with the largest absolute increase in core night-time economy employment between the 2021 and 2022 financial years at 14,000 more jobs, and the number of core night-time economy establishments continuing to grow to 45,000, ahead of Victoria. Sales have rebounded to above pre-pandemic levels (Anna Edwards, *Measuring the Australian Night Time Economy 2021-22, 2024*). This does not come without its challenges, including the pandemic having cost many creatives their jobs (Council of the City of Sydney, 2023) and the loss of live performance venues. We are working to counter both these challenges. The impact of a rising cost of living is another issue facing the sector.

The unique circumstances of recent years have allowed us to accelerate some aspects of reform, such as transforming many urban centres and main streets to accommodate alfresco dining and performance; removing outdated and cumbersome regulations; and investing millions of dollars into our creative night-time sector.

We continue to work with Destination NSW to build Brand NSW through telling authentic stories of our night-time precincts with a focus on our rich First Nations arts and culture and our vibrant culturally and socially diverse night-time precincts. Our Data After Dark platform and Vibrancy Reforms work reflect an evidence-based, collaborative, cross-government approach to reducing legislative barriers, tracking and growing the NSW night-time economy.

In helping night-time businesses to become more environmentally sustainable, we aim to support sustainable environmental and resources management. In fostering the development of the 24-hour workforce, the Office recognises that people are the innovation engine of the night-time economy.

As a new area of focus for the Office, this Strategy plays a key role in changing the focus of the night-time economy from a leisure-based economy to one that supports a myriad of night workers – some in the entertainment industries, and others in critical sectors such as healthcare, transport, freight and manufacturing. The Office will consult with industry to understand the key challenges and barriers with government to develop appropriate policy measures and initiatives to sustainably develop night-workforce participation.

The way people interact with the 24-hour economy has also changed and evolved, both in Australia and globally. Changes to working patterns and a growth in working from home have radically altered the way our daily lives are spent and how we interact with our communities.

Alongside these societal and economic changes there has been disruption, but the market has also adapted to changing trends. This Strategy seeks to interpret this new environment and make recommendations to enhance it even further.

To reflect these changes, the Strategy presents an increased focus on the 24-hour economy, rather than night-time economy (economic activity taking place between 6pm and 6am), as an economic framework that extends productivity and activity beyond traditional business hours.

This shift is needed to service and grow essential 24-hour precincts across NSW such as the upcoming Western Sydney Airport operating 24/7, Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct, and Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct.

Shifting from a predominantly night-time economy to a 24-hour economy does not mean we advocate 24-hour entertainment across our cities, but rather entertainment, services, and amenities contained within specific areas at specific times.

This Strategy retains some of the original's initiatives and values, while updating and refining policies for a new environment. It will continue to deliver and build on programs and policies that have demonstrated their worth.

This Strategy aligns with *Creative Communities* (Create NSW, 2024) and with the refresh of the *Visitor Economy Strategy 2030* (Destination NSW, 2024) and the development of the *Contemporary Music Strategy* (Sound NSW, 2024).

Fundamentally, this Strategy demonstrates an iron-clad commitment from NSW Government to deliver vibrant, welcoming and accessible 24-hour precincts across NSW.



Jaipur Sweets in Harris Park | Credit: Destination NSW

## Vision

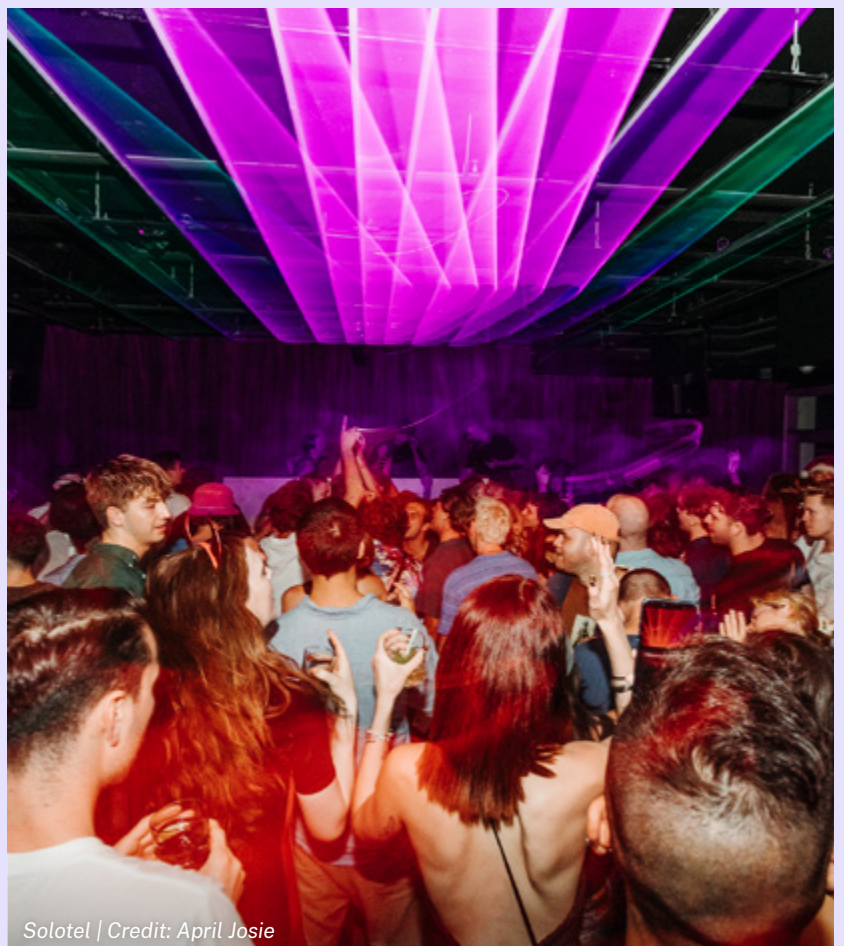
To forge globally acclaimed 24-hour precincts, fostering an environment where businesses and workforces can thrive, communities flourish and individuals connect in a vibrant, inclusive after-dark experience.





## What the Strategy will do

-  Create a framework for the NSW 24-hour economy that promotes confidence, shared responsibility and alignment across stakeholders while creating opportunities for innovation.
-  Provide a platform for advocacy across the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and its stakeholders to further the success of the 24-hour economy.
-  Support meaningful evaluation through achievable and measurable actions.
-  Position NSW as a global leader in night-time economy thought leadership.



Solotel | Credit: April Josie

## What has happened since the last Strategy was published?

**2020** • **September:** The 24-Hour Economy Strategy is released, the original blueprint for revitalising Greater Sydney's night-time economy.

**2021** • **March:** The 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, Michael Rodrigues, is appointed, tasked with building and leading a team that will implement the 24-Hour Economy Strategy.

• **August:** First edition of Local Government Toolkit is released.

• **October–December:** CBDs Revitalisation Program Round 1 is rolled out under the NSW Government COVID-19 Economic Recovery Strategy, funding six major event series including Sydney Street Parties delivered by the Office.



*CBDs Revitalisation Program | Credit: Belinda Rolland*

• **November:** The Alfresco Restart initiatives are rolled out, including The Festival of Place in collaboration with Transport for NSW where local streets were revitalised with murals, art installations, laneway cinemas and more to kickstart a 24-hour economy.

**2022** • **March–October:** The Office delivers Rounds 2 and 3 of the \$50 million CBDs Revitalisation Program, funding 61 projects across Greater Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong to support arts, culture and hospitality events, draw people back to town centres, and drive social connection.

• **August:** Pilot of the Purple Flag safety and vibrancy program commences, which included precincts in Sydney CBD, Parramatta, Lakemba and Marrickville during the pilot period.



*Accredited Purple Flag area | Credit: YCK*

• **October:** Inaugural Uptown Accelerator of skills-building workshops for more than 20 districts across Greater Sydney.

At the same time, the Hospitality Concierge is launched, providing business owners with a more streamlined process for engaging with NSW Government.

**2023** • **March–September:** The Culture Up Late and Culture Up Late Western Sydney programs are launched, enabling cultural institutions across Greater Sydney to provide evening access to their exhibitions and performances.

• **April:** Following a pilot phase by NSW Government, Enmore Road is declared by Inner West Council as the first Special Entertainment Precinct.

**May:** The Office hosts the inaugural NEON International Night-time Economy Forum, attracting ‘night mayors’ from London, New York City, Paris, Montreal and Vienna to discuss global and domestic topics with industry stakeholders.



**October:** The Night Time Industry Association launches five best-practice guidebooks for industry.

**November:** NSW Parliament passes the Vibrancy Reforms, a package of legislation that removes red tape and boosts NSW’s night-time economy, benefiting live music, dining and creative sectors.

At the same time, the Office launches Venues Unlocked program in partnership with Sound NSW to support venues offering regular live performance programming and announces the release of the Creative Footprint Sydney study conducted by VibeLab to benchmark the cultural strength and impact of the city’s music and nightlife ecosystem.

**December:** Laws commence that officially establish the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner’s expanded, statewide remit. At the same time the Office releases an enhanced version of the Local Government Night-time Economy Toolkit, a guided resource to assist councils in working with businesses and NSW Government to develop and grow their local going-out districts.

2024

**February:** The first Live Performance Venue Accelerator takes place, providing dozens of small hospitality venues with skills and knowledge in establishing and promoting live entertainment programming.

**February-May:** 21 expressions of interest received from local councils considering establishing Special Entertainment Precincts.

**March:** The Hollywood Quarter precinct in Surry Hills is activated for Great Southern Nights, the first Uptown district to take part in the statewide music festival.



**May:** The Office commences its regional roadshow, engaging with key stakeholders in Newcastle, Lower Hunter, Central Coast and Illawarra-Shoalhaven areas. The first Open Mike Night outside of Greater Sydney is held in Wollongong.

**June:** Uptown Accelerator Program (Round 3) is expanded to the Six Cities Region and evaluation of Purple Flag Pilot program is completed.

## What we heard

In preparing this Strategy refresh, we consulted stakeholders from many sectors across NSW. Here are some strong themes gleaned from focus groups, interviews, sentiment surveys and independent research:



The need to focus on the 24-hour workforce as the engine drivers of our 24-hour economy and understand their barriers to participation.



The lack of reliable and late-running public transport can act as a barrier to patrons going out and staying out later. Lack of access to rideshare and taxis outside Sydney can also be a barrier to people going out.



Sydney's nightlife has rebounded well after the pandemic, but audience habits have changed. Patrons increasingly look for 'unique' or different experiences when going out, often with less focus on alcohol.



Deregulation of rules affecting the night-time economy has been welcomed, but more needs to be done, and recent changes to noise and sound policy will provide more reasonable, simplified management and counter vexatious complaints from a minority.



The nightlife offering has also changed across the state. Some examples of the increased diversity of offerings available at night are: the largest video games and entertainment venue in the southern hemisphere, Fortress Sydney; suburban 24-hour libraries; idiosyncratic golf and board game hotels; CBD country and western bars; and harbourside cinemas and late-night food markets.



Striking the right balance between safety and vibrancy is important, particularly in relation to policing and security. The relationship between industry and police has improved significantly, and there is opportunity to build further on this.



The decentralisation of nightlife has largely been welcomed and is likely to remain a long-term trend. While the Sydney CBD is adjusting to changed visitation habits – with different peaks and troughs across the week requiring changes to operating models – many main streets across other parts of the city and state have seen an uplift in night-time venues and trade.



Strong support exists for continued state government collaboration on night-time economy policy, particularly across key agencies such as the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, Destination NSW, Liquor & Gaming NSW, Create NSW, Sound NSW, Department for Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, and Transport for NSW.



Cost of living pressures remain high among residents across the state, with a preference for affordable options at night.



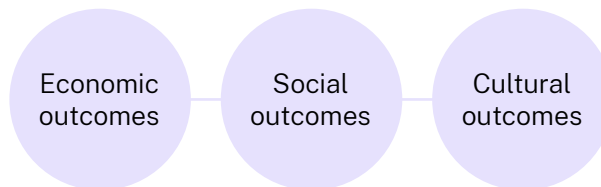
There is an opportunity to build better understanding and overlay of all state agency precinct initiatives, their differences, purpose and how they interact with one another.

# Strategic framework

A strategic framework has been developed to organise the opportunities that exist alongside a set of overarching success measures and enablers.

## Overarching indicators

This set of outcomes will measure the effectiveness of this Strategy. Success measures consist of economic, social and cultural outcomes and are described in more detail under *Measuring Success*.



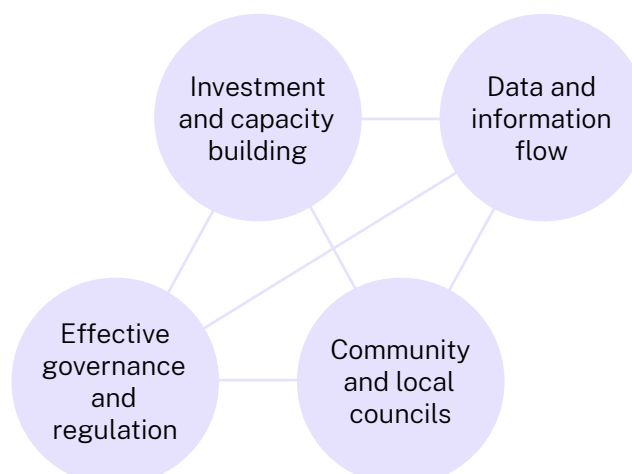
## Strategic pillars

Five strategic pillars make up the core of the Strategy. Each pillar comprises a range of actions that have been identified to further grow the 24-hour economy across the state.



## Underpinning enablers

Four underpinning enablers that sit across the pillars are broad functions that will underpin the effective delivery of the 24-Hour Economy Strategy. They must be effectively managed to enable the actions within the Strategy.



## A delivery framework for the 24-hour Economy Strategy

The Strategy is the blueprint for the work that the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner will deliver across the state. To ensure the successful delivery of the Strategy, an Implementation Plan will be developed in collaboration with NSW Government and stakeholders.

The Data After Dark platform will help measure the success of the 24-Hour Economy Strategy and Implementation Plan. The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner will be supported by the 24-Hour Economy Advisory Council and a 24-Hour Economy Community of Practice to deliver and monitor the Strategy.

## Empowering the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner

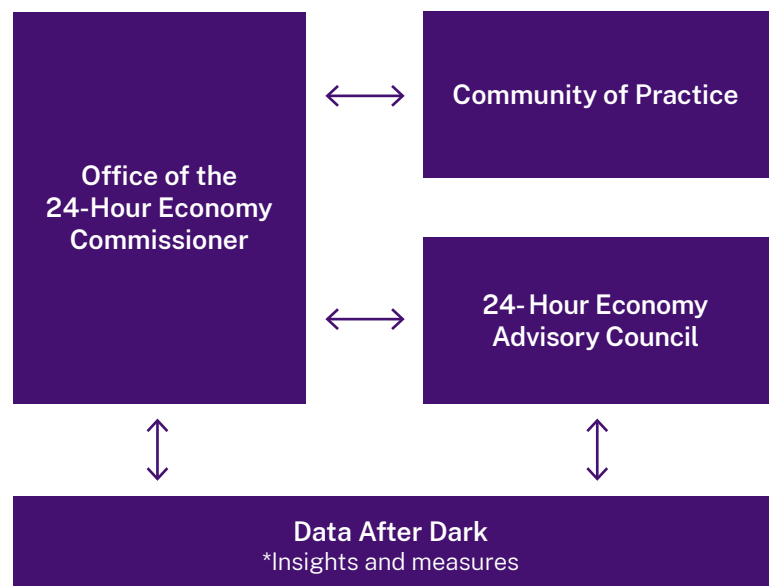
NSW is the first state jurisdiction in the world to appoint a 24-Hour Economy Commissioner. Under the *24-Hour Economy Commissioner Act 2023* (Parliament of NSW, 2023), the Commissioner's role is a statutory appointment. The Commissioner's remit has also expanded from Greater Sydney to all of NSW.

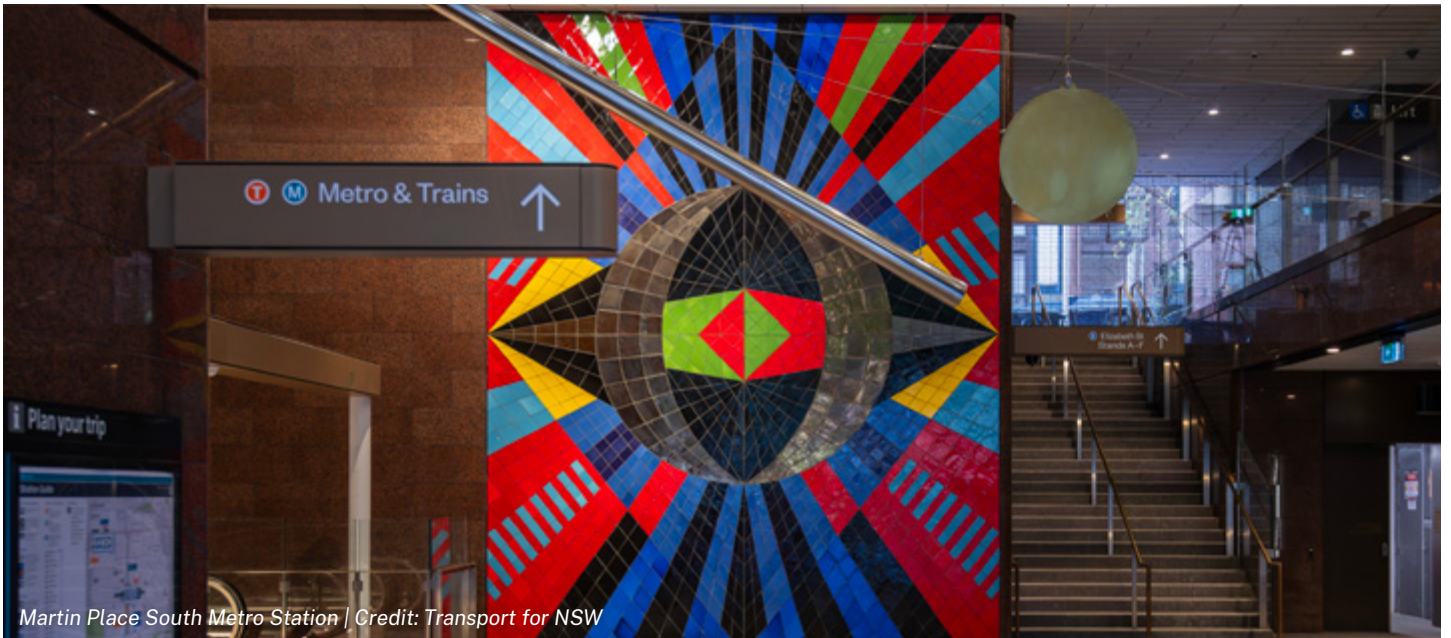
This change recognises the importance of the role and solidifies the night-time economy as a permanent priority for NSW Government.

Having a permanent Commissioner also ensures a single, coherent approach with an appropriate level of authority to resolve cross-government challenges relating to the night-time economy. The Commissioner has the authority to provide oversight, coordination and advocacy for a mix of diverse cultural, social and business activities and experiences across the night-time economy. The Commissioner also brings an evidence-based perspective on the function of the night-time economy across government agencies and is empowered to provide independent advice and recommendations and reports to the Minister and Parliament.



## Delivery and Coordination

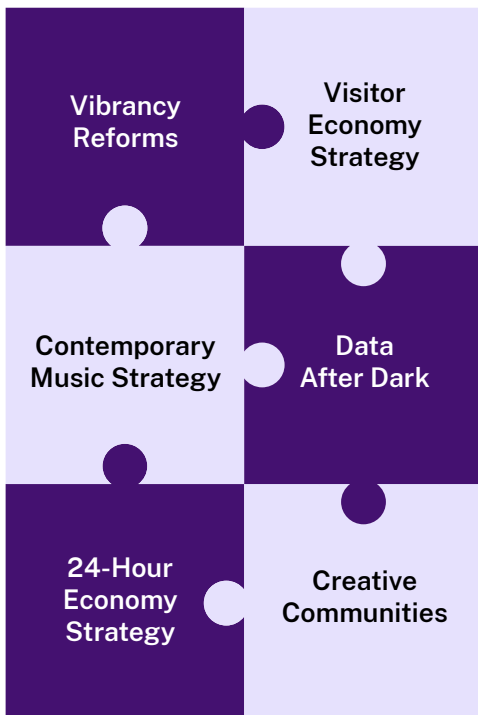




Martin Place South Metro Station | Credit: Transport for NSW

## Implementation Plan

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner will develop an Implementation Plan that is fit for purpose across the state. The Implementation Plan will deliver on the actions in this Strategy, allowing for specific initiatives and collaborations to deliver on the outcomes outlined for each pillar. This Strategy will align with intradepartmental strategies, initiatives and policy reforms outlined below.



In developing the Implementation Plan, the Office will consider different perspectives for each of the pillars and actions with a focus on access, equity and inclusion.



### First Nations First

Acknowledging the traditional custodianship of the land across the entire state and elevating the perspectives, knowledge and aspirations of First Nations people within the night-time economy.



### Increase opportunity for women

Recognising the unique challenges and opportunities faced by women in the night-time economy and commitment to enhance their participation, safety and economic empowerment.



### Diverse communities

Embracing the cultural, linguistic and social diversity of communities within NSW, ensuring their voices are heard and their interests are represented within the night-time economy.



### Accessibility and inclusion

Prioritising accessibility and inclusion in all aspects of the Implementation Plan, ensuring that the night-time economy is accessible to people of all abilities, gender identities, family types (including LGBTQI+), backgrounds and generations.



### Regional areas

Recognising the unique characteristics, challenges and opportunities for regional areas to support the growth and sustainability of their evening and night-time economies.

# The Strategy at a glance

1

## An Enabling Regulatory Framework

### Objective

Enable a sustainable, safe and diverse 24-hour economy

### Actions

- ① Offering straightforward, balanced entertainment sound management
- ② Creating and supporting vibrant, coordinated precincts
- ③ Making the most of outdoor spaces

2

## Vibrant, Coordinated Precincts and Places

### Objective

Foster a collaborative approach to building an environment where the 24-hour economy can thrive

### Actions

- ① Developing diverse and vibrant precincts which reflect communities across the state
- ② Continuing to deliver our precinct development and accreditation programs
- ③ Embedding 24-hour economy design principles in relevant major NSW renewal and development precincts

3

## Night-time Workers, Culture and Industry Collaboration

### Objective

Collaborate across government and industry to support night-time workers, businesses and cultural entrepreneurs to thrive in the 24-hour economy

### Actions

- ① Developing a new strategy for NSW's 24-hour workforce
- ② Establishing an independent 24-Hour Economy Advisory Council
- ③ Supporting the delivery of the *Creative Communities Policy*, *NSW Visitor Economy and Contemporary Music Strategies*

4

## Safety, Mobility, Access and Inclusion

### Objective

Enable easy movement to and from 24-hour economy precincts and champion the wellbeing and safety of workers and patrons in the 24-hour economy

### Actions

- ① Refreshing the Safety, Mobility and Wellbeing Advisory Group
- ② Fostering a safe and inclusive night-time economy
- ③ Developing transport and mobility initiatives that increase transport options at night

5

## Authentic Storytelling

### Objective

Internationally recognised 24-hour precincts delivering exceptional experiences to locals, visitors and workers celebrating their local stories

### Actions

- ① Marketing and promotion of night-time precincts across NSW
- ② Elevating the role of First Nations storytellers in the night-time economy
- ③ Promoting unique night-time culture

- ④ Implementing streamlined, contemporary liquor licensing processes to support diversification and growth
- ⑤ Planning frameworks that support creative spaces, connection and inclusion

#### Delivery Partners

Department of Climate Change, Energy and Water (Environment Protection Authority), Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport (Create NSW, Destination NSW Liquor & Gaming NSW), Department of Customer Service, Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure (Office of Local Government), NSW Health, NSW Police Force, The Cabinet Office, Transport for NSW

- ④ Developing a local government program to support growth of the night-time economy
- ⑤ Building environmental sustainability capacity within precincts
- ⑥ Delivering a business-to-business digital platform connecting districts to opportunities

#### Delivery Partners

Department of Climate Change, Energy and Water, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport (Destination NSW, Office of Sport), Department of Customer Service, Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure (Office of Local Government, Sydney Olympic Park Authority), Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Premier's Department (Regional Coordination and Delivery), Transport for NSW

- ④ Supporting community-led festivals and activations
- ⑤ Providing support for the Hospitality Concierge and Cultural Front Door service
- ⑥ Informing, educating and partnering with industry
- ⑦ Continuing the Live Performance Venue Program with Sound NSW

#### Delivery Partners

Department of Communities and Justice (Multicultural NSW), Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport (Create NSW, Destination NSW, Liquor & Gaming NSW), Department of Customer Service, Department of Education, Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure (Sydney Olympic Park Authority)

- ④ Developing transport initiatives with a focus on safety, access and inclusion
- ⑤ Developing transport initiatives which support city shaping and precinct making

#### Delivery Partners

Department of Communities and Justice (Office of the Women's Safety Commissioner), Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport (Liquor & Gaming NSW), Department of Customer Service (SafeWork NSW), NSW Health, NSW Police Force, Transport for NSW, Premier's Department (Regional Coordination and Delivery)

- ④ Continuing thought leadership and opportunities positioning NSW on a global stage as a 24-hour centre
- ⑤ Leveraging international and domestic major events
- ⑥ Annual publication of the State of the Night report

#### Delivery Partners

Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport (Create NSW, Destination NSW, Office of Sport), Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Department of Community and Justice (Multicultural NSW), Premier's Department (Aboriginal Affairs NSW, Study NSW)







Full Set Festival, Globe Lane, Wollongong | Credit: City of Wollongong

# An Enabling Regulatory Framework

## Objective

### Enable a sustainable, safe and diverse 24-hour economy

A healthy 24-hour economy needs a regulatory environment that supports venues and creative organisations and practitioners to open, diversify and grow –and to work together. Our framework needs to incentivise and support diverse activities and businesses to meet community needs.

Regulation around noise, planning and liquor licensing is being streamlined, updated and simplified through a series of legislative reforms announced in late 2023. These reforms incentivise and enable live music and night-time businesses to thrive. They aim to bring sector regulation in line with contemporary going-out behaviours and expectations, improve government processes and encourage more people to go out, closer to home and across the state.

This means venues and communities in NSW will have the opportunity to reach their full economic and creative potential –especially at night.

These Vibrancy Reforms are a cross-government initiative led by the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and developed in consultation with key government agencies, industry, councils and other stakeholders. The first round of reforms was introduced with the passage of NSW Government's *24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Act 2023* (Parliament of NSW, 2023). The Office will lead further policy reform work in 2024 and beyond to continue this mission.

# How will we do this?

Government will continue to deliver regulation that enhances our nightlife and creativity through:

- ① Offering straightforward, balanced entertainment sound management
- ② Creating and supporting vibrant, coordinated precincts
- ③ Making the most of outdoor spaces
- ④ Implementing streamlined, contemporary liquor licensing processes to support businesses to open, diversify and grow
- ⑤ Planning frameworks that support creative spaces, connection and inclusion.

## 1.1 Straightforward, balanced entertainment sound management

Live music, venues and events make communities more creative and connected, providing valuable employment opportunities and a more diverse night-time offering. However, overlapping regulation has caused confusion and uncertainty, increasing costs and limiting live music.

As of 1 July 2024, Liquor & Gaming NSW is the lead regulator for entertainment sound coming from licensed premises. This change enables a sensible and consistent approach to managing entertainment sound associated with licensed premises and streamlines the complaints process for everyone involved. New rules around complaints management recognise the value of live performance with clearer, more robust tests for formal complaints, fairer complaint resolution that looks for solutions, and stronger consideration of order of occupancy. This prevents circumstances where complaints from newcomers to a neighbourhood can reduce or even shut down an established venue's entertainment or operating hours. More information can be found at: [liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au](https://liquorandgaming.nsw.gov.au)

The Office will continue to work with venues and event organisers, councils and government agencies to identify further opportunities for fairer, more streamlined sound management that supports live performance in various environments and meets community expectations.



Smoke Bar at Barangaroo House | Credit: Patrick Stevenson

## 1.2 Creating and supporting vibrant, coordinated precincts

Positive experiences are found in local precincts that are welcoming, well managed and offer a rich mix of things to do. More coordination is needed to support these precincts, including the right incentives and structures for councils and businesses to work together.

By establishing and supporting diverse and inclusive going-out precincts, NSW Government will empower councils and businesses to take advantage of this demand and enhance their night-time offerings.

Well-planned precincts also enable:

- 9 easy and accessible late-night public transport and point-to-point services;
- 9 a wide range of people going out for different activities;
- 9 visitors to understand and experience local offerings;
- 9 good governance, certainty and opportunity for local business operators; and
- 9 safety programs, wayfinding, natural surveillance and street lighting.

NSW Government is supporting the growth of going-out destinations by offering additional trading-hour extensions for participating venues in Special Entertainment Precincts, including two hours on nights they offer live music, and one hour on other nights of the week, subject to eligibility criteria. There are also new powers for councils to automatically adjust trading hours and noise standards for businesses in Special Entertainment Precincts to support diverse late-night offerings.

Further work is planned to empower councils and NSW Government to protect creative and cultural spaces and create new ones. This may include changes to planning policy to encourage performance or creative spaces and further enhancement of the Special Entertainment Precinct framework. This will increase employment opportunities for creative workers and make these areas more vibrant.



## 1.3 Making the most of outdoor spaces

NSW's response to the COVID-19 pandemic showed how well our state can deliver alfresco events, and made it clear that communities love outdoor public spaces for social connection and cultural performance. However, slow and complex application processes can prevent businesses and patrons making the most of outdoor spaces.

The Office will continue to support cross-government work to achieve quicker, light-touch approvals, and help councils ease the way for activation and events.

The temporary exempt development pathway for outdoor dining on private land and registered clubs – such as car parks and bowling greens – was made permanent in December 2023. These rules benefit a wide range of businesses including pubs, clubs, restaurants and artisan food and drink businesses such as microbreweries. In addition, councils are permanently empowered to approve temporary street closures for outdoor dining, performance and other activities.

Councils are also being supported to make it easier for creative workers and community groups to stage pop-up events and festivals. This includes street closures and global pre-approvals for event sites.

The Office will continue its work with regulators to identify more streamlined pathways to make use of outdoor space to benefit communities.



## 1.4 Supporting hospitality businesses to open, diversify and grow

There has been strong feedback that outdated and overlapping regulation prevents businesses from opening and adapting to their customers' needs.

A common-sense approach to risk is being adopted for liquor regulation that reflects changes in the sector's composition and going-out behaviours, responds to changing community demands, and streamlines licensing processes to provide additional flexibility for businesses to grow and diversify.

Significant progress has been made, including a new, streamlined, single-consultation process to apply for a liquor licence which will reduce duplication and costs for businesses, reduce consultation fatigue for stakeholders, and empower the community to provide meaningful feedback direct to decision-makers.

Venues can also take up meaningful incentives to feature live music and performances. This is aimed at driving employment opportunities for creative workers and entertainment options for audiences.

These incentives include:

- 9 extended trading of up to two hours for live music and performance venues on nights they offer live music, and
- 9 an 80% discount on liquor licensing fees for live music and performance venues.

Other initiatives include standardised trading periods during the week and expanding the range of venues that can access extended trading for special events.

Further opportunities for more cohesive liquor licensing and planning frameworks will be explored in close consultation with Liquor & Gaming NSW, industry, councils, police and other stakeholders to ensure a balanced, sensible approach to processes and risk.

## 1.5 Planning frameworks supporting creativity and connection

As our town centres and going-out districts mature, there is more to do to encourage and protect diverse nightlife experiences.

There are barriers facing live music and performance venues in relation to planning approvals and conditions, and this limits their ability to grow and thrive. Too many rules also limit how businesses and event organisers operate outdoors, making it challenging to use public land to stage events and activate outdoor spaces.

Following the 2023 reforms, NSW Government has committed to further reforms to support creative and cultural activity, simplify processes, provide easier pathways to staging outdoor and cultural activities at various scales, pop-ups and events, and support flexibility and diversification in our hospitality sector.

These reforms will be designed in close consultation with industry, councils, creatives and the community.



Dulwich Hill | Credit: Ross Coffey



# Vibrant, Coordinated Precincts and Places

## Objective

### Foster a collaborative approach to building an environment where the 24-hour economy can thrive

Great cities offer an array of 24-hour precincts and districts, each offering unique experiences to diverse audiences. Picture the iconic laneways of London's Shoreditch, the shimmering neon of Tokyo's Shinjuku, or the 24-hour hustle of New York's Meatpacking District.

How we nurture and plan for these areas is important and involves getting regulation and place-making right while managing the different audiences that use the areas across the day and night.

Recently, Sydney and NSW have seen a proliferation of exciting new and developing going-out districts. The key to these places' appeal lies in their ability to offer different experiences to a broad mix of audiences.

Preserving a thriving night-time economy while upholding the vitality of the day economy is paramount. Managing a seamless transition between daytime and night-time activities is essential for fostering a cohesive and sustainable precinct, ensuring its continued prosperity.

The future of our 24-hour economy lies in the rebuilding of our state, precinct by precinct. As our population grows and more

communities form, access to safe, vibrant nightlife depends on providing more local and diverse options. More people want to spend time in their local areas.

This trend is supported by NSW Government's Transport Oriented Development Program encouraging sustainable, mixed-use development around transport nodes and aiming to create vibrant and walkable communities.

The pandemic accelerated the decentralisation of the night-time economy from CBDs, evident in Greater Sydney's Blacktown and Canterbury Bankstown (Anna Edwards, *Measuring Success of the 24-Hour Economy Strategy, 2024*), with respective growths of 39% and 23% in night-time businesses.

Each precinct's distinct culture is invaluable, and we must preserve this uniqueness to avoid a homogenous culture. The precinct-based approach meets the rising demand for local options, fostering vibrant, dynamic communities. We embrace a future where local precincts thrive as the heart of our 24-hour economy, offering diverse and enriching experiences for all.

# How will we do this?

Government will support the continued growth and development of going-out districts through a number of initiatives:

- ① Developing diverse and vibrant precincts which reflect communities across the state
- ② Continuing to deliver our precinct development and accreditation programs
- ③ Embedding 24-hour economy design principles in relevant major NSW renewal and development precincts
- ④ Developing a local government program to support growth of the night-time economy
- ⑤ Building environmental sustainability capacity within precincts
- ⑥ Delivering a business-to-business online platform to showcase vibrant, coordinated, going-out precincts and connect them to opportunities.

## The future of precincts

We understand that the future of economic and community development is place-based. We know that different communities may partake in different state government programs and initiatives depending on their ambitions and needs. NSW Government is undertaking strategic precinct work at a range of scales to support a variety of outcomes for communities and businesses.

Great Going Out Districts (see page 34) offers a snapshot of some of these precinct initiatives, depicting their interconnections and differences.

In some instances, initiatives may intersect and provide an opportunity to enhance precinct development. Precinct initiatives such as the Special Entertainment Precincts and the Community Improvement Districts model may be formalised under legislative frameworks. Given this, these initiatives are considered mature models of precinct development.

NSW Government will develop an outline of each of the precinct development initiatives that details the objectives, delivery methods, rationale, leadership, participant eligibility, collaboration opportunities and project boundaries.



Chinatown, Burwood | Credit: Destination NSW



# Twenty Four Hour Tea Break

The Randwick Health & Care Precinct welcomes you for a Tea Break with artist Lauren Brincat.

Thursday 14 December, 10am

The artist and her team will open for breakfast health workers 24-hour day for our community.

Throughout the day and night, 'Tea Break' will be served and music, art and food.

This is a space for health workers with the artist, Lauren Brincat, April 2024.

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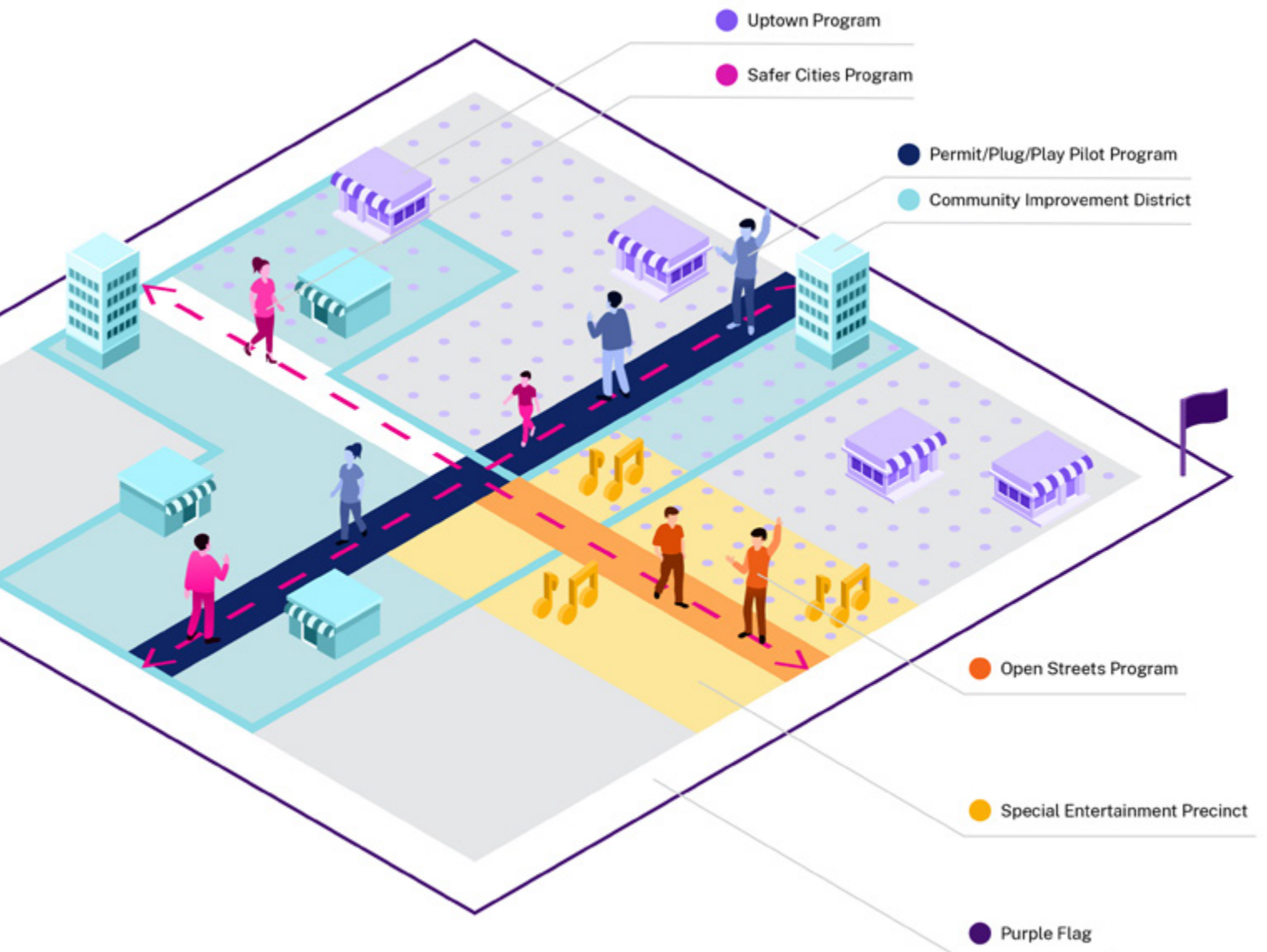
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# Intersecting precinct development initiatives



## Transport for NSW initiatives

### ● Safer Cities Program

#### What

A multi-year trial program to help improve perceptions of safety in our cities and towns, particularly for women, girls and gender diverse people.

#### Why

Women are twice as likely not to feel safe in public spaces in NSW at night compared to men. A sense of safety influences how all people choose to move around our cities and towns.

#### How

Transport for NSW led a \$30 million investment to pilot initiatives co-designed with local communities to deliver placemaking and capacity building initiatives.

An evaluation will be undertaken to design potential future iterations.

### ● Community Improvement District Pilot Program

#### What

A multi-year pilot program across NSW that delivers improvements to local spaces including outdoor dining, seating, landscaping, public art, shopfront activations and signage.

#### Why

People are increasingly attracted to well-designed high streets with greening, parks, slower traffic speed and wider footpaths, connecting people with their communities.

#### How

A \$5.25 million multi-year pilot program with eligible applicants including councils, companies limited by guarantee, and incorporated associations.

### ● Permit, Plug, Play Pilot Program

#### What

A partnership grant program under the Vibrant Streets Package to help councils streamline approval processes for temporary road-closure enabled events and deliver enabling place infrastructure.

#### Why

To reduce cost and complexity to deliver street-based events in NSW while maximising strategic investment across key locations and supporting local collaboration.

#### How

Through a pilot grant program in collaboration with councils.

### ● Open Streets Program

#### What

A grant program under the Vibrant Streets Package for NSW councils to temporarily close streets to vehicles for community events and activations.

#### Why

Street activations are expensive. Supplementing Permit, Plug, Play with grants will help councils transform our streets into vibrant, walkable public spaces for people to enjoy and safely access.

#### How

A demand-driven grant program comprising of grants up to the value of \$150,000 per council.



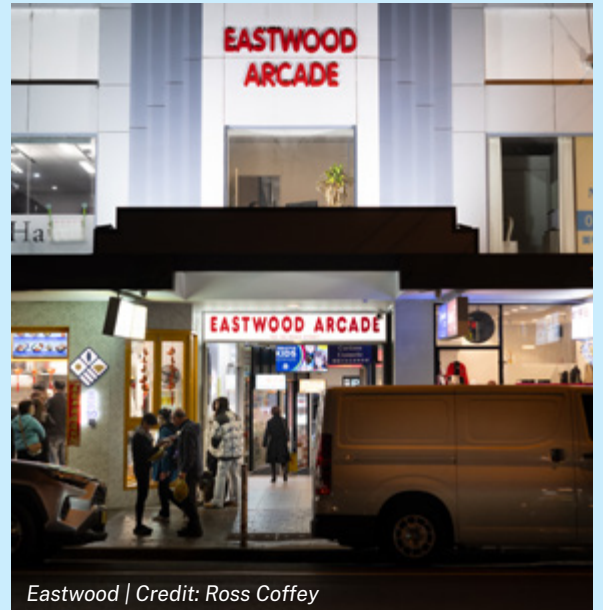
Open Streets, Wagga Wagga | Credit: Anna Kucera



Civic Cinema in Newcastle | Credit: City of Newcastle



Burwood | Credit: Destination NSW



Eastwood | Credit: Ross Coffey

## Great going out districts in NSW

- 📍 Eastwood
- 📍 BAD – Brookvale Arts District
- 📍 Chippendale Collective
- 📍 Hollywood Quarter, Surry Hills
- 📍 Burwood
- 📍 Tamworth Country Music Festival precinct
- 📍 Wollongong City Centre
- 📍 Newcastle City Centre



Tamworth Country Music Festival | Credit: Antony Hands

## 2.1 Diverse and vibrant precincts

We recognise that developing diverse and vibrant precincts that fully reflect communities across the state is an economic, social and cultural imperative. The inclusion of women, First Nations people and people of all cultures, abilities, generations, family types and socioeconomic backgrounds will be embedded in the programs we undertake. Reflecting our communities as both workers and consumers of the night-time economy is an important step to enabling night-time precincts to thrive (NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, 2024).

Diversity of offer and diversity of business composition also provides visitors the opportunity to have a journey of experiences within a precinct and is a crucial element to ensure vibrancy in an area. For this reason, we strongly advocate for the inclusion of non-licensed and affordable venues as well as civic spaces such as public libraries and community facilities (sport fields, venues) to be at the core of precincts.



City of Sydney streetscape | Credit: City of Sydney



ANZ Stadium | Credit: Dan Gosse

## 2.2 Precinct Development Programs

### ● Uptown District Acceleration Program

Since 2022, new and emerging districts have been supported by Uptown, a two-stage program that aims to unlock the potential of going-out districts by:

- empowering district teams to collaboratively develop their district identity
- equipping district teams with the skills, networks and resources to attract partners and consumers to their district, and
- providing district teams with seed funding to coordinate and build audience engagement and patronage for their local areas.

Since its inception, Uptown has built the capacity of over 50 district teams and has made available over \$11 million in grant funding at the time of publication.

### ● Purple Flag

Purple Flag is a global best practice accreditation scheme which aims to recognise precincts that provide a safe, diverse, and enjoyable night-time experience for residents and visitors. Developed in the UK in 2012 by the Association of Town and City Management, Purple Flag has been rolled out internationally with around 90 Purple Flag accredited areas across the UK and Ireland, Sweden, and in Auckland, New Zealand.

Purple Flag precincts meet or surpass standards of excellence in managing the night-time economy to achieve vibrancy, diversity and safety during the evening and night hours – providing a positive consumer experience and a governance model for businesses within a local area.

To be awarded a Purple Flag, applicant precincts are assessed by independent Purple Flag Assessors and an Accreditation Panel against five core principles, outlined below:



#### Wellbeing

The precinct must be welcoming, clean and safe.



#### Movement

The precinct must provide a secure pattern of arrival, circulation and departure.



#### Appeal

The precinct must include a vibrant choice and a rich mix of entertainment and activity.



#### Place

The precinct must be a stimulating destination and vital place with place identity.



#### Strategic Alignment

The precinct stakeholders must share a clear aim and common purpose.

Following a pilot program in Greater Sydney throughout 2023, NSW Government worked with the following precincts which were successful in achieving Purple Flag accreditation in 2023-2024:

- ⑨ YCK (York, Clarence, Kent Streets) Laneways, Sydney CBD
- ⑨ Parramatta CBD
- ⑨ Haldon Street, Lakemba
- ⑨ Illawarra and Marrickville Roads, Marrickville

After an independent evaluation of the pilot program recommended its continuation, the Purple Flag program will be rolled out across NSW.



Accredited Purple Flag area | Credit: YCK



Uptown District Showcase | Credit: Murray Harris

## ● Special Entertainment Precincts

Special Entertainment Precincts support live entertainment through extended trading hours for live music venues and favourable noise controls that provide operational certainty for venues, neighbouring residents and businesses. Any council in NSW may choose to establish Special Entertainment Precincts to support designated going-out districts in their local areas. The precinct framework allows councils to set requirements for amplified music and adopt their own plans to encourage more live music and performance venues.

To encourage vibrant communities in the Transport Oriented Development precincts and Special Entertainment Precincts will be enabled to support live entertainment through extended trading hours for live music venues and favourable noise controls that provide operational certainty for venues, neighbouring residents and businesses.

The *24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Act 2023* facilitated changes to a range of legislation to improve the framework for supporting councils to establish precincts and provide extra incentives for businesses to take part. This framework includes:

- 9 Clearer sound governance: as of 1 July 2024, Liquor & Gaming NSW manages entertainment sound complaints for licensed venues while councils continue to set sound standards and manage noise from unlicensed venues.
- 9 New powers for councils to automatically adjust trading hours on development consents so other businesses such as shops can stay open later.
- 9 A liquor trading extension for participating venues in Special Entertainment Precincts, including two hours on nights when live music is offered and one hour on other nights, subject to eligibility criteria.
- 9 Strengthening governance arrangements to support safety and collaboration.
- 9 The ability of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner – now a statutory role – to hold inquiries into the establishment, operation, suspension or revocation of Special Entertainment Precincts.

To help create and support more night-time districts, NSW Government will provide guidelines and a support service for councils interested in establishing Special Entertainment Precincts.

## 2.3 24-hour economy principles in precinct planning

The future growth and economic success of NSW is often underpinned by the development and enhancement of urban precincts. NSW is home to many world-class precincts where businesses clustered together will foster collaboration, creativity, productivity and innovation.

We will work with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to embed 24-hour design principles in the master planning stage of relevant NSW renewal and state significant precincts. We will also work with Planning to refresh the NSW Government Guide for Establishing and Managing Night-time Economy Uses (NSW Government, 2018).

In creating sustainable 24-hour economy precincts, we need to ensure a balance of day and night activities, where businesses can transition from day into night-time uses (e.g. dual usage) and infrastructure and assets are optimally used around the clock.

## 2.4 Local Government Program

Councils are a key driver for the development and cultivation of local 24-hour economies. Since 2020, the number of Greater Sydney councils publishing night-time economy strategies has steadily increased, and there is strong interest from other councils across the city and state to grow their night-time economies to improve local communities' wellbeing and attract visitors.

A detailed Local Government Toolkit was published in 2023 (Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, 2023) and will continue to support the work of councils across NSW through a capacity building program.

### CASE STUDY

## New York Waste Collection Services

New York City's Department of Sanitation (DSNY) determined that commercial waste collection in the city was very inefficient. More than 90 different waste management companies have trucks servicing the city with overlapping routes. In some areas, more than 50 trucks service a single neighbourhood and some city blocks have trucks passing by up to 400 times each day.

Kinesis analysed routing and customer data from a variety of sources across the city to identify and test a more efficient system for waste collection. This involved the development of a waste characterisation and demand model for the city. The plan lays out a blueprint for dividing the city into 20 zones, each served by only three to five waste management companies.

The analysis highlighted the benefits of creating commercial waste zones to reduce garbage truck traffic by 18 million miles a year, a 63% reduction from the current system. Knock-on effects include reduced noise and air pollution and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.



New York | Credit: Udayaditya Barua

## 2.5 Environmental sustainability within precincts

There is growing recognition globally of the impact of climate change on 24-hour economies and the contribution that businesses can make in both adapting to this challenge and finding solutions. There is also growing consumer expectation for environmentally sustainable practices within businesses.

Climate change-induced extreme events—which include heatwaves, fire, flooding and storms—are causing significant disruptions to many sectors related to the 24-hour economy, from festivals and events to essential urban services like cleaning and deliveries. Records show that night-time temperatures have been growing at a faster rate than daytime temperatures in recent years, especially in major cities, where the urban heat island effect traps temperatures overnight (Burt, 2022).

There has been strong commitment from all levels of government to address climate change. NSW Government *Net Zero Plan* (NSW Government, 2020) has an aspirational long-term objective of

achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, with a shorter-term (stage 1) commitment of a 50% reduction in emissions on 2005 levels by 2030.

Sustainable 24-hour economy precincts will have a significant role to play in meeting this objective. The *NSW Government Greater Sydney Regional Plan – A Metropolis of Three Cities* (NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, 2018) highlights the importance of precinct-based initiatives to increase renewable energy generation and improve energy, waste and water efficiency, to create low-carbon precincts across Greater Sydney.

To contribute towards net zero emissions by 2050, there is a need and an opportunity to embed sustainable principles into how we support 24-hour economy precincts, through:

- 9 Ensuring our programs encourage participants to adopt sustainable business practices to create low-carbon precincts;
- 9 Tracking the sustainable performance of 24-hour economy precincts and where possible, setting targets.

## 2.6 Online business-to-business platform connecting districts to opportunities

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner remains committed to advancing its Neon Grid concept by developing an online platform to accelerate business connections and opportunities. This innovative online platform will serve as a showcase for established and coordinated districts, elevating their visibility and facilitating business-to-business partnerships.

By connecting with investment opportunities, talent, place-based initiatives, and potential collaborators, districts are positioned prominently within NSW's 24-hour economy. Through visually illustrating each hub's unique value proposition, this business-to-business digital platform empowers government agencies, councils, event organisers and other commercial organisations to engage seamlessly with businesses within these districts.

## Local Government visitor economy initiatives

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and Destination NSW work closely to support councils to develop and grow their night-time and visitor economies for the benefit of local communities and visitors. Destination NSW supports industry development through strategic direction, tactical guidance and enabling a coordinated approach among stakeholders. Across regional NSW, seven Destination Networks act as the 'shop front' for Destination NSW by proactively engaging with stakeholders

to identify, prioritise and facilitate opportunities for regional visitor economy growth. In Greater Sydney, Destination NSW coordinates a Local Government Visitor Economy Engagement Program where council representatives come together to share insights, collaborate and align activities. The NSW First program is an industry capability building initiative that features workshops, webinars, toolkits and guides to help visitor economy businesses to develop, promote and sell their offering.



Central Coast | Credit: James Vodicka



# Night-time Workers, Culture and Industry Collaboration

## Objective

Collaborate across government and industry to support night-time workers, businesses and cultural entrepreneurs to thrive in the 24-hour economy

An effective 24-hour economy benefits hugely from collaboration between different sectors. It's crucial to the Strategy that different layers of government work closely with industry, workers and the creative sector. This collaborative approach is essential for fostering a vibrant and sustainable night-time economy that meets the diverse needs of communities and supports economic growth. Additionally, it prioritises research into the 24-hour workforce to allow for better participation and access to services and amenities.

# How will we do this?

The best and brightest from NSW industry and government will work collaboratively through the following actions:

- ① Developing a new strategy for NSW's 24-hour workforce
- ② Establishing an independent 24-Hour Economy Advisory Council
- ③ Supporting the delivery of the Creative Communities Policy, NSW Visitor Economy and Contemporary Music Strategies
- ④ Supporting community-led festivals and activations
- ⑤ Providing support for the Hospitality Concierge and Cultural Front Door service
- ⑥ Informing, educating and partnering with industry
- ⑦ Continuing the Live Performance Venue program with Sound NSW.

## 3.1 24-hour economy workforce

The current data on night-time workers is limited in scope and depth, failing to capture the full range of experiences, challenges and needs of this pivotal workforce. More comprehensive research is essential to address these gaps and inform effect policy measures.

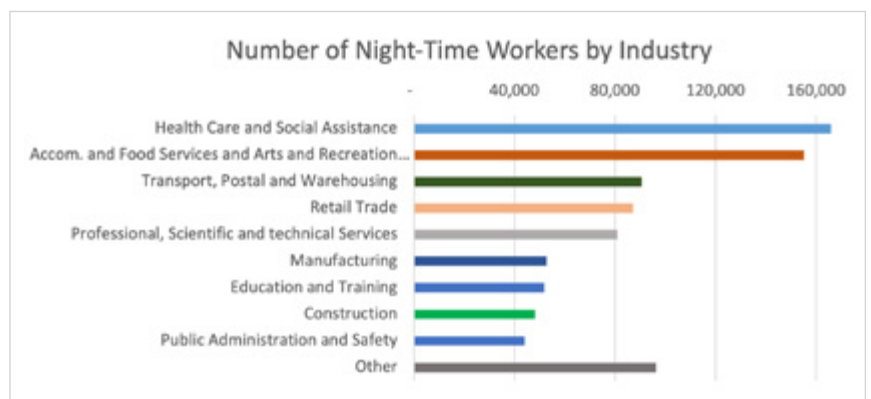
Research conducted in 2024 by SGS Economics & Planning on behalf of the Office reveals that approximately 872,620 individuals in NSW work between the hours of 6pm and 6am, constituting 21% of the overall workforce. This includes hundreds of thousands of employees in vital sectors like health, transport, freight and manufacturing who work during the night.

The research also indicates the top industry by the number of night-time employees is Health Care and Social Assistance, with approximately 166,000, followed by Accommodation and Food Services and Arts and Recreation Services, with around 155,200. The Transport, Postal and Warehousing sector employs approximately 90,500 people during night-time hours, closely followed by Retail Trade with 87,100 workers.

Night-time employment is forecast to grow by between 5% and 13% by 2031, implying a structural shift in the way the NSW economy operates, with a larger proportion of people working during the night. Despite the essential nature of their roles, individuals working at night frequently encounter challenges in accessing safe, reliable affordable services including medical, childcare, professional, retail and transportation options.

NSW Government is committed to supporting this increase in future night-time worker participation. Office of the 24 Hour Economy will consult with different sectors to identify key challenges and barriers in order to support a cross-government approach to policy measures and initiatives to sustainably develop night workforce participation.

Further research into night-time workers to be conducted will involve carrying out both qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey to gather comprehensive insights into the experiences, challenges, needs, and demographics of night-time workers. Additionally, further analysis will expand on previous gap analysis to understand the temporal nature of service provision, identify 'pain points' across different sections of the night, and forecast future service gaps by geography and service type.



## How it works overseas

### CASE STUDY

## Changi Airport, Singapore

Changi Airport is one of the world's busiest airports, with over 40 million passenger movements in 2022/23. Managed by Changi Airport Group (CAG) and operating 24/7, the airport relies on nearly 50,000 workers, with only 2,000 directly employed by CAG; the rest are employed by partners including airlines and government agencies. Many of these workers, including those on night shifts, ensure smooth operations around the clock.

### Challenges and strategies

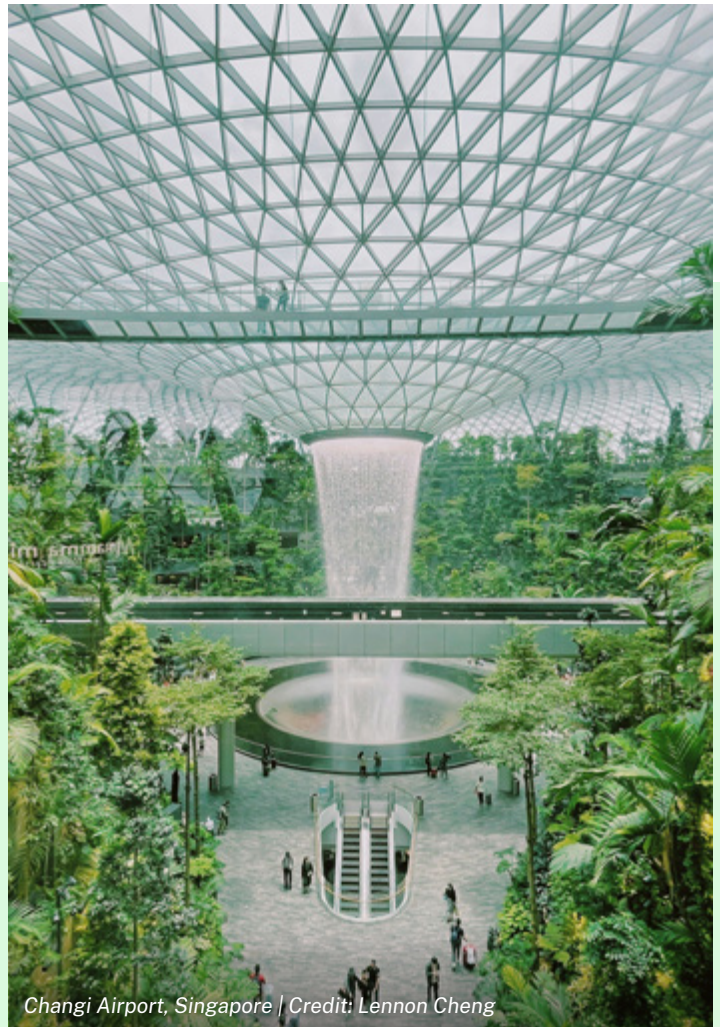
Singapore, a compact city-state spanning just over 700 square kilometres, faces challenges in locating airports away from residential areas due to limited space. Despite this, the clustering of businesses and services benefits workers and residents. Planning is overseen by Singapore's Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), which updates a Masterplan every five years.

The URA has developed Changi Aviation Park and Changi City around the airport, fostering aviation-related businesses alongside recreational and tourism opportunities. Singapore's extensive social housing, comprising over 70 per cent of housing stock, ensures that Changi Airport workers can live near their workplace. The airport is connected to the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT), enhancing mobility for workers, visitors, and residents. However, the MRT operates only from 5:30am to midnight, which can be challenging for shift workers.

### Lessons for NSW

Effective transport connections for future airport workers are crucial. If public transport isn't viable at night, establishing shuttle services from nearby areas or ensuring sufficient affordable parking is essential. These steps will address challenges similar to those faced by workers at Changi Airport.

Additionally, integrating airports into the local lifestyle by ensuring availability of late trading retail, dining, entertainment and transport options can benefit visitors, workers and residents alike.





Boston | Credit: Todd Kent

## CASE STUDY

# Longwood Medical Area Boston, USA

The Longwood Medical Area (LMA) is a medical and education employment hub 5 kilometres southwest of downtown Boston. It acts as a major economic engine for both Boston and the broader region, with strong ties to Harvard Medical School, employing more than 57,000 people, catering to 29,000 students, and receiving 112,000 visitors daily. The concentration of world-renowned institutions and medical facilities has attracted significant investment from both private and government sources, recognising the area as an innovation district. While not known as a night-time precinct, the LMA operates 24/7.

The LMA aims to grow responsibly by housing workers locally, improving public and active transport, and enhancing the sustainability of buildings. It includes workforce development initiatives such as mentoring programs, community development support, and addressing labour shortages in critical sectors.

### 🔗 Challenges and strategies

The medical and research sectors in the LMA operate throughout the night, with workers requiring access and services at all hours. The Longwood Collective, a non-profit organisation made up of member organisations within the LMA, addresses some of these challenges by providing various programs and services for workers and visitors.

These services include public domain improvements such as better pedestrian connections, active transport infrastructure, green space preservation, a shuttle service to reduce traffic and improve worker access, childcare options, and addressing safety concerns for workers, including security measures like an emergency ride home and an emergency alerts system, which are particularly relevant during night-time hours.

### 📌 Lessons for NSW

The LMA is comparable to health and education precincts in Sydney, such as Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Sydney University, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District and University of NSW, and Westmead Hospital and Western Sydney University. These precincts have varying degrees of formal recognition and shared strategies. Facilitating discussions on the night-time worker experience in these areas would improve conditions for workers and stimulate practical action.

## How it can work in NSW

### CASE STUDY

## Western Sydney Airport

The new Western Sydney International Airport in Bradfield's Western Parkland City is slated to open in 2026 and will operate 24 hours a day without curfews.

By 2031, the airport alone will support 28,000 direct and indirect jobs, while the surrounding aerotropolis will provide career opportunities across a wide range of sectors, including technology, logistics, science, creative industries and agribusiness (Minister for Finance, 2021). In the longer term the Western Sydney Aerotropolis will support around 200,000 new jobs in industries such as aerospace and defence, manufacturing, freight and logistics, tourism and research. There are targets for at least 50% of these jobs to be filled by residents from Western Sydney, requiring transport connections throughout the region (Western Sydney Airport, 2024).

The new 23-kilometre railway will link residential areas with job hubs, including the aerotropolis, and connect travellers from the new airport to the rest of Sydney's public transport system. Drawing on lessons from Changi Airport, which successfully integrated its operations with the local transport infrastructure, these connections will be vital for ensuring smooth, round-the-clock accessibility for workers.

Additionally, for Western Sydney International Airport, ensuring availability of late trading retail, dining, entertainment and transport options will be crucial for supporting the night-time workforce. This approach will enhance the quality of life for night-shift workers, providing them with essential services and amenities and contributing to a thriving night-time economy.



Airport logistics | Credit: Mason Dahl



Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct | Credit: Quentin Jones



Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct | Credit: Luke Fuda

## Key 24-hour workforce precincts

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### Port Kembla Industrial Precinct

 1800km<sup>2</sup>  
 3,668 night-time employees

- Precinct focus: Manufacturing, transport, postal and warehousing night-time employment hub, with construction jobs supporting these sectors.
- Major employers: The main employers within the precinct include BlueScope Steel and Colorbond.
- Transport access: Access to train line and public buses, noting train services are irregular.
- Other services: Retail, medical and personal services have lower levels of access due to a lack of options and early closing hours.

### Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct

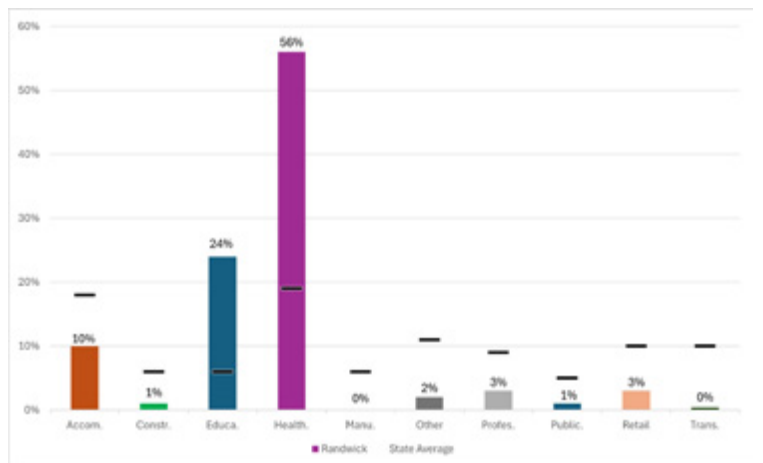
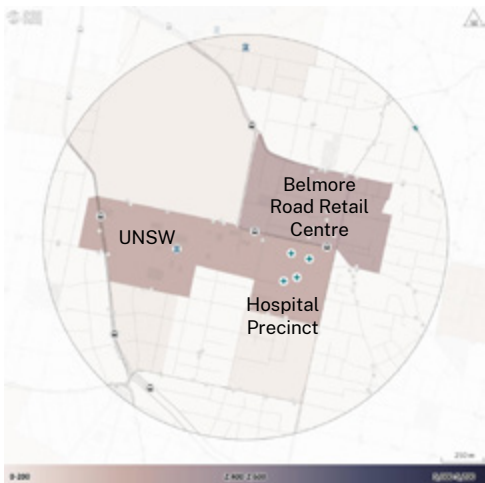
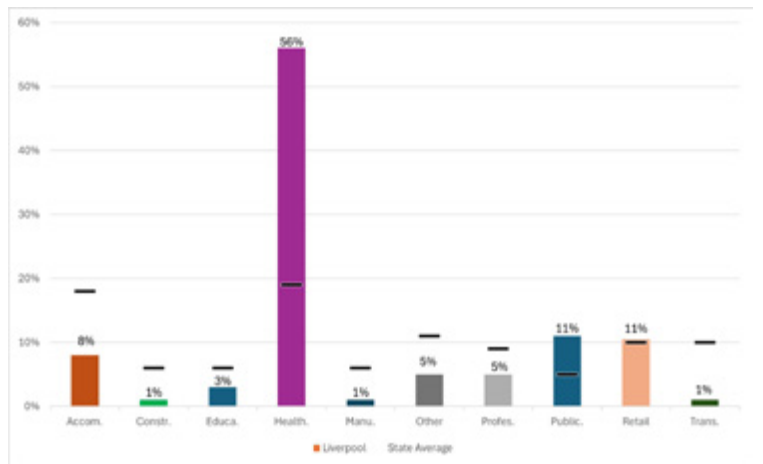
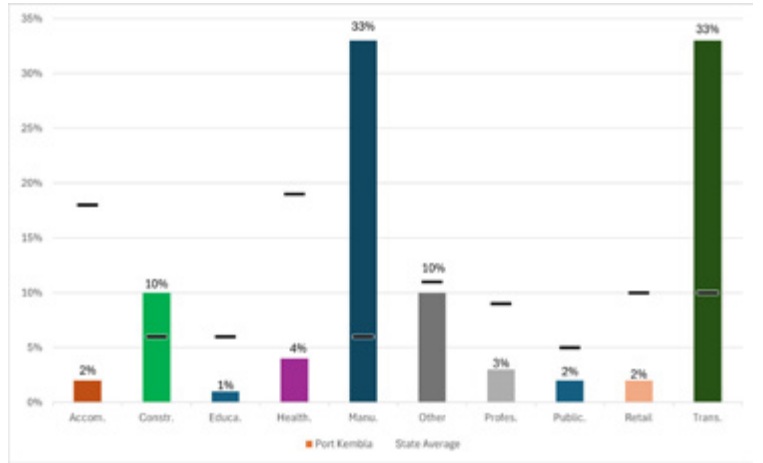
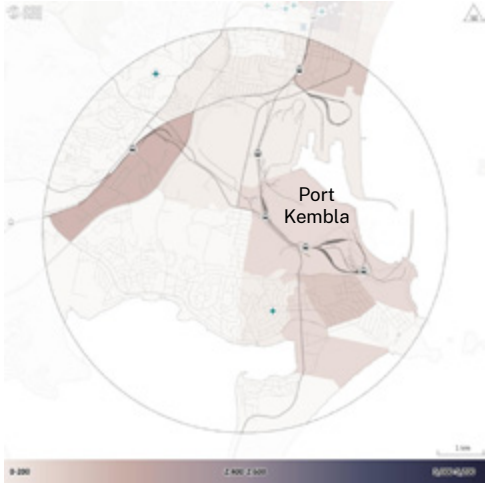
 100km<sup>2</sup>  
 4,595 night-time employees

- Precinct focus: Officially known as the Liverpool Health and Academic Precinct (LHAP), it features multiple education and research hubs.
- Major employers: Liverpool Hospital and associated medical employers.
- Transport access: Liverpool is serviced by a train line and access within the precinct is supported by a network of buses.
- Other services: The precinct includes a retail centre offering medical, personal and retail options for workers. Opening hours are mainly during daytime periods.

### Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct

 105km<sup>2</sup>  
 4,735 night-time employees

- Precinct focus: A health and innovation cluster located in the eastern suburbs of Sydney.
- Major employers: Night-time employers within the precinct include the Prince of Wales Hospital, Sydney Children's Hospital and the University of NSW.
- Transport access: Light rail line operating till 12am, and public bus routes.
- Other services: The precinct includes a retail centre including medical, personal and retail services, with food options that open later into the evening.



## 3.2 24-Hour Economy Advisory Council

Established under the *24-Hour Economy Commissioner Act 2023*, the Advisory Council will provide expert advice, feedback and ideas to support the work of the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner.

In keeping with the multi-sector collaboration that underpins this Strategy and to reflect the diversity of the state's night-time economy, the Council will be open to organisations from industry, local government and cultural organisations.

## 3.3 Creative Communities

The Office works closely with Create NSW and will continue to ensure alignment between *Creative Communities*, NSW Government's 10-year arts, culture and creative industries policy, and the 24-Hour Economy Strategy.

*Creative Communities* (Create NSW, 2024) will guide the NSW Government's efforts to enable, support and advocate for culture for the next decade. Commitments to support this include:

- 9 Legislating the delivery of a Creative Statement to the Parliament every three years, detailing and tracking the status, health and progress of the arts, culture and creative industries in line with this policy.

- 9 Safeguarding and modernising workplace conditions for artists by requiring individuals and organisations receiving NSW Government funding to commit to safe workplace standards.
- 9 Establishing a Youth Creative Taskforce to ensure the next generation of cultural leaders are at the decision-making table including advising the Minister directly.
- 9 Activating creative spaces by a combination of continued direct public investment, seeking new sources of investment for the sector and regulatory reform.
- 9 Maintaining free public access to NSW state cultural institutions and collections.
- 9 A cultural space audit will aim to identify underutilised assets that could be used for creative endeavours, including spaces held by NSW agencies, local councils and other landholders.

## 3.4 Supporting community-led festivals and activations

Not every centre in NSW can sustain a 24-hour economy and there is a need to get behind community-led festivals and activations. The Office acknowledges the importance of these events for enhancing evening and night-time economies within communities.

The Office will work collaboratively with other state agencies to help both existing and new community-led festivals and activations by investigating and supporting funding initiatives and regulatory reforms to remove obstacles and streamline processes for events to be staged.

More funding and simpler processes will empower communities to organise and host events that stimulate economic activity and cultural vibrancy during night-time hours.



Cabramatta Lunar New Year | Credit: Ken Leanfore



Dance battle - Court Tomo Ookai at 4Elements HipHop Festival (4ESydney) | Credit: Benny Clark

### 3.5 Hospitality Concierge and Cultural Front Door

The Hospitality Concierge is a one-stop shop for hospitality businesses to find out more about the new liquor licence and Vibrancy Reforms and to help businesses benefit from new initiatives that simplify processes and support the 24-hour economy. The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner works closely with and supports the work of the Concierge.

The Hospitality Concierge provides personalised guidance on a range of government support including:

- 1 Helping access government incentives and initiatives i.e., outdoor dining and live music incentives.
- 2 Outreach to industry and councils to understand current barriers to uptake and provide information on licensing/ application pathways.
- 3 Linking with government partners and local councils to support smooth and coordinated approvals.
- 4 Working with the 24-hour Economy Commissioner to deliver more impactful outcomes for businesses.
- 5 Sharing information about Special Entertainment Precincts and their potential to boost trade, support live performance and increase footfall in the precinct.

NSW Government will establish a Cultural Front Door service that supports artists, creative workers, cultural organisations and creative businesses all over the state to navigate NSW Government services.

NSW Government will reform the Arts and Culture Funding Program grant application and acquittal processes to ensure a fairer and more equitable process, reducing paperwork for applicants and simplifying the acquittal process.

NSW Government will formalise the state's experience tourism policy focus. Such a direction will explicitly commit to support for the arts, culture and creative experiences across NSW.

## 3.6 Informing, educating and partnering with industry

Under the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner's legislated remit, there is an ongoing role for the Office to inform, educate and upskill industry. This proactive approach aids businesses and cultural entrepreneurs, including First Nations creatives to access and thrive within the 24-hour economy. Recognising the importance of collaboration, we understand that this is better done in partnership with industry and state government agencies. Initiatives include:

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### Industry Playbooks

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner works across industry to share and promote best practice in service delivery and policymaking.

Developed in partnership between the Office and industry, several Playbooks have already been published, offering advice on:

- 1 Navigating planning and licensing;
- 2 Managing sound and noise in venues;
- 3 Building a brand and identity;
- 4 Promoting safety and wellbeing; and
- 5 Integrating performance into venues.

A second iteration of Playbooks will be commissioned under this Strategy. We will work with industry partners to highlight innovative thinking, service delivery and best practices that foster safe workplace cultures.

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### Education on regulatory reform

It is important for clear communication and education to be deployed from the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner to ensure that regulatory amendments and changes in legislation are taken up as opportunities. This is an ongoing piece of work that follows the pillar *An Enabling Regulatory Framework*, including initiatives such as the Special Entertainment Precinct Coordinating Service.

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### Stakeholder Industry Nights

The Office will continue to host its quarterly networking and stakeholder events for industry. These events bring together stakeholders from across the 24-hour sector to exchange ideas, develop networks and stay up to date with the Office's work. These forums provide the opportunity for industry to be briefed by sector leaders, access emerging insights and learn about innovations.

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### Supporting skills development

Workforce development is key to the success and continuation of night-time industries. Through stakeholder consultation we learned that there is shortage of staff in supporting roles in the 24-hour economy, exacerbated by the pandemic.

We acknowledge that solving the skills shortages is a more complex task than just developing and providing training. The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner is committed to collaborating with industry and state government stakeholders to craft an approach that maximises existing pathways, highlights entrepreneurship opportunities and facilitates apprenticeships within the industry.

We will align with state government's incoming skills plan for NSW to ensure delivery of these initiatives.

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### Partnering with industry

The night-time economy sector is facing a number of key challenges, including consumer awareness, workforce expansion and diversification, intergenerational participation and affordability. The Office will partner with industry to seek solutions to the challenges confronting the sector. The Office will explore pathways for industry to innovate and collaborate through funding mechanisms and partnerships, actively supported by government.

### 3.7 Venues Unlocked and Sound NSW

The Venues Unlocked Program aims to strengthen venues across NSW, supporting the growth of world-class live performance, hospitality and infrastructure in NSW. Through investment, skills development and collaboration, Venues Unlocked will help NSW venues to explore business-model diversification and expansion of audiences. It is delivered through Sound NSW and the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner.

The program aims to:

- 9 increase the number of fit-for-purpose live performance venues in NSW
- 9 increase sector knowledge and expertise in best-practice sound management and sustainable live performance programming
- 9 build the number of live performance opportunities for NSW residents and artists
- 9 generate greater live performance diversity and vibrancy in communities.

The program will continue under the refreshed Strategy until at least 2026.

Sound NSW is a dedicated office within NSW Government committed to the growth, development and promotion of contemporary music in NSW.

It aims to nurture creative careers, encourage innovation, enhance export opportunities, and create positive outcomes for artists, industry professionals, music businesses and audiences.

Sound NSW will be responsible for developing and delivering a 10-year contemporary music strategy to make NSW the home of contemporary music.



L-FRESH The LION at 4Elements HipHop Festival (4ESydney) | Credit: Benny Clark



Sister Cities Tours, Mandy Hawkes at The Royal Hotel Dungog | Credit: Swamp House Photography



# Safety, Mobility, Access and Inclusion

## Objective

Champion the wellbeing and safety of workers and patrons in the 24-Hour Economy and enable easy movement to and from 24-hour economy precincts

Safety and mobility have been two central pillars for the work of the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner since its inception. Whilst Sydney has been rated as one of the world's safest cities (Berkshire Hathaway Travel Protection, 2023), it is imperative that we continue to develop a night-time experience that allows patrons to get to and from locations conveniently and safely.

Access and inclusion is also an important consideration to enable equal participation in the 24-hour economy and ease of movement to and from precincts. Particularly as we consider the use of night-time

spaces by young people and multicultural communities, who have reported a need for third spaces, such as civic space and libraries late into the night.

Having effective collaboration across government and between different sectors is key to ensuring safe and accessible night-time districts. The intra-government Safety, Mobility and Wellbeing Working Group plays a vital role in aligning state government partners involved in this space.

Programs like Purple Flag have also helped to promote public safety and confidence in the going-out experience.

# How will we do this?

Government will work to increase to safety, access and mobility through:

- ① Refreshing the Safety, Mobility and Wellbeing Advisory Group
- ② Fostering a safe and inclusive night-time economy
- ③ Developing transport and mobility initiatives that increase transport options at night
- ④ Developing transport initiatives with a focus on safety, access and inclusion
- ⑤ Developing mobility options and transport initiatives for workers and consumers of the night-time economy that support city shaping and precinct making.

## 4.1 Safety and policing

The NSW Police Force provides an invaluable service to the millions of people who enjoy nightlife across the state.

The NSW Police Force is an active participant in the NSW Government Safety, Mobility and Wellbeing Working Group and works closely and collaboratively with the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner on numerous issues including Vibrancy Reforms, Purple Flag, Special Entertainment Precincts and women's safety.

Good dialogue between police and industry has helped to broker safety solutions. Continued close communication will be encouraged under this Strategy. The Office will establish a Community of Practice to continue the work of the Safety, Mobility and Wellbeing Working Group as it is vital for ongoing collaboration and dialogue.

The Office will review the membership of this group to include representatives from industry, peak bodies and organisations that will advance solutions and drive initiatives.



Secure taxi rank within the YCK Purple Flag Precinct |  
Credit: Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport

## 4.2 Fostering a safe and inclusive night-time economy

Fostering a safe and inclusive night-time economy is key for the night-time economy. The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner will deliver the following initiatives:

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### Propose holding a Security Roundtable

Security plays a vital role in keeping staff and patrons safe in venues and precincts. We recognise that a level of security presence is required, not just in NSW, but at night-time venues across the world. Security staff protect employees from abuse, support patrons in need, uphold responsible service of alcohol and are watchful for possible offences such as drink spiking.

The security sector has faced challenges since COVID-19, including skills and labour shortages. Some stakeholders have identified an opportunity to update skills and training to better support staff. There has also been some public criticism of a perceived heavy-handedness by some security staff within venues. Finding common ground, where staff can perform their important work whilst patrons have a positive customer experience, is therefore paramount.

To tackle these issues, the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner proposes to hold a Security Roundtable in collaboration with NSW Police Force and Liquor & Gaming NSW.

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### A new campaign that promotes respectful patron behaviour

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and Liquor & Gaming NSW will work with industry to develop a campaign that promotes and reinforces positive and respectful patron behaviour. A similar campaign was delivered following the reopening of hospitality venues in 2021, following lockdowns in NSW.



Randwick | Credit: Ross Coffey

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### Training and capacity building for hospitality staff

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy, in consultation with SafeWork NSW, will explore training for hospitality workers, including security staff, to create safer and more equitable night spaces. This may include bystander training to support staff to safely intervene when people are threatened, cultural awareness, accessibility training and inclusivity training.

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### Collaborate on health and safety initiatives and campaigns for women and diverse communities

Safety initiatives are crucial for supporting an increase in perceptions of safety and a reduction in crime. We know that individuals tend to feel safer in situations where there is a diversity of people and they also feel represented (David Rowe, 2008). We heard from our stakeholder consultation that safety is a barrier to the night-time economy, particularly for women, people with a disability, the LGBTQI+ community, First Nations people, people of colour and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner will collaborate with state agencies such as the Office of the Women Safety Commissioner, SafeWork NSW, NSW Police Force and other organisations to deliver fit-for-purpose safety initiatives and campaigns.



Circular Quay railway and light rail station | Credit: Destination NSW

### 4.3 Develop mobility and transport initiatives that increase transport options at night

Getting patrons safely to and from destinations is a key part of the 24-hour economy, but transport can also act as an economic enabler. Greater choice and capacity of transport options can increase footfall and give greater choice and amenity to local areas.

The Office will collaborate with Transport for NSW on actions to improve the safety of and access to transport at night. We will collaborate to develop mobility options and initiatives for staff and consumers of the night-time economy, with the goal of supporting city shaping and precinct making at night.

Night-time transport options in major NSW centres have improved in recent years, with the construction of light rail in the CBD, South East, Parramatta and Newcastle as well as the CBD and Southwest Metro and Barangaroo ferry hubs. However, during the consultation phase for this refresh, there was strong stakeholder support for extending the hours of travel for public transport in key night-time hubs. The Office will work with Transport for NSW to pilot extension of transport in key hubs, with a focus on equity and improving access to communities, particularly people with a disability and others facing transport disadvantage.

Google Maps data commissioned by the Office reveals 41% of businesses in the Sydney CBD and 34% of businesses in the Parramatta CBD are open on Saturday evenings. Therefore, we would welcome a pilot of the Sydney Metro M1 Line and the Sydney to Randwick and Parramatta Light Rail to run from 5am to 2am on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. In the spirit of responding to changing demand, the Office will collaborate with Transport for NSW to design pilots for increased transport services for large events such as Sydney Festival during Summer in Walsh Bay.

Opportunities exist for the Office to collaborate with Transport for NSW through the development of the Smart City Innovation Challenges and the Draft Regional Network Plans. In addition, micro-mobility, micro-transit, on-demand mobility services, future mobility trials and other transport programs offer opportunities to improve connection to and within precincts and to develop better last mile transport solutions. The Office will support initiatives such as the 2022-23 Opal+ trial which included employers being able to subsidise light rail travel for their staff and discounts on rideshare that could be paid for through the Opal+ app.

As an initial approach to expanding transport options at night, transport between key nightlife hubs will be assessed by the refreshed Safety, Mobility and Wellbeing Working Group with a report presented to relevant Ministers. This will include an audit of taxi and rideshare access for key night-time precincts.

## 4.4 Develop transport initiatives with a focus on safety, access and inclusion

Improved perceptions of safety around transport hubs are crucial to increased usage of existing networks at night. Research commissioned by the Office (IPSOS, 2023) suggests that 32% of people feel safety is a barrier to using public transport.

NSW Government through Transport for NSW led the Safer Cities Program. The \$30 million program sought to improve perceptions of safety in our cities and towns, particularly for women, girls and gender-diverse people. The Office will work with Transport for NSW on design of potential future iterations.

In addition, the Office will collaborate with Transport for NSW on the delivery of initiatives aimed at improving safety across public transport and around transport hubs at night.

Data indicates that the demographics of shiftwork populations are evolving, with a transition from millennials to Gen Z and Alpha cohorts entering the workforce (Deloitte, 2024). As the cost of living increases, workers and consumers need to be able to get to and from home affordably at night. The Office will leverage NSW Government's commitment to transport equity (Transport for NSW, 2022) so people have access to safe, affordable transport that gets them to where they need to be.

## 4.5 Develop transport initiatives which support city shaping and precinct making

New infrastructure, such as Sydney Metro and Western Sydney Airport, will reshape Greater Sydney and there will be opportunities to leverage this to create new night-time precincts and better support existing precincts. By 2031, the Western Sydney airport alone will support 28,000 jobs, while in the longer term the surrounding aerotropolis could host around 200,000 new jobs. Late-night transport options will be essential to ensure employees from Western Sydney and beyond can work here around the clock.

Transit Oriented Development (NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, 2024) is an example of planned greater density of jobs and housing around existing

and new train stations to deliver more affordable, well-designed and well-located homes. The Office will leverage planning reforms such as this investment to grow and manage vibrant night-time precincts in these areas, through initiatives such as Purple Flag, Uptown and Special Entertainment Precincts.

The Office will support industry and precincts to develop appealing, destinational use of transport assets and technology. Examples include integrated transport and ticketing at Moore Park; the Tay Tay Express train to Taylor Swift concerts (Transport for NSW, 2024); and Park Sounds at Sydney Olympic Park (Brandle, 2022), funded by CBDs Revitalisation. The use of a vintage double decker bus to connect White Bay Power Station to the Sydney CBD for the 2024 Biennale of Sydney (Sydney Bus Museum, 2024) was another creative transport activation.



Students getting around on Sydney Trains | Credit: Destination NSW



DEM MOB at 4Elements HipHop Festival (4ESydney) | Credit: Benny Clark

# Authentic Storytelling

## Objective

Internationally recognised 24-hour precincts delivering exceptional experiences to locals, visitors and employees celebrating their local stories

Policy reforms and new program initiatives are important, but their success relies on good communication. In particular, we need to communicate the good news story of NSW's night-time economy revival and dispel the myths and stereotypes of the past. This is best done by giving a platform to the diverse communities that live and thrive in our night-time economy.

# How will we do this?

Government will amplify the diverse 24-hour precincts and offerings across the state through:

- ① Marketing and promoting night-time precincts across NSW
- ② Elevating the role of First Nations storytellers in the night-time economy
- ③ Promoting unique night-time culture
- ④ Continuing thought leadership and opportunities positioning the Office on a global stage
- ⑤ Leveraging international and domestic major events
- ⑥ Annual publication of the State of the Night report.

## 5.1 District marketing and promotion

As the night-time economy has decentralised, several exciting nocturnal districts have been formed or rebooted. Telling the stories of these places to a domestic and international audience will help to boost the visitor economy and inward investment as well as spark locals' discovery of their own state.

The night-time offering is now the fourth highest reason for people to visit Sydney (Destination NSW, 2024). The Office will collaborate with Destination NSW to target visitors to NSW, telling the stories of unique night-time precincts across the state and supporting the Sydney and NSW brand position to shift perceptions of NSW's nightlife.

We will also work closely with Destination NSW to deliver the incoming Visitor Economy Strategy.





Newcastle | Credit: City of Newcastle



Enmore | Credit: Destination NSW



Lakemba | Credit: Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport



York Clarence Kent | Credit: YCK



Spinfest, Wollongong | Credit: Wollongong City Council

## Our diverse night-time precincts

### 📍 Newcastle Civic Precinct

The precinct is home to art galleries, late-night dining, a craft brewery, hidden cocktail bars, a comedy club, gyms and educational facilities. Public space serves as a thoroughfare between four other nightlife precincts and public transport linkages help create a place where people want to work, visit, live, and play.

### 📍 Enmore

The first designated Special Entertainment Precinct in NSW, with Enmore Road well known for its live performance venues, bars and restaurants.

### 📍 Wollongong CBD

The area features art galleries, performance spaces, cosy cafes, multicultural restaurants, bars and live music spots. The CBD is known for its unique blend of hospitality and retail businesses, street art, and a lively atmosphere from morning to night, all within close proximity to the beach and WIN Sports and entertainment centres.

### 📍 Lakemba

A vibrant, multicultural night-time economy not based on alcohol, with late-night eateries, markets, services, council-run library and retail. Haldon Street was one of the first districts in Greater Sydney to receive Purple Flag accreditation.

### 📍 York Clarence Kent

The YCK precinct in Sydney's CBD is a hive of small bars, hotels, retail and theatres. It was the first Purple Flag-accredited precinct in Australia and participated in the Office's inaugural Uptown Accelerator.

## 5.2 First Nations storytelling

The Office will elevate the role of First Nations people as the nation's original storytellers in the night-time economy and its precincts. Building upon respectful consultation with First Nations communities and strong, ongoing relationships with First Nations storytellers, the Office will support First Nations-led stories of lived experience, contemporary expression and truth telling.

This includes supporting the curation of events that promote First Nations arts and culture, using platforms that elevate First Nations voices, and ensuring that these contributions are recognised and respected.



### CASE STUDY

## Blacktown by Night (part of Round 2 of the CBDs Revitalisation Program)

This multi-month series of curated arts, entertainment and cultural events featuring live music performances, film screenings and creative workshops took place between April 8 and June 25, 2022 at the Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre alongside multiple activations throughout the Blacktown CBD. It was staged by Blacktown Arts, Blacktown City Council to attract newcomers to the area and stimulate the local economy. The inclusive program was devised to engage with a broad inter-generational and inter-faith audience, with a focus on family-friendly and alcohol-free events. Blacktown Arts also delivered a range of additional programming during Blacktown by Night, including extended hours for public programs, special screenings and exhibitions, new music performances, and block party-style outdoor takeovers.

During the over 80 days of free and ticketed events, over 6000 participants are estimated to have spent an average of 3.9 hours in the Blacktown CBD. 88% of surveyed participants said the Blacktown by Night event was a key factor in their decision to visit the Blacktown CBD. The Council/Blacktown Arts also estimates over 300 businesses were supported within the CBD area, including dining and retail venues. Close consultation with First Nations Elders and local custodians was vital

to creating an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere at Blacktown by Night events, and 65% of respondents surveyed said their degree of connectedness and engagement with the Blacktown CBD changed after attending a Blacktown by Night event.

Locals and visitors alike reported an overwhelmingly positive experience:

“I belong to the Aboriginal community and I thought this was such a great experience to bring together such diverse age groups and activities through cultural sharing. It was really beautiful to be part of.”

“As we are from the city, we haven't spent much time in Blacktown. The Blacktown Block Party got us to see the area for ourselves and to feel the energy from the people, ultimately getting us more connected and engaged.”

Blacktown Arts and Blacktown City Council developed new relationships with local creative businesses and event suppliers to create Blacktown by Night, which in turn will inform programming decisions, CBD activations and collaborations in the future.



International students are a part of the 24-hour workforce | Credit: Ross Coffey

## 5.3 Promoting unique night-time culture

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner will develop content and promotional strategies that highlight and celebrate other unique elements of NSW nightlife.

This will include at least three workstreams:

### A global centre for LGBTQI+ communities

Sydney is an iconic LGBTQI+ city celebrated for its vibrant and inclusive community, with Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras being one of the world's most prominent and renowned LGBTQI+ events.

Building upon the success of Sydney WorldPride in 2023, there exists a unique opportunity to further leverage Sydney's status as an LGBTQI+ friendly city throughout the year. The Office will work with Destination NSW to showcase LGBTQI+ experiences.

### Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities

NSW is one of the most multicultural places in the world, with 280 language groups and over 50 per cent of NSW residents having at least one parent born overseas (Multicultural NSW, 2024). It's a rich tapestry of diverse communities, each with its own night-time precincts cherished by locals.

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and Multicultural NSW will work on content that showcases these night-time economies, telling our unique stories and creating a more welcoming environment where everyone feels represented and celebrated.

### International students

The international education sector is the state's largest service export, worth \$ 17.9 billion in 2023 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2024) and the state's second largest export overall behind coal, with over 300,000 international students across NSW, 39% of the national total (Department of Education, 2024).

International students are also part of the 24-hour workforce. There is a great opportunity to capture these audiences and support the promotion of precincts and storytelling to international students across NSW, enhancing their study experience.

## 5.4 Continuing thought leadership and opportunities positioning NSW on the global stage

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner is internationally recognised as both the first state government agency of its kind and a leader of innovation in night-time policy. There exists a valuable opportunity to further leverage our state's global standing by engaging in more outbound activities aimed at promoting this work. Through strategic outreach efforts, we can amplify NSW's reputation on the global stage and reinforce our commitment to driving positive change by delivering vibrant precincts to our local communities.

Initiatives include:

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### NEON International Night-time Economy Forum

Launched in 2023, the NEON International Night-time Economy Forum brought together the world's best minds and leaders around night-time economy policy. The Forum will continue to be held in NSW on a regular basis, bringing together experts from Australia and overseas and positioning NSW as the leading state for night-time economy policy.

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### Leveraging the Office and the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner

The Office will maintain active participation in international forums and information-sharing platforms, advocating for the policies and programs it delivers while shaping and influencing other international night-time cities, and drawing insights from initiatives in other jurisdictions to inform future initiatives in NSW.

Through these engagements, we aim to share best practices, foster collaboration and drive positive change in the night-time economy to build economic opportunity and quality of life, and boost NSW's global reputation as a desirable location to visit, live and invest in.



NEON International Night-time Economy Forum | Credit: Murray Harris



Vivid Sydney at Oxford Art Factory | Credit: Destination NSW



Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras | Credit: Destination NSW

## 5.5 Leveraging international and domestic major events

NSW is home to unique and globally recognised events, including Mardi Gras, New Year's Eve Fireworks, Vivid Sydney, State of Origin, Ashes Series, and Tamworth Country Music Festival. However, there is scope to maximise the impact of the night-time experience around these events.

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner will partner with Destination NSW, Office of Sport and Venues NSW to enhance these events through precinct activations, licensing changes and marketing.

## 5.6 Annual publication of State of the Night

Given the challenges and competing perspectives that the night-time economy has faced at key points in its history, its future security and success depends on informed debate and evidence-based decisions.

The Commissioner will produce a regular report to the Minister for the Night-Time Economy, which will include key night-time economy performance data trends, drawing on wider economic indicators to provide insights and forecasts on the state's night-time economy, and case studies of emerging innovation and opportunities in the sector. In line with the *24-Hour Economy Commissioner Act 2023*, this report may be tabled in Parliament to ensure decision-makers understand the value of the economy, trends affecting its performance, and their power to support a more vibrant NSW through their policy making.

# Measuring success

## Indicators and measures

Our vision is to forge globally acclaimed 24-hour precincts, fostering an environment where businesses and workforces can thrive, communities flourish and individuals connect in a vibrant, inclusive after-dark experience.

The realisation of our vision and the successful execution of the actions outlined in this Strategy rely on the establishment of clear indicators and measures.

The Strategy will leverage the Data After Dark platform and the Implementation Plan to articulate specific measures and indicators aimed at tracking the delivery and effectiveness of the Strategy. This systematic approach ensures accountability and enables informed decision-making through the implementation process.

## Data After Dark

We want our cities to thrive, both during the day and at night. To help this happen, we need to understand how our night-time areas are doing and how they compare to each other.

Historically there has been no standard baseline dataset to understand the health of our economy after dark. This includes information on the value and impact of Sydney's music and nightlife spaces, and how it performs against other global cities.

Data After Dark is a platform delivered in partnership with the NSW Department of Customer Service's Data Analytics Centre with the initial funding from the Smart Places Acceleration Program. This platform combines, visualises and compares economic performance and impacts of the NSW night-time

economy over time and across various geographies, including the state, Greater Sydney and the Six Cities Regions (Greater Cities Commission, 2022).

This information will enable a wider view of our night-time activity and performance. It will also support decision making on interventions to improve economic activity and help target and track the impact of policy and program initiatives at state and precinct level.

The project will continue to help develop agreed metrics to measure the health of the night-time economy. The metrics will be drawing on and aggregating economic data to measure these agreed indicators. The Office will look to roll out the platform to state agencies and local councils within NSW.



Dulwich Hill | Credit: Ross Coffey

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## Indicators

To measure the impact of this Strategy, the Data After Dark platform would be used to measure key social, cultural and economic indicators as outlined below.

### Social



- 9 Proportion of people who participated in night-time economy leisure or entertainment activity outside the home (after 6pm) in the last 7 days;
- 9 Percentage of people with a positive view of the nightlife;
- 9 Percentage of people feeling safe in participating night-time activities.

### Economic



- 9 Number of core night-time businesses;
- 9 Number of employees hired by NTE sectors;
- 9 Value added by NTE sectors;
- 9 Consumer night-time spend.

### Cultural



- 9 Number of cultural businesses open at night;
- 9 Number of registered live entertainment venues;
- 9 Percentage of surveyed respondents that participated in cultural activities at night.

These indicators will undergo continuous internal tracking and annual public reporting to ensure transparency and accountability. They will also contribute to broader monitoring and evaluation work across the state government, including the NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework. We are committed to exploring new data and refining this measurement framework, which improves our ability to assess the impact of the Strategy and gauge its success. As a result, the above indicator list may evolve over time and any changes, along with the rationale behind them, will be documented in the annual report.

As the one monitoring platform to measure the health of the night-time economy in NSW, the Office will work with state agencies to incorporate their data into the platform and quarterly report.



Fortress Sydney | Credit: Fortress Sydney



Uptown Vision Workshop, Sydney

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## Quarterly reporting

A quarterly report will be developed for industry and other stakeholders to monitor the night-time economy, with the first quarterly report to be published in 2024. The report will provide a snapshot of indicators monitoring our 24-hour economy in addition to trends analysis.

## Implementation Plan

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner will develop an Implementation Plan that is fit for purpose across the state. The Implementation Plan will deliver on the actions in this Strategy, allowing for specific initiatives and collaborations to deliver on the outcomes outlined for each pillar.

In developing the Implementation Plan, the Office will consider different perspectives for each of the pillars and actions as outlined in *A delivery framework*.

# Acknowledgements

NSW Government and the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner would like to acknowledge the many individuals, organisations and businesses that contributed to the refreshed Strategy.

This Strategy was the outcome of a collaborative process that spanned over eight months. In its ideation and design, the Strategy was shaped by unique and important contributions from stakeholders in NSW Government, local government and industry.

We list and thank these below. These organisations have not necessarily endorsed this Strategy.

13 CABS, 24-Hour Economy Advisory Group, Accessible Arts, Adamstown Bowling Club, Atom Brands, Australian Football League, Australian Hotels Association Newcastle Hunter, Australian Hotels Association NSW, Australian Recording Industry Association, Australian Retailers Association, Australian Venue Co, Bandid, Blue Kahunas, Bondi Lines, Burwood Council, Business Events Sydney, Business Illawarra, Business NSW, Business Sydney, Business Western Sydney, Canterbury Bankstown City, CBRE, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Central Coast Council, City of Newcastle, City of Parramatta, City of Ryde, City of Sydney, Clubs NSW, Committee for Sydney, Customs House, Deloitte, Deputy, Destination Sydney Surrounds South, DiDi, Earp Distilling Co, Fairfield City Council, Fairfield City Museum & Gallery, Family Hotel Newcastle, FBi Radio, Five Barrels, Gig Buddies, Good Food, Good Times only Group, GreenRoof, Grumpy Sailor Creative, Heaps Gay, Heaps Normal, Heydey, His Boy Elroy, House of Pocket, Humber, Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation, Independent Bar Association NSW, Independent representatives from events production and music sector, Independent representatives from Western Sydney creative scene, Independent representatives with live experience of disability, Industree Group Stadium, Kinesis, King St Hotel, Liquor & Gaming Solutions, Live Music Task Force, Luna Park, Mardi Gras, Media Entertainment & Arts Alliance, Merivale Group, Mia Mia, Minds at Play, Museum of Applied Arts and Music People, MusicNSW, Newcastle Pride, Night Parrot, Night Time Economy Council Committee, Night Time Industries Association, Parramatta Liquor Accord, People with Disability, Phoenix Central Park, Pocket Bar, Point to Point Industry Reference Group, Powerhouse Parramatta, Premier Cabs, QT Hotel Newcastle, Randwick Health District, Riverside Theatres, Service and Creative Skills Australia (formerly SkillsEquipped), Solotel, SXSW, Sydney Festival, Sydney Fringe, Sydney Olympic Park Business Association, The Argyle, The Entertainment Quarter, The Illawarra Hotel, The Rogue Scholar, The Stag & Hunter Hotel, Theatre Royal Sydney, This That Festival, Tourism Industry Group, Uber, University College London, University of Wollongong, UTS, VibeLab Asia Pacific, Vyva Entertainment, Western Sydney Airport, Western Sydney Arts Alliance, Western Sydney Creative, Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue, Win Sports and Entertainment Centre, Wollongong City Council, Worlds Collide, Yours and Owls.

## NSW Government state agencies

Responsibility for developing a 24-Hour Economy Strategy for NSW has been held by several NSW Government agencies over the last three years. Many NSW Government agencies have played an essential role in the shaping of this Strategy, and these are listed below.

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Department of Communities and Justice (including Multicultural NSW and Office of Women's Safety Commissioner), Department of Customer Service (including SafeWork NSW, Service NSW and Small Business Commission), Department of Education, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport (including Create NSW, Destination NSW, Liquor & Gaming NSW and Sound NSW), Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (including Office of Local Government, Placemaking NSW and Sydney Olympic Park Authority), Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, NSW Health, NSW Police Force, NSW Treasury, Premier's Department (including Aboriginal Affairs NSW, Regional Coordination and Delivery, Study NSW and Women NSW), The Cabinet Office, Transport for NSW (including Point to Point Commissioner).

# Glossary

**24-hour economy** An economic framework that extends productivity and activity beyond traditional business hours, encompassing diverse offerings that incorporate core night-time economy industries (food, drink and entertainment) and other non-core night-time industries such as retail and cultural events throughout the night.

**24-hour workforce** People who are actively engaged in work or willing to work at some point in time between 6pm and 6am. However, numbers quoted in this document only refer to people who are actively working at some point in time between 6pm and 6am.

**CBD** Central Business District.

**Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities** This describes Australia as a culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse population.  
Read more: [multicultural.nsw.gov.au](http://multicultural.nsw.gov.au)

**Going out districts** Districts are a geographically distinct micro-area (e.g., a high street or block of streets) that have a unique identity and diverse cultural and entertainment offerings across multiple venues within short walking or biking distance.

**Night-time economy** Economic activity taking place between 6pm and 6am.

**Special Entertainment Precinct** A defined area where sound from premises with amplified music is managed by a council through its noise management plan.  
Read more: [special-entertainment-precincts](#)

**Six Cities Region** The Six Cities Region stretches across the Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City; the Central Coast City; Illawarra-Shoalhaven City; the Western Parkland City stretching from the Blue Mountains to Fairfield and the Hawkesbury to Wollondilly; the Central River City stretching from The Hills to the Georges River and from Blacktown to Canterbury-Bankstown; and the Eastern Harbour City stretching from Northern Beaches to Bayside and Strathfield to Waverley and the Sutherland Shire.  
Read more: [six-cities-vision](#)

**Vibrancy Reforms** A cross-government initiative developed in consultation with key agencies, industry, councils and stakeholders to bring vibrancy back to NSW's night-time economy and community.  
Read more: [vibrancy-reforms](#)

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