

Resolution of Council

18 October 2021

Item 14.1

Covid-19 Roadmap to Recovery - Nightclub Restrictions

The original Notice of Motion was moved by Councillor Forster and seconded by Councillor Scully.

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) in early September 2021, the NSW Government released details of its roadmap to freedom for fully vaccinated individuals once the state hit a target of 70 per cent double dose vaccinations amongst the eligible population;
- (ii) some of these measures included increased gatherings at home and in public spaces, and the reopening of hospitality venues subject to one person per four square metres inside and one per two square metres outside;
- (iii) in early October 2021, Premier Perrottet released updated details of what life would look like once the state hit a double dose vaccination rate of 70 per cent in early October 2021 then 80 per cent around late October followed by a further easing of restrictions from 1 December 2021, including a one person per two square metre rule and drinking while standing for most hospitality venues;
- (iv) this roadmap was informed by expert advice provided by NSW Health and is designed to ensure the easing of restrictions is done safely and proportionally, however some in the nightlife sector have noted inconsistencies in the application of restrictions across different sectors;
- (v) under current health advice, nightclubs will still be the subject of an open-ended one person per four square metre rule once they are allowed to reopen from late October 2021;
- (vi) this will preclude the reopening of some venues which were operating safely under the one person per two square metre rule prior to the June 2021 lockdown;

- (vii) nightclubs are an integral part of the City of Sydney's late-night economy and cultural fabric. They are important contributors to the local economy, often run by small business owners, and deserve the same support to reopen in a safe and viable manner as the other hospitality venues in our late-night precincts; and
 - (viii) as Sydney emerges from the greatest economic crisis in a century, it is vital that we provide each and every business, large and small, and from every sector in the economy, the same opportunity to get back on their feet;
 - (ix) while economic supports such as JobSaver and microbusiness grant payments will cease on 30 November 2021, many nightlife businesses and sole traders will not be able to trade or have a return to viable business operations until their sector is able to trade beyond the anticipated level of restrictions at that date. Advocates including the Electronic Music Conference and Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance have communicated the need for continuing support for this sector;
 - (x) sector advocates have also highlighted confusion in the nightlife sector as to how restrictions are applied, including the definition of a nightclub for the purposes of these orders, or whether venues operating under a hotel licence will also be subject to these capacity restrictions while also programming electronic/dance music for the purpose of dancing; and
 - (xi) venues received the Public Health Orders only a couple of days prior to the 80 per cent reopening date, which is not enough time for businesses to prepare, and they are seeking advance notice of conditions; and
- (B) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Health requesting that:
- (i) they seek health advice specifically in relation to the operation of the nightclub sector, and develop a roadmap to full opening that provides more clarity and certainty for nightlife business operators, including clear dates when nightclub businesses can plan to transition from one person per four square metre to one person per two square metres, to the lifting of restrictions and a return to normal operations; and
 - (ii) the NSW Government engage with sector advocates including the Electronic Music Conference and the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance to understand their concerns related to Roadmap to Reopening and to consider their recommendations for how to best support the nightlife sector, including a need for continued economic support for this sector while it is unable to return to normal operations.

The amended motion was carried on the following show of hands:

Ayes (9) The Chair (the Lord Mayor), Councillors Chung, Forster, Kok, Miller, Scott, Scully, Thalys and Vithoukas

Noes (1) Councillor Phelps.

Amended motion carried.

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