

22 July 2024

At the conclusion of the Cultural and Creative Committee

## **Resilient Communities and Economy Committee**

**Agenda**

- 1. Confirmation of Minutes**
- 2. Statement of Ethical Obligations and Disclosures of Interest**
- 3. Public Exhibition - Economic Strategy 2025-2035**
- 4. Grants and Sponsorship - Haymarket Activation Grant**
- 5. Adoption – Child Safety Policy**

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2. Check the recommendation in the Committee report before speaking, as it may address your concerns so that you just need to indicate your support for the recommendation.
3. Note that there is a three minute time limit for each speaker (with a warning bell at two minutes) and prepare your presentation to cover your major points within that time.
4. Avoid repeating what previous speakers have said and focus on issues and information that the Committee may not already know.
5. If there is a large number of people interested in the same item as you, try to nominate three representatives to speak on your behalf and to indicate how many people they are representing.

Committee meetings can continue until very late, particularly when there is a long agenda and a large number of speakers. This impacts on speakers who have to wait until very late, as well as City staff and Councillors who are required to remain focused and alert until very late. At the start of each Committee meeting, the Committee Chair may reorder agenda items so that those items with speakers can be dealt with first.

Committee reports are available at [www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

**Item 1.**  
**Confirmation of Minutes**

Minutes of the following meetings of the Resilient Communities and Economy Committee are submitted for confirmation:

Meeting of 17 June 2024



**Item 2.****Statement of Ethical Obligations**

In accordance with section 233A of the Local Government Act 1993, the Lord Mayor and Councillors are bound by the Oath or Affirmation of Office made at the start of the Council term to undertake their civic duties in the best interests of the people of the City of Sydney and the City of Sydney Council and to faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in them under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act, to the best of their ability and judgement.

**Disclosures of Interest**

Pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, the City of Sydney Code of Meeting Practice and the City of Sydney Code of Conduct, Councillors are required to disclose and manage both pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any matter on the agenda for this meeting.

In both cases, the nature of the interest must be disclosed.

This includes receipt of reportable political donations over the previous four years.

## Item 3.

### Public Exhibition - Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035

File No: X09982

#### Summary

The Economic Development Strategy 2013-2023 has guided the City of Sydney's (the City's) approach to economic development for 10 years. The strategy contained three strategic priorities - strengthen Sydney's competitiveness, improve productivity and capacity, and promote opportunity. It also set employment and growth targets for 2030 and provided the rationale for the development of related Action Plans to support priority sectors of the economy.

While delivering the strategy the City has enabled several major new projects to support economic development, from the light rail along the length of George Street that has transformed the city's central spine, to the Green Square Urban Renewal project which enabled \$22 billion in private development and 33,000 homes, through to the Central Sydney Planning review that has unlocked 2.9 million square metres of employment floor space in our central CBD.

These investments have helped to contribute to the city's strong economic performance over the past 10 years, with the total jobs in the city growing from 437,000 jobs to 520,000 jobs. There has also been a continual shift towards a more advanced, knowledge-led economy with the proportion of knowledge jobs growing from 64 to 68 per cent. The City of Sydney LGA economy has also experienced stronger than forecast long-term economic growth, with the economic output growing by more than 40 per cent, from \$101 billion to \$142 billion.

The strategy has been delivered through a period of significant change and unprecedented challenges for the economy and community. The ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic required an additional investment of over \$150 million which created new grant programs to support impacted businesses and community organisations, along with an al fresco dining program to enable trading on reallocated road space, and the introduction of the Sydney Streets program to revive local high streets after a period of restrictions and lockdowns.

The City has been regularly reviewing available data to understand patterns of economic activity. Analysis is published as a quarterly City Insights economic snapshot which points to a 'new normal' in our city with public transport usage at 85 to 95 per cent of pre pandemic levels across the week, and much higher on Saturdays and Sundays. International visitors and students are back in record numbers and there has been a 'flight to quality' in the office market, with higher vacancies in lower grade stock.

These data-led insights and feedback from the business community have been central to the development of a new strategy response for the next decade. In 2022, the City adopted a new community strategic plan Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050: Continuing the Vision. This plan outlines the community's vision for a transformed and innovative economy in Sydney. With the community strategic plan as a foundation, City staff have consulted extensively with City's Business Advisory Panel, industry and government agencies over many years to develop a new draft Economic Development Strategy to guide the City's support for our economy over the next ten years.

The new Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035 aims to reinforce Sydney's historic economic strengths while focusing on four key underlying vulnerabilities that pose a challenge to the economy's ongoing sustainability - climate change, rising inequality, slowing productivity and ongoing uncertainty about how our city is used post-pandemic, as well as cost of living and economic headwinds, presenting challenges in the transition.

The new strategy sets a vision to champion a global economy that unlocks innovation, which is sustainable and inclusive, and provides great local experiences. To drive an innovation-led economic transformation, the strategy targets 200,000 new jobs by 2036, with 70 per cent of these new jobs to be in knowledge and innovation intensive industries. It also proposes 33 high level actions and eight momentum building projects to address systemic challenges.

The new strategy provides a robust framework to support the wide diversity of investments the City makes in the quality of the city, and by extension, the vibrancy of the economy. It includes support for the extension of light rail, providing the policy basis for how this public domain and transport project enhances the economy by improving amenity, innovation and productivity. It is recommended the strategy be exhibited for two months to seek community and industry feedback and explore the proposed actions with stakeholders.

## Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note the finalisation of the Economic Development Strategy 2013-2023 and the ten years of significant achievements under the guidance of the Tourism Action Plan, Retail Action Plan and Tech Start-Ups Action Plan, as outlined in Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council approve for public exhibition the draft Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035 as shown at Attachment B to the subject report;
- (C) Council note that the Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035, including any recommended changes, will be reported to Council for adoption following the exhibition period;
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make minor editorial amendments for clarity or correction of drafting errors prior to the exhibition of the draft Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035; and
- (E) Council note the Engagement Report summarising consultation for the development of the draft Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035, as shown at Attachment C to the subject report.

## Attachments

- Attachment A.** Economic Development Strategy 2013-2023 Close Out Report
- Attachment B.** Draft Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035
- Attachment C.** Engagement Report - Sector Consultation for a Draft Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035

## Background

1. The Economic Development Strategy 2013-2023 was adopted in December 2013 and has guided the City's approach to economic development for ten years.
2. The Strategy contained three strategic priorities - strengthen Sydney's competitiveness, improve productivity and capacity, and promote opportunity. It also set employment and growth targets until 2030.
3. Importantly, it provided the rationale for the development of related action plans to support priority sectors of our economy. This included the Tourism Action Plan, Retail Action Plan and Tech Start Ups Action Plan which all provided detailed guidance on how to implement the ambitions in the overarching strategy.
4. The 2013 Economic Development Strategy targeted 460,000 jobs in the city by 2030. There are now more than 520,000 jobs in the city, reflective of a decade of strong employment growth. Key projects flagged in the 2013 strategy, most notably George Street's revitalisation and light rail, have helped grow the city economy to over \$142 billion per year, a 40 per cent increase from the \$101 billion noted in the 2013 strategy.

## Conclusion of the Economic Development Strategy 2013-2023, Tourism Action Plan, Retail Action Plan and Tech Startups Action Plan

5. The action plans to support the Tourism, Retail and Tech Start-up sectors have achieved their ambitions with almost all actions now completed across the three plans, with support for these sectors now firmly embedded in City activities and programs.
6. For the Tourism Action Plan, of the 87 Actions, 97 per cent are completed or in-progress and three were discontinued (3 per cent).
7. For the Retail Action Plan, of the 67 actions, 97 per cent are completed or in-progress and two were discontinued (3 per cent).
8. For the Tech Start-ups Action Plan, of the 40 actions, 93 per cent are completed or in-progress, two not started (5 per cent) and one discontinued (2 per cent).
9. A small number of actions were discontinued as they were no longer contextually relevant, or their execution relied on State or Federal government programs which have since been discontinued.
10. A high-level update on how the actions were addressed across the action plans and their significant achievements and investments is included in Attachment A.
11. As these strategies have come to the end and almost all actions implemented, the 2013 Economic Development Strategy and the Tourism, Retail and Tech Startups Action Plans will be closed out at this time.

**Draft Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035**

12. The new Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035 builds from the success of the 2013 Economic Development Strategy and the supporting sector-specific action plans, with key actions from these strategies rolled into the new strategy.
13. It provides the implementation pathway for Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision Direction 9 – a transformed and innovative economy.
14. Data-led insights and an understanding of the ‘new normal’ of our city and its economy in a post-pandemic environment are central to the strategy response. Insights on the city’s change have been regularly communicated to the public via the City Insights quarterly economic snapshot.
15. The data reveals there has been a broad economic recovery but that it has been uneven across industries and with economic headwinds:
  - (a) public transport patterns to CBD to 85 to 95 per cent of pre-pandemic across the week;
  - (b) spend above pre-pandemic, particularly on weekends, reflecting higher spend from visitors;
  - (c) return of international visitors, but from different markets, driving different experiences;
  - (d) return of international students in record numbers but with potential challenges from visa changes; and
  - (e) “flight to quality” in the office market, with higher vacancy in lower grade stock.
16. The new strategy was developed in close collaboration with the City of Sydney’s Business, Economic Development and Covid Recovery Advisory Panel which has CEO-level representation from (amongst others) Committee for Sydney, Business Sydney, Property Council of Australia, University of Sydney, Supply Nation, Canva and Greenhouse and 4 Pillars Gin.
17. The new strategy also incorporates extensive community engagement undertaken on the draft Economic Development Strategy Discussion Paper (2022-2023) and via the bi-annual Lord Mayor Business Chamber Roundtables.
18. The key findings from the consultation with the business community were:
  - (a) strong support for innovation as the primary driver of our economic future and a recognition post-pandemic that the city economy cannot continue to rely on its traditional strengths in professional and finance services and on the visitor economy;
  - (b) there is a significant leadership role for the City to promote and accelerate the green economy transition, aligned with recent announcements from Federal government as part of the 2024/25 budget;
  - (c) the importance of fairness and ensuring equitable access to work, living, and housing – particularly with the current challenges with cost of living;

- (d) the role of the City in creating more opportunities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enterprises and ensuring community wealth building principles are embedded throughout the new strategy; and
  - (e) the heightened importance placed on the city 'experience' and the need to further Sydney as a 24-hour economy.
19. The new economic development strategy aims to reinforce Sydney's historic economic strengths while focusing on four key underlying vulnerabilities that pose a challenge to the economy's ongoing sustainability.
20. The four underlying vulnerabilities the strategy seeks to address are as follows:
- (a) Climate change threatens key sectors like tourism but also presents an economic opportunity if Sydney positions itself as a global hub for net zero innovation.
  - (b) Rising inequality, and particularly affordability issues and cost of living pressures, have the potential to stifle our economy and erode our society's sense of fairness and opportunity.
  - (c) Slowing productivity and an uncoordinated approach to innovation are leading to lower commercialisation and impacting Sydney's attractiveness to talent.
  - (d) Economic headwinds, cost of living and broader uncertainty are changing how our city is used post-pandemic, presenting challenges in the transition.
21. The new strategy provides a robust framework to support a wide diversity of investments the City of Sydney makes in the quality of the city, and by extension the vibrancy of the economy. It includes support for the extension of light rail, providing the policy basis for how this public domain and transport project enhances the economy by improving amenity, innovation and productivity.
22. It also highlights over \$540 million of other flagship approved forward commitments that directly support economic development outcomes – from ongoing work on the pedestrianisation of George Street, Greenhouse Climate Tech Hub, Haymarket revitalisation, economic grants, cycling infrastructure and works on Crown Street to extend outdoor dining and widen footpaths.
23. The strategy sets a new vision to champion a global economy that unlocks innovation, which is sustainable and inclusive, and provides great local experiences.
24. The four outcome areas for the strategy are an economy that is sustainable, inclusive, innovative and experiential. Against each of these outcomes, two measures of success are listed in the strategy and will be reported on an annual basis, or as the data becomes available.
25. To drive an innovation-led economic transformation, the strategy targets 200,000 new jobs by 2036, with 70 per cent of these new jobs to be in knowledge and innovation intensive industries.

26. Adopting a place-based approach, the strategy illustrates the role and reach of our economy and the City of Sydney at four different scales:
  - (a) Global Sydney promoting our city internationally as one of the best places to live, work, study, play, visit, create and invest.
  - (b) Australia's economic heart progressing economic, environmental and cultural outcomes across Greater Sydney, NSW and Australia.
  - (c) City of distinct precincts connecting a diversity of specialised industry clusters to drive innovation and productivity.
  - (d) Strong local neighbourhoods supporting inclusive local opportunities, fostering authentic experiences and a vibrant street life.
27. Ensuring a holistic approach to economic development, 33 actions are proposed across the four outcome areas and the four different scales of our economy from grassroots to global..
28. In addition, the strategy proposes eight momentum building projects where partnership is required to provide immediate focus to complex challenges:
  - (a) unlocking Tech Central via Broadway by supporting the revitalisation of Broadway through public domain, light rail, activation and governance;
  - (b) accelerating the green economy transformation by leveraging Greenhouse to position Sydney as a global sustainable finance destination;
  - (c) exploring localised circular economies with small business collectives to find precinct-wide sustainability measures and promote local innovations;
  - (d) supporting Indigenous enterprise through the full business life-cycle, from seed funding to securing affordable space, working with the City, and scaling;
  - (e) putting vacancy to creative use, working with the property and cultural sectors to match underutilised commercial space with creatives displaced from the city;
  - (f) retaining international student talent by welcoming students into the Sydney community and providing pathways into employment and filling critical skills gaps;
  - (g) evolving the visitor economy by reviewing visitor needs post-pandemic, partnering with Destination NSW to better design and coordinate services; and
  - (h) promoting vibrant streets by developing more effective and efficient ways to activate local streets in partnership with small business collectives.



## Key Implications

### Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

29. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This plan is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - the new strategy proposes a range of actions and projects to support economic development in the local government area.

### Organisational Impact

30. The draft Strategy does not propose an expansion of the City's ongoing economic programs and services or changes to the composition of the business units responsible for delivering support for economic development and implementing the Strategy. Rather the approach to designing business support program and services will be informed and shaped by the new Strategy, with particular focus on areas of highest need as evidenced by the Strategy.

### Risks

31. The draft Strategy is an evidence-based approach to delivering the community's aspirations and vision. Risk has been managed by ensuring the City's investments respond to current issues facing the city's economy, drawing upon the most current available data and analysis and community consultation.

### Financial Implications

32. The draft Economic Development Strategy 2025-2035 proposes a new Indigenous Enterprise Support momentum building project which will require an additional investment of \$1 million over five years. If the Strategy is adopted \$1 million will be funded for this new project from within, and included in future iterations of, the City's overall operational budget for each financial year from 2025/26 to 2029/30, subject to Council approval.

### Critical Dates / Time Frames

33. If approved, the draft Strategy will be placed on public exhibition for two months. It is anticipated a post-exhibition draft will be reported to Council in late 2024. The Strategy is intended to commence in 2025.

**Public Consultation**

- 34. City staff have developed the draft Strategy and an engagement plan in consultation with the City's Business, Economic Development and Covid Recovery Advisory Panel.
- 35. The new strategy also incorporates extensive community engagement undertaken on the draft Economic Development Strategy Discussion Paper (2022-2023) and via the bi-annual Lord Mayor Business Chamber Roundtables.
- 36. An engagement report has been prepared outlining the outcomes of these consultations.
- 37. If approved, the draft Strategy will be placed on exhibition for two months. The community will be able to provide feedback through a Sydney Your Say survey and written submissions. City staff will conduct further consultation sessions with the business community.

**KATE DEACON**

Director Strategic Development and Engagement

Lara Wolski, Executive Manager, Strategy and Urban Analytics

Bryn Davies, Manager Economic Strategy

# **Attachment A**

**Economic Development Strategy 2013–2023  
Close Out Report**

# Economic Development Strategy 2013-2023 Close Out Report



Sydney2030/Green/Global/Connected



# Economic Development Strategy

**Sydney's economy:  
global city, local action**

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# Purpose of the report

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## Economic Development Strategy 2013 - 2023

The Economic Development Strategy 2013 - 2023 (the Strategy) has provided the strategic framework for economic development programs, initiatives, and projects across the City of Sydney over the past ten years.

The Strategy sets out our vision for the economy of Sydney and the strategies and actions required to achieve that vision. It has been the overarching framework that has guided our economic development initiatives and has outlined our role, priorities and approach over the 10 years. The strategy also provides the rationale for engaging with identified priority sectors and delivering outcomes through detailed action plans including Retail, Tourism and Tech Startups.

This report is a high-level summary of the actions delivered and is intended to formally close-out the specific commitments of the strategy and actions plans. It includes details of key economic development achievements during the life of the strategy and action plans.

This report provides an update across the 194 actions from the Retail Action Plan, Tourism Action Plan and Tech Startups Action Plan. Detailed case studies are outlined demonstrating the range of levers used by the City and outcomes achieved.

The City of Sydney's Community Strategic Plan, *Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050: Continuing the Vision*, was adopted in 2022 and responds to the communities' vision to deliver a transformed and innovative economy. The community strategic plan is the foundation to guide the development of the next economic development strategy that will set a new vision for the city's economy; that Sydney will become an even more welcoming global city renowned for its lifestyle and sustainability, its inclusive and diverse society, and its vibrant street life and creative precincts.

A new Economic Development Strategy for the period 2025 – 2035 accompanies this Close Out Report.

# Economic Development Strategy 2013-2023

The 10 year Economic Development Strategy delivered in 2013, was intended to strengthen the city economy and support business. It centred on further improving the solid foundations for success; creating opportunities for individuals, businesses, the community, and future generations as well as addressing the challenges that might otherwise limit Sydney's potential growth as a global city.

The strategy built on the broad economic themes from Sustainable Sydney 2030 and took into account contemporary economic challenges. It set a 10 year vision for Sydney to be a globally competitive and innovative city, the premier place in Australia to live, work and visit. It also set the course for the city to be renowned for its creativity and productivity, with a robust economy which is resilient and dynamic.

The 2013 strategy outlined the rationale for developing detailed action plans for priority sectors including Tourism, Retail and Tech Startups. Tourism and Retail Action Plans were concurrently released as 10 year plans along with the strategy and the Tech Startups Action Plan was subsequently released in 2016 as a five year plan.

International Education, Open Sydney and Eora Journey Economic Development Plan have also been released and have several years to run and will continue to be implemented an integrated way with the new economic development strategy.

The economic development strategy identified three strategic priorities that would deliver the results needed to achieve the vision for Sydney's future economy. These priorities focused on building on the economic foundations for success, taking action to address the challenges, and taking full advantage of the opportunities for our economy.

The priorities included:

1. **Strengthen Sydney's competitiveness:** through the creation of a city that encourages business investment, attracts visitors and has the amenity and liveliness sought by current and future residents;
2. **Improve productivity and capacity:** through investment in the productive, transformative and social infrastructure needed to unlock the city from congestion, to keep people and goods moving, increase knowledge and capital flows, to enable full participation in the workplace and to enable workers at all levels to live close to their work; and
3. **Promote opportunity:** build on strong regional, national and global links and cross sector networks, support the continued development of strong industry clusters, encourage partnerships and collaborate and work to strengthen the established sectors as well as the entrepreneurial and small business community within the City.

The City has created strong partnerships and networks with industry, government, community and other stakeholders to deliver this 10 year strategy. We have also worked in partnership with many other metropolitan stakeholders to achieve the vision for a strong economy.



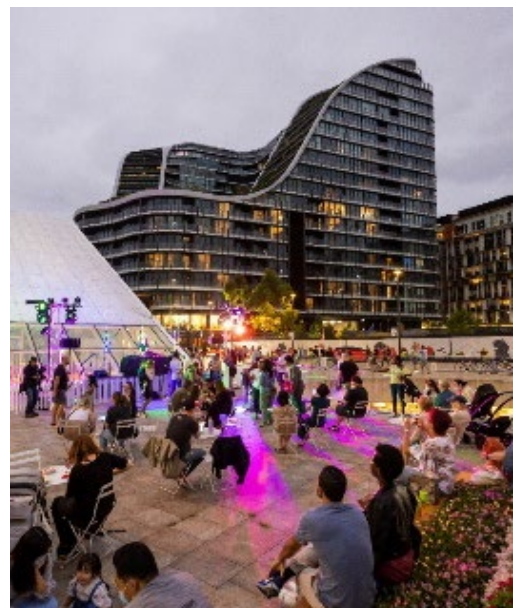
### Key achievements across the decade

- A jobs target was established through Sustainable Sydney 2030 which was achieved in part through economic initiatives. Jobs grew from a 2013 base of 437,000 to over 521,000 jobs by 2024, with strong shift towards more advanced, knowledge economy jobs.
- In conjunction with the NSW Government, transforming George Street into a pedestrian, retail and light rail boulevard, with a major network of revitalised laneways has been achieved. Our public domain improvements include wider footpaths, more space for alfresco dining areas, more trees, seating, bike racks, water bubblers, and street lighting. George Street revitalisation has helped grow the city economy to over \$142 billion per year, a 40% increase from the \$101 billion noted in 2013.



- We have completed a comprehensive review of the central planning controls – the ‘Central Sydney Planning Review’, which included involvement from key stakeholders such as the Property Council of Australia and state government. Key objectives were to reinforce the attractiveness of Sydney as a location for global business enterprises, to ensure that the City’s planning controls can positively influence Sydney’s functioning as a global city, and that there would be sufficient development capacity for employment growth in central Sydney.

- Major urban renewal projects are catalysts for change in the city. Green Square urban renewal transformation into a vibrant, sustainable and connected community is taking shape. Upon completion it will accommodate 63,000 people, living in 33,000 new homes and provide around 21,000 permanent jobs, and include investments of \$22 billion in private development, and \$1.8 billion in public infrastructure.





# Action Plan Close-Out




## Summary

The Tourism, Retail, and Tech Startups Action Plans have reached the end of their terms and are being closed-out with relevant actions rolled into the new economic development strategy. These close-out reports provide a snapshot of the status of actions implemented, outcomes and the impact on the respective sectors and wider economy. They highlight new challenges and opportunities and provide recommendations to ensure alignment with the new economic development strategy.

The status of all actions were reviewed for this close-out report and grouped into five categories:

- Completed – actions that have been completed without a plan to repeat.
- Ongoing (BAU) – actions that are well-established and have become business as usual.
- In-progress – actions that have commenced but are not fully delivered.
- Not started – actions that are under consideration but have not commenced.
- Discontinued – actions that are no longer relevant and discontinued.

Figure 1. Summary of action status by Action Plan

Tourism Action Plan	Retail Action Plan	Tech Startups Action Plan
<p>87 Actions</p> <p>97% completed or in progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 78 completed (91%)</li> <li>• 5 in-progress (6%)</li> <li>• 3 discontinued (3%)</li> </ul> 	<p>67 Actions</p> <p>97% completed or in-progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 64 completed (95%)</li> <li>• 1 in-progress (2%)</li> <li>• 2 discontinued (3%)</li> </ul> 	<p>40 Actions</p> <p>93% completed or in-progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 completed (70%)</li> <li>• 9 in-progress (23%)</li> <li>• 2 not started (5%)</li> <li>• 1 discontinued (2%)</li> </ul> 

The 3 Action Plans contained a combined total of 194 actions. Most actions (96%) have been completed or are in-progress. There are 8 (4%) that have been identified as not started or discontinued, with details and context provided below.

### **Tourism Action Plan**

Three actions investigated but not implemented are recommended to be closed out, as follows:

- *Advocate to the NSW Government to improve the speed, number, quality, and volume of rail services from rural and regional NSW, particularly from key locations such as the Central Coast, Newcastle and Wollongong.*

The City's priority was to advocate for the Metro in the first instance, as this results in significant capacity increases on the rail system, which then makes it more feasible to have more frequent and faster connections from the regions to central Sydney.

- *Collaborate with Destination NSW in the development of digital-based visitor information that facilitates wayfinding.*

This action was not implemented, and with the pandemic having such a significant impact on visitor arrivals, it has not progressed. It will continue to be investigated in the future through the City's QMS system, Legible Wayfinding system and in discussions with Destination NSW. This will be reflected in the new economic development strategy.

- *Investigate provision for information, signage, and wayfinding through mobile devices to accommodate non-English speaking residents and visitors to the City.*

This action was not directly implemented, although there was a modified action utilising our QMS system to welcome visitors in multiple languages. Through the new economic development strategy, we will be working on new visitor economy projects to address wayfinding, signage and sharing of information with visitors.

### **Retail Action Plan**

Two actions investigated but not implemented are recommended to be closed out, as follows:

- *Advocate to the Federal Government to reform Australia's GST Tourist Refund Scheme to allow competition by private refund operators that will drive tourist shopping and product development to international visitors and allow reimbursement whilst visitors are still in Australia.*

The City consulted with the Retail Advisory Panel and the Australian Retailers Association, and it was agreed that this advocacy work should be led by industry. The City agreed to provide a supportive role if industry requested.

- *Facilitate partnerships between the vocational and higher education organisations and the retail sector to pursue research, knowledge and skills development as well as opportunities for entry-level employment.*

The City consulted with the Australian Retailers Association (ARA) who advised that the retail industry peak body, on behalf of retailers was seeking federal government investment to help future-proof the sector and reposition retail as a career. The need to upskill the existing workforce and build career pathways, particularly in the digital transformation of the industry, was essential, but acknowledged that work was being led by ARA and the private sector to meet the skills training required. The City agreed to provide a supportive role if industry requested in the future.

### **Tech Startups Action Plan**

One action was discontinued:

- *5.2 Investigate increasing the number of Sydney-based companies the Advance Innovation program supports and boosting its impact.*

It was discontinued as the Advance Innovation program ceased operation. Subsequently, the City either directly delivered or supported other programs to build the entrepreneurial skills of local startup founders. The programs include the Business Innovation program, Visiting Entrepreneur Program, Tech Ready Women program, and Future Asia Business Summit.

Two actions were not started:

- *1.8 Formally acknowledge the contribution of entrepreneurs and other members of the tech startup ecosystem, for example, through a Sydney innovation or young entrepreneur award.*
- *2.9 Devise an advocacy campaign to support relevant, exciting and accessible early education in digital technology, particularly for girls.*

The City has considered these two actions but did not commence them due to resource and capacity constraints. The City has however supported Business NSW to deliver The Sydney Business Awards for many years.

# Tourism Action Plan – close out report

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## Strategic context

Our 10-year Tourism Action Plan, published in December 2013 set the direction for the City to work with partners to maintain and grow our tourism-related industry to ensure Sydney remained a highly desirable destination for global tourist travel and business markets.

This action plan was developed as tourism was identified as a priority sector in the city due to its size relative to other industries, the number and diversity of the jobs associated with the tourism industry and the role tourism plays as a catalyst for economic investment in NSW and Australian through international visitation.

There have been many challenges facing the sector and these were further exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lock-down of all Australian borders, including state borders. Some of the earlier challenges prior to the pandemic included a high Australian dollar, increased competition over Sydney as a destination of choice for visitors and business travellers within the Asia-Pacific region and high hotel occupancy levels which limited the capacity for growth and the attraction of conferences and events.

Desired outcomes from this action plan were the ongoing recognition of Sydney as the premier tourist destination ahead of other Australian capital cities and as a regional leader in Asia Pacific. We aimed to ensure that the tourism sector offered a range of diverse events, attractions and experiences that rank amongst the best in the world and are unique to Sydney and Australia. We prioritised high quality tourism facilities, greener accommodation and transport infrastructure that supported and sustained the growing number of domestic and international visitors.

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## Key action areas

There are **87 actions** in the Tourism Action Plan, with 3 key areas of focus:

### 1. Destination Development

This area of focus prioritises collaboration and support for the development of new visitor experiences, products, and infrastructure to meet long-term sustainability and accessibility goals. There are a total of **43 actions**, grouped into 7 themes.

- Developing capacity through improvements in the public domain, and investment in sustainable tourism infrastructure such as increasing the supply of hotel accommodation in the city centre and urban renewal areas.
- Developing city areas to ensure that the management of key tourist precincts is better integrated to improve the visitor experience.
- Developing connections at key areas of the city including facilities for cruise ship passengers, arrivals at Sydney Airport and other public transport connections.
- Developing sustainably through the provision of green event guidelines, improvement in the sustainability of accommodation and business events, and venue operating standards.
- Developing communities and businesses and encouraging development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' tourism infrastructure and experiences.

- Sustaining capacity and building economic growth through events management of year-round events and conferences to drive visitor demand.
- Developing reasons to visit through our ongoing support of conferences and business events as well as support for high-profile major events which attract visitors to Sydney.

## 2. Destination Management

The City continues to develop how we manage key areas of Sydney to ensure the city meets the expectations of visitors. There are **21 actions**, grouped into 5 themes:

- Managing the city environment through ongoing maintenance, cleansing services and beautification to ensure increased community safety and perceptions of safety.
- Managing visitor navigation through investment in high quality urban design initiatives for lighting, wayfinding, signage and landscaping.
- Managing visitor arrivals through our provision of visitor information services.
- Managing visitor transport including the delivery of light rail in the city and other major transport improvements including connections through Wynyard, Martin Place, Central Station, and integration of other major transport hubs.
- Managing visitor feedback to monitor the level of visitor satisfaction.

## 3. Destination Marketing

Integrated planning and execution of marketing campaigns has been central to our approach in promoting Sydney as a premier visitor destination. We are committed to highlighting Sydney's unique character, including our diverse cultural offering, neighbourhoods, and vibrant nightlife. There are **23 actions**, grouped into 3 themes:

- Marketing to visitors in the city through the provision of a variety of tourism related material at key information points across the city and neighbourhoods including development of new technology and apps.
- Marketing Sydney's experiences to locals and visitors including major events and festivals and celebrations that support tourism.
- Marketing Sydney globally through our partnership with Destination NSW to promote Sydney as a destination of choice. We also support the work of Business Events Sydney to attract and retain large conferences and conventions.

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## Action status

The status of all 87 actions in the action plan were reviewed and grouped into five categories:

- Completed – actions that have been completed without a plan to repeat.
- Ongoing (BAU) – actions that are well-established and have become business as usual.
- In-progress – actions that have commenced but are not fully delivered.
- Not started – actions that are under consideration but have not commenced.
- Discontinued – actions that are no longer relevant and discontinued.

Of the 87 actions, 71 (82% of all actions) have been implemented and are established as ongoing/business as usual, 8 (9%) have been completed but are not required to be repeated (i.e. actions including studies/research projects), no actions were not started, 5 actions are in progress (6%), and 3 actions (3%) were discontinued and are recommended to be closed out. In total, 97% of actions are completed, ongoing or in progress.

Figure 2. Chart: Tourism Actions by implementation status



Three actions were investigated but discontinued as no longer relevant and are recommended to be closed out. These include:

- *Advocate to the NSW Government to improve the speed, number, quality, and volume of rail services from rural and regional NSW, particularly from key locations such as the Central Coast, Newcastle and Wollongong.*

The City's priority was to advocate for the Metro in the first instance as this results in significant capacity increases on the rail system, which then makes it more feasible to have more frequent and faster connections from the regions to central Sydney.

- *Collaborate with Destination NSW in the development of digital-based visitor information that facilitates wayfinding.*

This action was discontinued, and with the pandemic having such a significant impact on visitor arrivals, it has not progressed. It will be investigated in the future through the City's QMS system and in discussions with Destination NSW and other government agencies. This will be reflected in the new economic development strategy.

- *Investigate provision for information, signage and wayfinding through mobile devices to accommodate non-English speaking residents and visitors to the City*

This action was not directly implemented although a modified action was utilising our QMS system to welcome visitors in multiple languages. Through the economic development strategy, we will be working on new visitor economy projects to address wayfinding, signage and sharing of information with visitors.

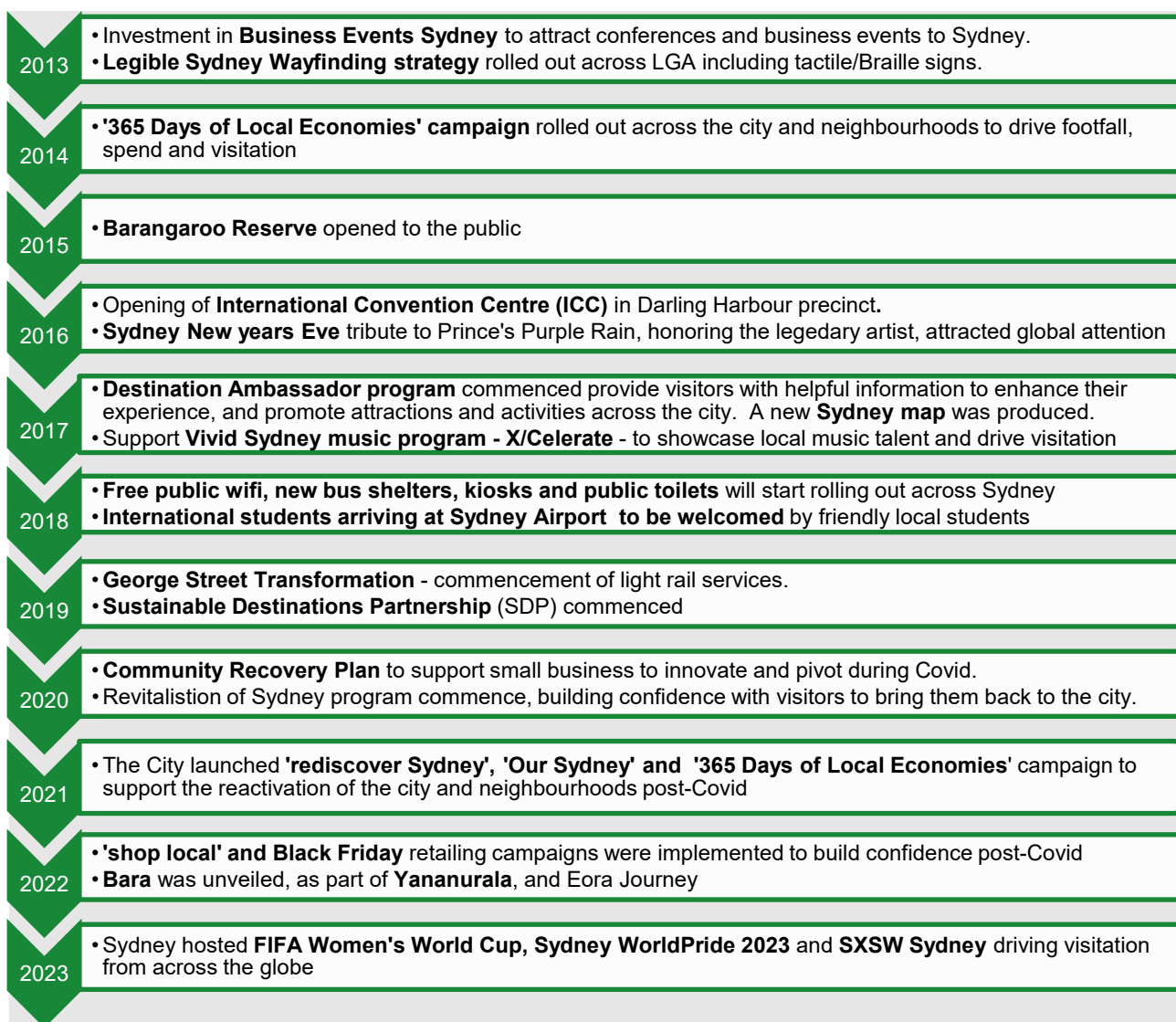
It is recommended that the above three actions are closed out, and through the new economic strategy, we investigate priorities to support the visitor economy.

## Key programs

Actions have been implemented through a range of levers including providing direct business services, delivering programs, organising events, sponsoring major events and festivals, supporting enablers, offering grants and subsidies, sharing information and key data, providing affordable space, and advocating for the Tourism and related sectors to support the economy.

Over the years, the City has made significant progress in introducing new programs, advocating for major infrastructure and transport connections, developing policy, and providing funding support for major events to strengthen our support for the tourism sector. The following chart highlights some key programs and milestones achieved each year over the life of the action plan and showcases the City's commitment to developing tourism opportunities and the wider visitor economy.

### Figure 3. Highlights of key program achievements





## Implementation Case Studies

### Case study 1 – ‘bara’ – a new visitor welcome

*bara* by Aboriginal artist Judy Watson is a major new permanent artwork to celebrate the First Peoples of Sydney, the traditional custodians of Gadigal Country.

The artwork takes pride of place on the Tarpeian Precinct Lawn above Dubbagullee (Bennelong Point) and honours clans of the Eora Nation and Elders past and present.

The cultural protocol of welcoming people to Country, or acknowledging the traditional custodians of Country, is at the heart of this artwork. It exemplifies this symbolic and deeply meaningful public gesture in a tangible and respectful way. This is especially important given the national significance of where *bara* is located, on the eastern shore of Warrane (Circular Quay), a key visitor destination.

Yananurala (Walking on Country) is the name for the new 9-kilometre walk sharing Aboriginal perspectives of place through artworks and installations along the Sydney harbour foreshore. This walk is an Acknowledgement of Country in its truest, most ancient form.

As visitors walk the shoreline, interact with public art and stories, hear whispers of language, and place their feet in the water, they introduce themselves to this Country so that it will remember them.

Yananurala invites us all to celebrate and learn from our beautiful harbour. It's hoped it will help locals and visitors better understand Country in a way Aboriginal people have experienced for millennia.

This is a key example of a destination development action to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' tourism infrastructure and experience for all people to enjoy.

Image: *bara* by Judy Watson. Photo: Chris Southwood/City of Sydney



### Case study 2 – Sydney Ambassadors

Our Sydney ambassadors help visitors daily by offering advice, wayfinding solutions, information on what's on and tips and tricks. They provide advice on where to find the best shops, restaurants, theatres, museums, galleries, and tourist attractions, to ensure our visitors have a memorable time in our beautiful city.

Our roaming ambassadors are located across the city at key landmarks including Circular Quay precinct, Customs House and have supported major events including Vivid Sydney and Sydney





WorldPride, Sydney New Years Eve, as well as welcoming passengers disembarking from cruise ships at the Overseas Passenger Terminal and White Bay port.

The ambassadors provide maps of Sydney and the latest guides to events across the city and our neighbourhoods.

Over the course of a year, our ambassadors typically greet close to 100,000 visitors with the top enquiries being for directions, transport, attractions, and maps. Additionally, the ambassadors meet about 47 international cruise ships, serving over 10,000 visitors.

Image: Destination Ambassadors welcoming international visitors arriving at Overseas Passenger Terminal

### Case study 3 – Sydney New Year’s Eve

New Year’s Eve celebrations put Sydney on the global stage, annually attracting millions of visitors and viewers of our spectacular fireworks display and family fun events.

In 2019, we undertook a study into the value of this event, which at that time bought in \$280m boost to the economy. This event reminds the world that Sydney is a global city for tourism, for business, for culture, technological creativity and most importantly, Sydney is a welcoming inclusive and diverse city for all our communities.

As one of the first cities to ring in the new year, Sydney sets the benchmark for New Year’s Eve celebrations around the world including 20 minutes of fireworks over two displays, a smoking ceremony, pylon projections, lighting display, illuminated vessels on the water.

In 2023, for the first time in the event’s history, AI technology was used to create animated segments that were projected onto the Sydney Harbour Bridge pylons throughout the evening.

Image: Sydney New Years Eve fireworks Photo: Henry Li/City of Sydney



### Case study 4 – Haymarket Revitalisation

Haymarket is home to Sydney’s vibrant Chinatown as well as Thaitown, Koreatown, Railway Square and Darling Square. Chinatowns around the world attract visitors and keep alive the historic links with many Asian cultural and community traditions.

Haymarket is a unique and distinctive part of Sydney. It has a special urban character that is lively, diverse, and ever changing, characterised by dining and shopping, and is a popular destination for locals and visitors.

Haymarket has historic links with Chinese culture and community. The growing influence of other Asian cultures and communities adds to an increasing diversity of shops and restaurants and visitor attractions throughout the area.

The City has been working closely with the local community to develop a vision for the future of Haymarket. We have released our Haymarket and Chinatown revitalisation strategy and Haymarket public domain plan outlining how we can make this community vision a reality.

This significant revitalisation strategy and delivery program builds on the program of upgrades to the public domain that have taken place across Haymarket and Chinatown over the past 10 years to support local businesses across the retail, tourism, and hospitality sectors, to care for this important cultural, visitor and retail precinct.



Projects have included the Thomas Street, Haymarket, transformation that saw an enhanced walkway and public space delivered. This upgrade included more trees, lighting, seating, and a new artwork. In 2012 Little Hay Street, Factory Street and Kimber Lane were also upgraded.

The revitalisation of these streets created a more generous and engaging experience for people who walk. Shared zones and widened footpaths encouraged people to visit the area, provided opportunities for gathering spaces and created a framework for new public art and decorative lighting.

Image: Dixon Street, Haymarket

## Case study 5 – Upgrading our public domain

The City is continuously undertaking revitalisation projects across the city centre and neighbourhoods. Extending public space encourages people to walk through the city, contributing to a healthy community and neighbourhood.



The upgrades of the northern part of the city are underway now, to pedestrianise Wynyard to Essex Street. These upgrades are part of the City's long-term vision to provide a calmer, more appealing environment for workers, visitors, and residents and to generate a 24-hour city economy.

The pedestrianisation of George Street south has been completed, creating wider footpaths for walking and new spaces for outdoor dining. It is part of the City commitment to open 9,000 square metres of car-free space to help create opportunities for businesses to operate.

The new pedestrian zone on George Street is open between Bathurst and Goulburn streets and experiences the highest level of pedestrian activity across the city regularly. It's the first step in a \$43.5 million construction project. This area has been transformed, advancing the City's plans to progress the design for Belmore Park to better connect to Central station.

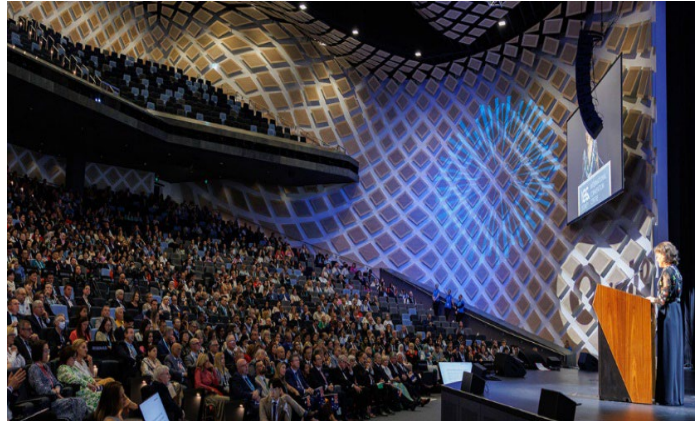
Image: George Street transformation, Danish architect and urban planner Jan Gehl, the creative mind behind the changes in Sydney's downtown, back in Sydney to see the results of his work 16 years after suggesting big ideas for the city. Photo by Abril Felman/City of Sydney



## Case study 6 – Business Events and Conferences

The City works closely with Business Events Sydney (BESydney) to secure significant global conferences, meetings, and incentive events that deliver economic and social impacts for Sydney.

The BESydney team works across Asia, Australia, Europe, and the Americas to bring hundreds of events to Sydney. The events each year attract thousands of international delegates from key industries and injecting hundreds of millions of dollars into the economy.



The City supports this endeavour through funding and leveraging opportunities when business delegates are here in Sydney. We work with BESydney to develop an exciting program of events, pre and post conference tourism experiences to attract this high-spending business visitor and their partners and families to experience more of Sydney and NSW.

In collaboration with BESydney, we participate in the Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDSI), which is the leading sustainability benchmarking and improvement program for meetings and events destinations. Annual participation in the index is a valuable way to recognise and promote the work of our local accommodation and entertainment sector in progressing sustainability.

Business Events Sydney, in partnership with the City and other key stakeholders, has also created a world-leading social impact methodology and framework for business events in Sydney and across NSW. The index is aligned with the UN sustainable development goals. It measures and compares the environmental impact, social performance, sustainable practices of suppliers and sustainable strategies and programs in participating cities.

Sydney has been participating in the program since 2016, with a current ranking of 15 out of 73 participating destinations. In 2019 the Sustainable Destination Partnership received the GDSI's Innovation in Sustainability Award for outstanding collaboration.

Image: FDI World Dental Congress 2023, International Convention Centre (ICC), Sydney

## Case study 7 – Sustainable Destination Partnership

Sydney is Australia's leading destination for tourists and the gateway to NSW. The tourism sector is a vital component of the city's economy and an important contributor to national and international recognition of Sydney being a great place to visit, live and work. But this popularity comes at a price with accommodation and entertainment venues creating 47% of Sydney's commercial waste, 21% of its carbon emissions and consuming 14% of its drinking water.



In response, leading hotels, event centres, cultural institutions and tourism bodies are working together to improve environmental performance and build Sydney's reputation as a leading

sustainable destination for visitors and attracting global business events, conferences and incentive groups.

Led by the City, the Sustainable Destination Partnership aims to improve the energy, water and waste efficiency of buildings in the local area; increase the uptake of renewable energy; and engage with regulators on major environmental policy and regulatory issues.

Officially established in June 2018, the partnership has committed to supporting the Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050 Continuing the Vision sustainability goals.

Image: Chair, Emma Bombonto, Sydney Opera House, and Deputy Chair, Mei McNamara, Salter Brothers

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## Collaboration and partnerships

The City works in collaboration with many key stakeholders across the tourism sector to bring meaningful and material impacts to Sydney's visitor economy. We cannot act alone and seek to always create strong partnerships and networks with industry, government and others, so, through our combined efforts, more can be achieved.

Wherever possible, we have aligned our strategies and actions with those partners including state and federal government tourism policies.

Our partnerships include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Destination NSW
- Tourism & Transport Forum
- Placemaking NSW
- Tourism Accommodation Australia
- Business Events Sydney
- BridgeClimb & Hammons Holding
- Committee for Sydney
- Merlin Entertainment
- Lend Lease
- Infrastructure NSW
- Property owners
- Cultural and arts organisations
- Ports Authority of NSW
- Local councils
- Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Advisory Panel
- Accommodation sector
- Tourism Australia
- Australian Retailers Association
- International Convention Centre
- Night Time Industries Association
- Sydney Opera House
- NRMA Travel
- Transport for NSW
- Department of Planning
- University of Sydney
- UTS
- University of NSW
- Barangaroo Delivery Authority
- Mirvac
- Property Council of Australia
- Retail and hospitality businesses
- Sydney Airport
- Cruise ship operators
- Tourism Research Australia
- Local tourism businesses
- Australian Hotels Association
- Business Chambers
- Theatres
- Conference organisers
- Office of the 24-hour Economy Commissioner

## Measures and indicators

Sydney is the international gateway to Australia, and it is the number one destination for domestic and international visitors. Short-term arrivals to Sydney are at 90% of pre-pandemic levels with forecasts showing growth will continue over the next 12 months. The United States of America was the largest individual source market of visitors to the region, followed by New Zealand.

Although tourism was extremely affected by the pandemic, recovery is on track. There has been a small decline in the number of tourism businesses in the LGA but a growth of tourism job numbers due to a significant increase in the number of part-time employment positions.

Initiatives such as the Sydney Ambassador program have seen a return to pre-pandemic numbers, and in the twelve months to June 2024 we have seen over 99,000 interactions with international visitors, providing information on transport, maps, directions and attractions.

We have served close to 10,000 international cruise passengers from the Overseas Passenger Terminal and White Bay Cruise Terminal.

### Figure 4. Total domestic and international visitors to Sydney – travel Dec 2014 to Dec 2023

	Year ending Dec 2014	Year ending Dec 2023	Change over 10 years
<b>Total Visitors</b> (include international, domestic and domestic day trippers)	29.7m	39.2m	24% increase
<b>Total Nights</b>	86.1m	103.8m	17% increase
<b>Visitor Expenditure</b>	\$14 b	\$25b	43% increase

Source: National Visitor Survey & International Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia

<b>Top 4 markets International visitor to Sydney</b>	<b>Percentage as at Dec 2023</b>	<b>Purpose of international visitor to Sydney</b>	<b>Percentage as at Dec 2023</b>
United States of America	13%	Holiday	47%
New Zealand	11%	Visitor Family & relatives	30%
United Kingdom	10%	Business	10%
China	9%	Education	6%
		Employment	2%

Source: National Visitor Survey & International Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia

## New challenges and opportunities

The tourism sector globally has had a tumultuous time over the past decade and Sydney and Australia was greatly impacted by national and state border closures for a significant period of time during 2020-2021, with a slow reopening and building of confidence for travellers in 2022.

The pandemic and the long recovery that followed had a profound impact on the sector. But with international visitor numbers continuing to grow, now is the time for all layers of government to re-evaluate their visitor economy strategies and find improved ways of working together, to realise new opportunities to evolve the sector.

There are many interconnected factors that impact the Australian tourism market which present challenges and opportunities that need to be addressed to ensure a strong recovery for the visitor economy. Some of these challenges and opportunities are outside of the City's control but many others we can influence or directly impact. These include:

### Challenges

#### 1. Sector and economic challenges and impacts

Return of international airline capacity is still lagging behind demand creating a shortage of available seats into and out of Australia, and airfares globally are still high post pandemic with travellers delaying booking in advance, hoping to catch a discounted airfare.

There has been an opening up of new tourist markets in the Asia Pacific region creating competition for Australia and Sydney. We need to ensure that there is renewal of visitor attractions, experiences and strong marketing campaigns to create traveller demand.

We are facing economic headwinds globally and cost of living pressures leaving travel as a discretionary item.

Ongoing supply constraints still impact the sector including workforce and skills shortages, supply chain disruptions and rising cost pressures.

We continue to see lower numbers of high-value international visitors compared to pre-pandemic years including the lower number of Chinese visitors. We must make sure we are considering the needs of diverse visitors from across the globe and country.

We have seen an increase in hotel accommodation in the past decade with many new properties coming online to meet demand at all levels of accommodation, but we need to ensure we manage the short-term accommodation levels to find balance between housing needs and short-term visitor needs.

### Opportunities

#### 1. Leveraging our Creative community and First Nations experiences

We need to grow opportunities to tell the unique story of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultural experiences.

Domestic tourism demand rapidly recovered from the pandemic but has now stabilised. We have an opportunity now to make sure that we are leveraging Sydney's creative and cultural community to enhance the visitor experience to drive repeat visitation. We need to acknowledge and celebrate culture as vital to liveability and wellbeing in our city.

#### 2. Investment in tourism experiences

We need to encourage greater investment in tourism attractions and experiences. It will be important to drive repeat visitation with new experiences on offer and some of the prominent projects coming online in the near future include new Sydney Fish Markets,

redevelopment of Powerhouse Museum, and Barangaroo precinct cultural and recreation transformation.

We must continue to work in partnership with NSW Government and the visitor economy sector to make Sydney a sustainable and accessible destination aligned with the UN sustainable development goals.

The annual events calendar in Sydney has recovered but we need to see a strong pipeline of events to drive visitor demand. Taylor Swift concerts, SXSW Sydney and Vivid Sydney all resulted in strong room night leisure demand and the business/corporate market is also recovering well.

### 3. Strong collaborative marketing

There needs to be better collaboration with the sector and relevant government agencies on marketing campaigns that showcase Sydney's unique character beyond the iconic landmarks.

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## Recommendations

### Integration with the new Economic Development Strategy

The City's next economic development strategy will set a new vision for the city's economy. We want to ensure that when visitors come to Sydney, they have a great experience, with vibrant street life, a dynamic 24-hour economy and access to diverse and engaging cultural experiences.

Challenges and opportunities outlined in this report have been considered and have helped shape the direction of the new economic development strategy. To address key issues, the new strategy proposes high-level objectives and relevant actions, many of which will focus on supporting the tourism sector as well as the broader visitor economy and help tackle these identified challenges and opportunities.

In addition, we have identified an important momentum building project in the next strategy which will help address how we can evolve the visitor experience in Sydney to meet visitor needs.

Actions in the strategy to support the visitor economy include:

1. Recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and history, and embed it in the experience of Sydney
  - *Our actions will consider how we can support our First Nations local businesses to grow opportunities and promote their unique and authentic offering to all.*
2. Invest in and leverage major events, festivals and business conferences to promote Sydney and its values to global audiences
  - *Events, festivals and activations drive footfall to the city centre and neighbourhoods. We need to continue to work closely with the retail, food and beverage and hospitality sectors to ensure they know how to leverage these events and attract more visitors to their destination and deepen the visitor experience.*
  - *Provide support to local festivals, major events, and business conferences that demonstrate Sydney's vibrancy, cultural and creative life and drive visitation of local and global audiences.*
3. Collaborate to create world class visitor services to deepen the visitor experience
  - *We will work with the sector and government agencies to deliver visitor information services and consider new technology to improve the visitor experience.*
4. Complement infrastructure projects with place making and activation opportunities



- *Our focus will be on the quality of the public domain and the level of activity within it. Creating pedestrian friendly, well connected, safe and activated public spaces are essential to a global visitor destination.*
- 5. Advocate and monitor regulation reform, with a focus on entertainment, sound, planning and liquor reform
  - *We need to continuously review, reform and make it easier to navigate government procedures and approvals to operate across the visitor economy to encourage and support small scale creative activations in the public domain, drive innovation and reform.*
- 6. Collect, monitor and share data and insights that illustrate how the city is changing and can assist with decision making with local businesses and government
  - *We will share data with local businesses, business chambers and industry to ensure they understand who is visiting Sydney, their changing needs and experiences they are seeking.*
- 7. Diversify the 24-hour experience to encourage wider participation
  - *Visitors are seeking new and alternative experiences, we need to make sure there is a diversity of businesses attracting a wide audience to our city centre and neighbourhoods. We need to encourage diversity of trading hours of the retail and hospitality sector to meet those visitor needs.*
- 8. Upgrade the public domain with creative, green and high-quality amenities
  - *We need to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport to and within precincts to create vibrancy across the 24-hour economy. We need to encourage public space projects to improve opportunities for engagement, activation and quality of place.*
- 9. Celebrate and promote distinct neighbourhoods and precincts to drive visitor engagement
  - *We need to work in partnership with local businesses on placemaking strategies to support vibrant and unique precincts. We need to work with government and other partners to develop marketing campaigns for these unique Sydney precincts.*
- 10. Support continuous learning, process improvement and improved business engagement
  - *We will work with state government agencies in the implementation and monitoring of planning and licensing regulation reforms to improve process and drive innovation and creativity to activate the public domain.*

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## Monitoring and evaluation

The City will continue to monitor the performance of Sydney's visitor economy sector using the following measures as set out in the new economic development strategy:

- Drive visitation across the daytime, night-time and weekend periods
- Drive attendance at and production of diverse cultural offerings
- We will measure international and domestic visitor arrivals, nights and spend.



# Retail Action Plan - close out report

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## Strategic context

The City has an important ongoing role to play in developing a strong retail sector, to support the broader visitor economy. We continue to work with industry and government partners to create an environment that allows retail to diversify, grow and develop to meet the resident, workers and visitor needs.

Our 10-year action plan set the direction for the City to engage with the retail sector and broader stakeholder groups, with the aim of positioning Sydney as Australia's premier retail destination with a shopping experience in the city centre and thriving main streets in each of our neighbourhoods.

Retail is defined as goods and personal services (such as hairdressers) plus cafes, restaurants and takeaway food services. The data in the Retail Action Plan, and this report, has adopted the broadest definition by including pubs and clubs. The core data in the Action Plan is drawn from the City's Floorspace and Employment Survey and other from respected industry and realtor sources.

There have been many challenges and opportunities facing the sector and these were tested during Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. People were unable to go out to shops, but the uptake of online shopping rapidly grew, and this has continued in subsequent years.

In 2012/13 the retail sector represented over 7,800 of approximately 21,500 businesses in the city which was 36% of all business establishments in the local government area (LGA). Retail in our LGA employed approx. 61,338 workers which was 14% of the city's workforce.

In 2022/23, retail now represents approximately 7,626 of approximately 21,614 businesses in the city, which was 35.5% of all business establishments in the LGA. Retail sector in 2022 had 68,175 workers of 519,839 total jobs in the city, which equates to approximately 13.1% of the city's workforce, and is a slight decrease from 2012.

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## Key action areas

There are a total of **67 actions** in the Retail Action Plan, with four key areas of focus:

### 1. Create great experiences

This area of focus aims to create great experiences for city workers, residents and visitors to Sydney to ensure they choose to shop in central Sydney and its villages and neighbourhoods. There are **32 actions** in this area, which were grouped into 4 themes:

- Invest in public domain improvements, infrastructure and services to enhance the attractiveness of central Sydney as a retail destination for workers, residents, visitors and business
- Deliver public domain improvements in the local neighbourhoods to enhance their attractiveness as retail destinations
- Create lively and active places that encourage more visits and increase dwell times in central Sydney and surrounding neighbourhoods
- Promote Sydney as Australia's premier retail destination

## 2. Build capacity and resilience

This area of focus aims to build the skills, capability and resilience of the retail sector to ensure the city has a diverse range of sustainable, innovative retail businesses. There are 23 actions in this area, which are grouped into 5 themes:

- Support and strengthen retail on main streets and local neighbourhoods
- Encourage the development of a diverse workforce
- Assist the sector to create baseline data, develop emission reduction strategies, and transparently report on performance
- Foster and promote innovation in sustainable retail practices in order to position Sydney as a leader in this field
- Ensure retail sector growth.

## 3. Remove barriers

This area of focus aims on reducing red tape and removing barriers and clarifying regulatory processes. It assists new retailers and small businesses to interact with council and other levels of government more efficiently and effectively. There are **7 actions** in this area, which are grouped into 2 key themes:

- Remove regulatory process inefficiencies and barriers to business growth and inform business how to navigate the processes
- Assist retailers to capitalise on business opportunities associated with events and shifts in consumer behaviour.

## 4. Engage with the sector

This area of focus aims to encourage closer cooperation between retailers and more efficient interaction with the regulatory processes of government. There are 5 actions in this area, with one key theme:

- Develop a multi-platform approach to facilitate communication and consultation with and between retail stakeholders.

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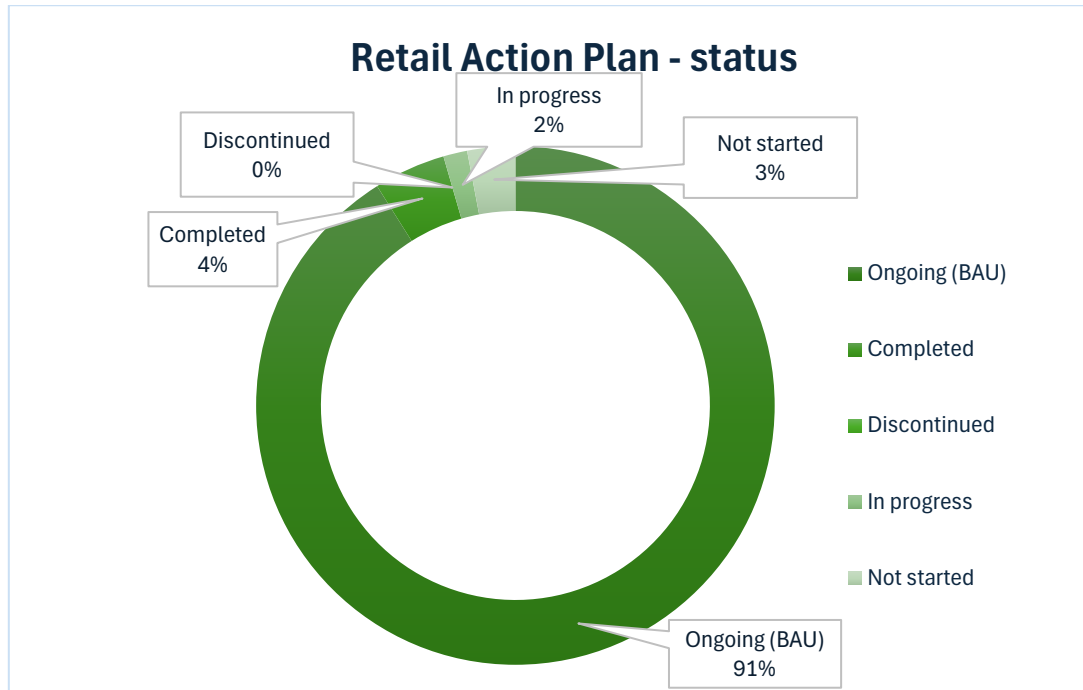
## Action status

The status of all 67 actions in the action plan were reviewed and grouped into five categories:

- Ongoing (BAU) – actions that are well-established and have become business as usual.
- Completed – actions that have been completed without a plan to repeat.
- Discontinued – actions that are no longer relevant and discontinued.
- In-progress – actions that have commenced but are not fully delivered.
- Not started – actions that are under consideration but have not commenced.

Of the 67 actions, 61 (91% of all actions) have been implemented and are established as ongoing/business as usual, while 3 actions (4%) have been completed but are not required to be repeated (i.e. actions including studies/research projects), zero actions discontinued, 1 action is in progress (2%), and 2 actions (3%) were not started and are recommended to be closed out. In total, 97% of actions are completed, ongoing or in progress.

Figure 5. Chart of Retail Actions by implementation status



The two actions that were investigated but not implemented and are recommended to be closed out, as follows:

- *Advocate to the Federal Government to reform Australia's GST Tourist Refund Scheme to allow competition by private refund operators that will drive tourist shopping and product development to international visitors and allow reimbursement whilst visitors are still in Australia.*

The City consulted with the Retail Advisory Panel and the Australian Retailers Association and it was agreed that this advocacy work should be led by industry. The City agreed to provide a supportive role if industry requested.

- *Facilitate partnerships between the vocational and higher education organisations and the retail sector to pursue research, knowledge and skills development as well as opportunities for entry-level employment.*

The City consulted with the Australian Retailers Association (ARA) who advised that the retail industry peak body, on behalf of retailers was seeking federal government investment to help future-proof the sector and reposition retail as a career. The need to upskill the existing workforce and build career pathways, particularly in the digital transformation of the industry, was essential, but acknowledged that work was being led by ARA and the private sector to meet the skills training required. The City agreed to provide a supportive role if industry requested in the future.

## Key programs

Actions have been implemented through providing direct business services, delivering programs, organising events, sponsoring major events and festivals, supporting enablers, offering grants and subsidies, sharing information and key data, providing affordable space and advocating for the retail and related sectors across the wider visitor economy.

Over the years, the City has made significant progress in introducing new programs, advocating for major infrastructure and transport connections, developing policy and providing funding support for major events to strengthen our support for the tourism sector and visitor economy. The following chart highlights some key programs and milestones achieved each year over the life of the action plan and showcases the City's commitment to developing the visitor economy.

Figure 6. Highlights of key program achievements



## Implementation Case Studies

### Case study 1 – Creating great experiences - Christmas in the City

The City's annual Christmas in the City event positions Sydney as a global city retail destination and a place to experience Christmas in the Southern Hemisphere.

The City hosts a huge Christmas event across the CBD and neighbourhoods with free children's concerts, Christmas markets, choirs, lights, trees, decorations, street banners, a visit from Santa and the much-adored Martin Place Christmas tree.



This event is not just about the celebration of Christmas but about providing opportunities to the retail and hospitality sectors to participate and benefit from the increased footfall and entertainment that is showcased each year.

We invite retailers, precinct managers, shopping centres, hotels, tourism, and hospitality sector operators to be part of this major event each year. Briefings are provided to inform stakeholders of the many marketing and promotional opportunities including space on Pitt Street Mall to activate retail events across the launch weekend, dedicated What's On pages to showcase retail, tourism and hospitality events, and regular media posts about all the events happening across the city and villages.

One of the key outcomes of hosting this event is the estimated spend on Christmas shopping, food, drinks, and entertainment across the opening weekend campaign. Research has identified that in 2022 over \$8.1m was generated by visitors to this weekend event in the CBD alone. Many people visiting the CBD at the Christmas in the City launch weekend attend year after year and come from across metropolitan Sydney.

In addition to Sydney Christmas, the City also produces Sydney New Year's Eve and Sydney Lunar Festival. These events are produced annually, drive huge footfall increases across the city centre and have significant impact on consumer spend across retail purchases, food and beverage, transport, tourism and visitor attractions, accommodation, and travel. The publicity from these events reaches global audiences putting Sydney and Australia in the minds of many potential travellers.

In addition to the events we produce, the City uses our grant funding to support many large and small festivals and events that drive footfall and spend across our local area benefiting our retail, hospitality and visitor economy. Those events include Vivid Sydney, Vogue Fashions Night Out, Australian Fashion Week, local neighbourhood festivals, Delicious Sydney, Good Food Month including Asia on your doorstep and many more.

Image: Christmas in Pitt Street Mall 2019



## Case study 2 – Creating great experiences – Alfresco Dining

Through the Alfresco program introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we have approved over 707 new outdoor dining areas since November 2020, including 180 on-street approvals to support our local hospitality businesses.

The revised outdoor dining guidelines enabled fast tracked approvals, reduced notification times and provided a more flexible and permissive requirements process. It allowed the reallocation of on-street parking bays and, allowed pubs, small bars and takeaway food and drink premises to use outdoor dining.



This red tape reform has been a huge success, and was achieved in partnership with NSW government and its agencies. In addition to simplifying the process, we removed outdoor dining fees from March 2020 until June 2025 to better support the revitalisation of our city centre and neighbourhoods.

Over 2097sqm of road space and 6589sqm in footpath space has been approved for alfresco dining across the city. Hospitality businesses who have taken up this opportunity have enjoyed growth of customers, turnover, staffing and outdoor dining space, which has benefited their businesses, the economy, and the vibrancy of the local area.

Image: Outdoor dining at the Dolphin Hotel, Surry Hills,  
Photo: Jessica Lindsay / City of Sydney

## Case study 2 – Creating great experiences - Sydney Streets

The City introduced the Summer Streets program in response to Covid-19 pandemic to encourage residents and businesses to safely return to enjoying their local areas, dine outside and activate the streets with music and entertainment.

This program series tapped into global trends reclaiming public spaces for local communities during the pandemic.

Locals loved the program, and we experienced a significant increase in foot traffic, spend and dwell time by visitors to the main high streets that were activated.



These events was then expanded into 'Sydney Streets' which has now become a well-established and successful series benefiting local business including retail, cafes, bars and much more.

The program involves shutting our best-known inner city high streets to traffic for one day. Cars and buses are replaced by street furniture, a crew of roving entertainers, and pubs and bars that spilled out onto the road.

The program started with an event in Kings Cross followed by Redfern Street and Crown Street, then Pyrmont, Glebe and East Sydney. Rather than inviting external vendors to set up

markets, the focus was on encouraging local businesses to shine - one local shop said its sales were up 900% on the event day.

This program continues to roll out three times per year, across seven main streets to drive vibrancy and support for our local businesses. These unique events enable local communities to enliven the public spaces and make them more inclusive, driving social connection.

Image: Stanley Street, Sydney Streets 2022

### Case study 3 – Building capacity and resilience and Removing Barriers - Oxford Street Place Strategy

Unveiled in 2022, the Oxford Street Place Strategy is one of a handful in the world to explore ways to protect and preserve LGBTIQ+ culture and communities. It is the first of its kind in Australia – reflecting the importance of this precinct and local LGBTIQ+ community.

Oxford Street is predominantly made up of retail businesses at the street level who will participate and benefit from this important piece of work.

The strategy identifies important places and sets out

opportunities to strengthen, support and promote LGBTIQ+ cultural identity and importance. It promotes inclusive businesses, funds new public artworks, and supports establishing a pride museum driving the revitalisation of this important precinct.

This program will help the City deliver more cultural spaces in the precinct – galleries, space for artists, theatres, restaurants, and nightclubs – and a 24-hour precinct with inclusive and diverse cultural offerings that include the full spectrum of LGBTIQ+ communities.

Visibility is vital to create a proud, colourful, and welcoming destination that Oxford Street is known for globally. We will also continue to address disadvantage and connect people with the services they need.

In addition to the place strategy the City has also formed in partnership, the Oxford Street Precinct Pride Business Charter which brings together a diverse and passionate network of like-minded businesses, community organisations and individuals that value and respect the diversity of people and places in the Oxford Street precinct, including LGBTIQ+ communities.

The area's businesses are key to its vibrant and inclusive culture. With this charter, a commitment has been made to maintain the important connection LGBTIQ+ communities have to Oxford Street, and to support and celebrate its culture, led by the City. We are working with local representatives of Rainbow Precinct as the custodians of the charter. Members sign up to a set of commitments that will tackle local challenges and create opportunities to see the Oxford Street precinct thrive.



Membership is open to businesses and organisations operating in the area. Like the locality, members of this charter are diverse and made up of businesses large and small, property owners, community organisations, arts organisations, community service providers and educational institutions operating across the Oxford Street precinct

Other key programs to support Oxford Street include support for the annual Mardi Gras Parade. This global event showcases Sydney as a truly open and inclusive city that celebrates diversity and creative culture. We provided more than \$3 million for WorldPride in 2023, helping to host events such as Pride Villages which activated Oxford Street as the festival's focal point.

Oxford Street is also a creative and cultural precinct, with major institutions including the National Art School and the UNSW School of Art and Design and includes clusters of creative businesses.

Once affectionally known as the 'gay golden mile', Oxford Street has a long history as a precinct associated with Sydney's counter-culture movements.

We're committed to building on Oxford Street's reputation as an iconic LGBTIQ+ precinct and a centre of buzzing activity both day and night, with space for thriving businesses, creatives and culture.

Image: Dog walker on Oxford Street circa 1988 Photo: C. Moore Hardy / City of Sydney Archives

#### Case study 4 – Build capacity and resilience - Greener Innovation grant

Reducing emissions rapidly is the key to achieving our net zero targets for the City of Sydney's area. Many small and medium businesses face barriers to act. These may be because include that they lack the resources to hire a sustainability manager or create a net zero plan.

In 2021, we awarded an innovation grant to create a net zero roadmap for the retail sector, an Australian first.

The project was led by the Australian Retail Association (ARA) in partnership with local clean tech startup Greener as part of the UN-backed Race to Zero pledge. The partnership produced Greener for Business, a sustainability management app that identifies immediate cost savings while outlining a simple net zero action plan for small to medium businesses in any sector.

The ARA net zero road map outlines the decisions, investments, and actions that retailers can make to accelerate their transition to net-zero emissions. The roadmap consists of 6 video modules and a practical guide. The videos feature insights from 8 prominent businesses and climate experts, and cover net zero foundations through to sustainable supply chains. ARA continues to run regular net zero workshops to educate businesses

This represents the first low cost, accessible net zero pathway for small to medium businesses in Australia. In 2022 Greener was awarded #1 cleantech start up in Australia by Climate KIC and received \$4million in seed funding from NAB Ventures.

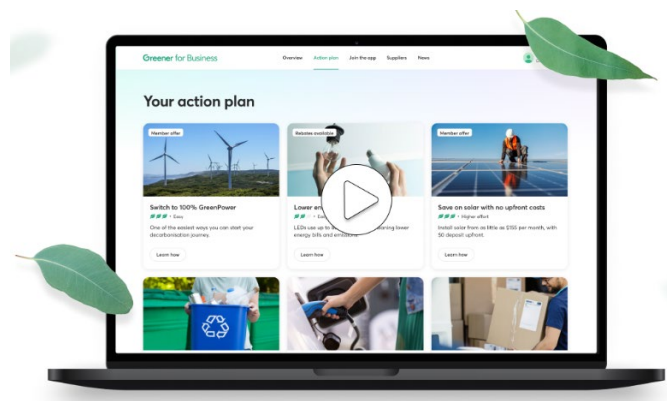


Image of the Greener for Business program



## Case study 5 – Build capacity and resilience – Reboot – Business Upskilling Program



This series focused on digital content skills and growing customer and brand for small businesses with a strong focus on the retail sector. The first series in 2021 saw more than 7000 registrations, and the second series in 2022 received over 5000 registrations.

The webinars provide inspiring stories and examples for retail and hospitality owners, startups, entrepreneurs, creatives, artists, and professional service businesses. Subjects include financial fundamentals, create winning online store, and storytelling content that connects.

Presenters include key personnel from Kelly Slessor, CEO of Shop You, e-commerce coach and digital marketing guru; Naomi Simson, founder of RedBalloon and Big Red Group, editor in chief at news.com.au and more.

Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

## Case study 6 – Removing Barriers – 24-hour Trading

Businesses in the city centre can now apply to trade up to 24 hours a day. This will give Sydney's night-time economy, which already employs more than 35,000 people and is worth more than \$4 billion each year, a major boost.

Shops on high streets like Crown Street, Union Street and Glebe Point Road will be able to apply to trade until 2am. This will give people more late-night options in their own neighbourhoods, support shift workers and make our streets safer by bringing people of all ages into the area.



The City has created new late-night trading areas in the city's fastest-growing neighbourhoods, like the Green Square town centre and Barangaroo. This change will give residents in these booming areas more places to shop, eat and do business after they finish work.

Live music and performance will also get a boost, with a new 24-hour arts and cultural precinct in north Alexandria, and extra trading hours for venues that hold performances. These changes will help create more diverse night-time options for the 1.2 million people that live, work, visit and do business in Sydney every day. These changes will help set the foundations for Sydney to become one of the world's best 24-hour cities.

Businesses will need to apply for the new hours through a development application. This includes demonstrating good management and showing how they'll manage any impacts on their neighbours.

Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

## Case study 7 – Engaging with the sector – Supporting our villages and neighbourhoods

The City invests ongoing resources to support the network of Business Chambers, Peak-body Associations and Industry groups by providing access to grants including the Business Support, Festival and Events, and Innovation and Ideas grants; as well as providing access to capacity building programs, invitations to participate in Business Chamber Roundtable events, seminars, access to research and data, events and briefings.

We have delivered a series of programs to support small businesses, including Reboot Webinar Series, Business Innovation Program, Visiting Entrepreneur Program, and Raising the Bar. Local business chamber members are invited to participate as audience members or participate as case-study business programs.

The City continues to engage with local business chambers, industry associations and local businesses on relevant issues and key policy initiatives such as the outdoor dining policy and guidelines, Sydney Streets opportunities and strategy development and engagement.

Through the various types of grants received by the Chambers, they have been able to deliver a range of projects which support businesses in our local villages and neighbourhoods. Projects include Women in Business seminar series, mentoring and networking events, destination strategy development and marketing, digital and print precinct guides, newsletters and digital communications and capacity building workshops.

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## Collaboration and partnerships

The City works in collaboration with many key stakeholders across the retail sector to bring meaningful and material impacts to Sydney's wider visitor economy. We cannot act alone and seek to always create strong partnerships and networks with industry, government and others, so, through our combined efforts, more can be achieved.

Wherever possible, we have aligned our strategies and actions with those partners including state and federal government tourism policies.

Our partnerships include (but are not limited to) the following:

### **Business, Economic Development Covid Recovery Advisory Panel**

- Investible
- Stone and Chalk
- Committee for Sydney
- House of Pocket – YCK Laneways
- Business Sydney
- Canva
- Four Pillars Gin
- Property Council of Australia
- Animal Logic
- Australian Retailers Association
- University of Sydney
- BridgeClimb & Hammons Holdings
- NSW Indigenous Business Chamber of Commerce
- Tech Central/Greater Cities Commission
- Placemaking NSW
- Supply Nation

- Banna property group

### **Retail Advisory Panel**

- Australian Retailers Association
- Tourism & Transport Forum
- SCentre Group (Westfield)
- Vicinity Group (QVB, The Galleries, The Strand, Chifley)
- Destination NSW
- Placemaking NSW
- Transport for NSW
- Louis Vuitton
- Tourism Accommodation Australia
- Restaurant & Catering Association
- Tonkin Zulaikha Greer Architects
- Sydney Business Chamber
- Property Council of Australia
- Capitol Theatre

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- Events Cinema Group
- World Square (JLL)
- Business Events Sydney
- NSW Small Business Commissioner

**Shopping Centres, Retailers & Precincts**

- SCentre – Westfield Sydney
- Vicinity Group – QVB, The Galleries, The Strand & Chifley
- Mid-City Centre
- Sydney Arcade
- World Square
- Barangaroo, Darling Square, Darling Square, Sydney Place (Lend Lease)
- 25 Martin Place, Gateway (Dexus)
- South Eveleigh, Broadway (Mirvac)
- The Rocks, Darling Harbour, (Property NSW/Place Management NSW)

- Haymarket and Chinatown
- Central Park
- David Jones
- Myer
- Dymocks
- RM Williams
- H&M
- JD Sports
- Footlocker
- Zara
- PE Nation
- Neighbourhood high street business partnerships
- Chambers of Commerce
- Event producers and Activation agencies

While the above list showcases key partners, the City acknowledges that there are many other organisations that have made substantial contributions to the delivery of the Retail Action Plan. We extend our sincere gratitude to all these unlisted partners who have actively participated in shaping the success of our endeavours.

## Measures and indicators

We will continue to monitor and review impacts on the retail sector. There are a number of indicators available to us including our Floor Space and Employment survey, and retail reports from respected industry and realtor sources.

### City of Sydney Floor Space and Employment Survey

We will monitor the number of businesses in the retail sector as well as employment, using our Floor Space and Employment Survey data.

## Figure 7. Change of Retail businesses and jobs 2012 - 2022

Businesses	2012	2017	2022
Total	21,617	23,508	21,614
Retail businesses	7,868	8,301	7,626
	36.4%	35.3%	35.3%

Jobs	2012	2017	2022
Total	435,769	501,785	519,839
Retail jobs	61,338	57,929	68,175
	14.1%	11.5%	13.1%

### Retail Sales

Retail sales results are an important measure of performance in the retail sector. Unfortunately, this data is not available at a City of Sydney LGA level from sources such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The ABS collects retail sales results on a monthly basis from a sample of retailers, but consolidates it for reporting purposes at a state-wide level.

ABS's most recent retail market update for Australia states that fashion and department stores have driven down an overall slump in retail sales of 2.7% in December 2023 compared to the prior month, data revealed.

This follows a revised rise of 1.6% in November 2023 and a fall of 0.2% in October 2023. Revisions to seasonally adjusted data are larger than usual this month according to the ABS, reflecting improvements in the data as the evolving seasonal pattern becomes clearer.

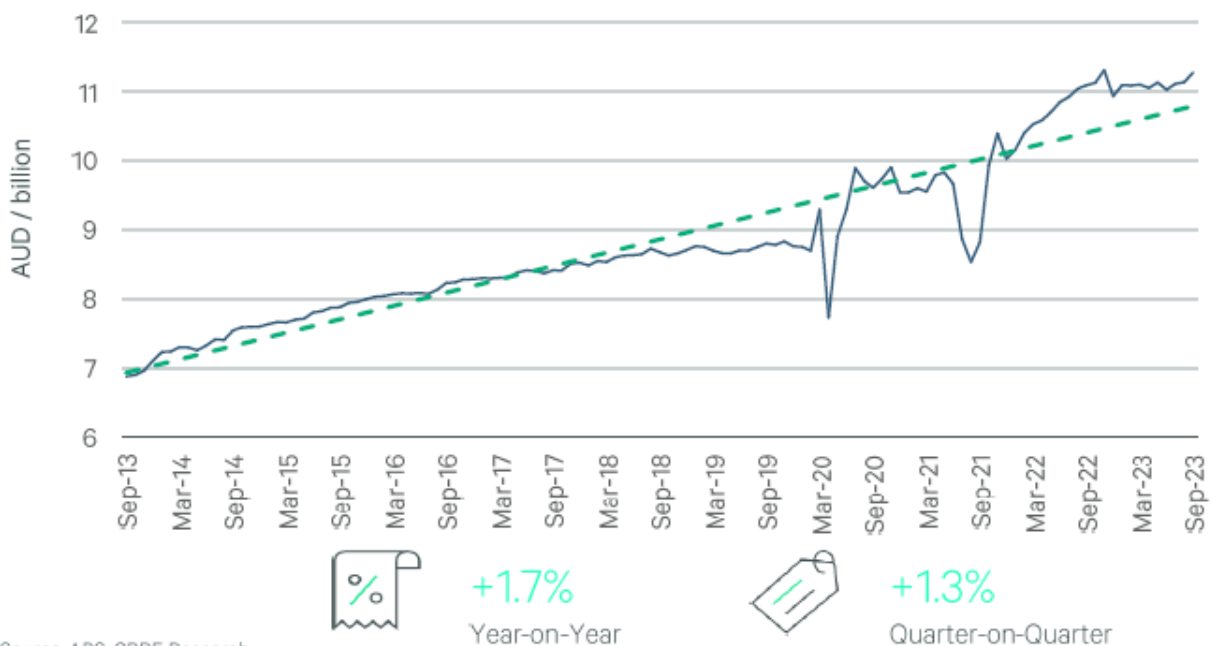
According to the ABS, the large fall in overall retail turnover in December was caused by a fall in discretionary spending. Consumers have generally brought forward their usual Christmas December spending to November to take advantage of Black Friday sales, Sydney's largest shopping event in the calendar year.

In Sydney centre, Department stores such as David Jones and Myer, fared better, capitalising on Boxing Day sales and the final few weeks before Christmas with a range of promotional events instore, driving customer footfall and spend.

CBRE have provided data on the performance of NSW total retail turnover, seasonally adjusted (Sep 2013 – Sep 2023). Retail sales increased in NSW by 1.3% quarter on quarter in September 2023, the highest quarterly growth recorded this year.

## Figure 8. NSW Retail Turnover, seasonally adjusted Sep 2019 – Sep 2023

FIGURE 1: NSW Total Retail Turnover, Seasonally Adjusted (Sep 13 - Sep 23)



### Retail Supply and Rents

Rents remain stable despite higher vacancy in Sydney CBD and Shopping Centres, but interestingly average Prime CBD rents did increase by 1.5% quarter on quarter, whilst Super Prime assets such as Pitt Street Mall remained stable. Green Square Town Centre reached practical completion in Q3 2023, one of the few new floorspaces added to the Sydney central city market of this year.

Whilst the return to office continues to support foot traffic and CBD retail trade, CBD vacancy remains relatively high at 8.1%. CBD Prime assets outperformance is underpinned by the increasing appetite for global brands securing Prime flagship store locations on major streets including George Street, Pitt Street, and Martin Place. The recent lease of 1103sqm in June 2023 at 130 Pitt Street to Adidas for a flagship store is evidence of the demand for these key Sydney CBD strip locations.

Sydney's Pitt Street Mall ranked 8<sup>th</sup> most expensive retail real estate on the global ranking scale in the 2022 Main Streets report, which measures prime real estate from across the world, produced

by Cushman and Wakefield. Pre-Covid it was ranked 7<sup>th</sup> globally and is the only Australian city to make the top 50 retail districts. It is valued at almost at \$13,000/sqm/year, which is a drop of 7% year on year or 24% since 2018 and this was primarily because of international borders closing in response to Covid-19 pandemic and loss of international travellers.

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## New challenges and opportunities

There are many interconnected factors impacting the Australian retail market which present challenges and opportunities that need to be addressed to ensure a strong recovery for the retail sector and wider visitor economy. Some of these challenges and opportunities are outside of the City's control but many others we can influence or directly impact.

### Challenges

#### 1. Economic conditions and sector challenges

A range of interconnected factors are having an ongoing impact on the retail sector in our city centre, with many of these challenges beyond our control. Some of those factors include consumer confidence; securing staff and creating retail career pathways; global economic headwinds; cost of living impacts; cost of goods, labour, shipping and delivery; supply of goods and services and access to import markets; high interests rates and housing stress – reduced capacity to spend by locals; highly competitive market online v brick n mortar; and weaker Australian dollar – cost to retailers.

Cyber security is also an increasing concern for businesses across all sectors and it is imperative that retailers invest in mitigating cyber risk, increasing cyber risk awareness and improving digital trust. Cyber risk management not only helps retailers avoid the costs and damage of a cyber-attack, but it also builds customer trust in the brand and keeps consumers engaged.

#### 2. Local challenges for retail sector

Local challenges faced by city retailers include cost of labour to extend trading hours to meet visitor demand, creating opportunities to extend trading footprint outside of premises using a similar process to outdoor dining, and costs to activate to drive customer engagement, footfall and spend.

### Opportunities

#### 1. Strong demand for experiences

Consumers are seeking fully interactive shopping experiences and this has driven a surge back to physical stores in the city centre. We are starting to also see the return of Chinese visitors who are seeking luxury experiences, premium retail shopping goods and trust of authenticity of those items. The slightly weaker Australian dollar against other global currencies has also made the cost of those luxury goods cheaper, making retail an attractive proposition moving forward.

We also have the opportunity to promote a unique point of difference by supporting our First Nations people, culture and history, and embed it in the experience of Sydney for all visitors, including the authentic retail experience that visitors seek.

#### 2. Strengthening local conditions

We need to support and encourage retailers who are using online channels to provide information to customers about the products and services they offer, including ESG



objectives and sustainability aspects as well as their point of difference over competitors. This builds corporate reputation and builds trust with consumers.

Recognising demand for faster delivery options by consumers will mean new opportunities for last mile delivery and fastest delivery service options. The City has a role to play in supporting active and last mile delivery solutions.

It is also important that we share data with the retail sector so they understand who is visiting the city and how they are spending. Retailers need to use this data with their own data to understand who their customer is and learn to service and respond to consumers.

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## Recommendations

### Integration with the new Economic Development Strategy

The four key areas of focus in the Retail Action plan are still current and relevant and should be incorporated into the next Economic Development Strategy.

- We need to create great places and spaces which encourage and support great experiences. Not all experiences need to be transactional, but should draw and entertain visitors to a retail precinct or strip, and increase dwell time in the area. Creating a pedestrian friendly, welcoming retail area is essential to see visitors returning.
- The City should continue to support and provide programs to build capability and skills of retailers to help build capacity and resilience to ensure the city attracts a diverse range of sustainable, innovative and resilient retail businesses.
- We must address barriers, remove red tape and simplify processes so retail businesses can effectively interact with council and other levels of government.
- We need to continue to engage with the retail sector to encourage closer cooperation and partnership, sharing of data and changes to visitor demographics to the city centre and neighbourhoods.

Challenges and opportunities outlined in this report have been considered and helped shape the direction of the new economic development strategy. To address key issues, the new strategy proposes high-level objectives and relevant actions, each of which will focus on supporting the retail sector as well as the broader visitor economy, tackle these identified challenges and opportunities.

Demonstration Projects and actions identified in the next economic development strategy will help address current retail challenges and opportunities, including:

1. Celebrate and embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people and culture in the experience of Sydney
  - *Our actions will consider how we can support our First Nations local businesses to grow opportunities and promote their unique and authentic offering to all.*
2. Invest in and leverage major events, festivals and business conferences to promote Sydney and its values to global audiences
  - *Events, festivals and activations drive footfall to the city centre and neighbourhoods. We need to continue to work closely with the retail, food and beverage and hospitality sectors to ensure they know how to leverage off these events and attract more visitors to their destination and deepen the visitor and retail experience.*
3. Invest in public domain, walking and cycling options that improve safety and the visitor experience

- *Our focus will be on the quality of the public domain and the level of activity within it. Creating pedestrian friendly, well connected, safe and activated public spaces are essential to a global retail destination.*
4. Advocate and monitor regulation reform, with a focus on entertainment, sound, planning and liquor reform
    - *We need to continuously review, reform and make it easier to navigate government procedures and approvals to operate across the retail and visitor economy to encourage and support small scale creative activations in the public domain, drive innovation and reform.*
  5. Gather, track and share data and insights that show how the city is changing and allow for performance to be measured
    - *We will share data with local businesses, business chambers and industry to ensure they understand who the visitor is in a local retail area, their changing needs and spending behaviours.*
  6. Support the development of a diverse and sustainable 24 hour economy that meets the needs of residents, visitors and businesses
    - *Consumers are seeking new and alternative experiences, we need to make sure there is a diversity of businesses attracting a wide audience to our city centre and neighbourhoods. We need to encourage diversity of trading hours of the retail sector to meet those visitor needs.*
  7. Reinforce local character and increase visitation by developing and promoting distinct local places and high-street offerings
    - *We need to work in partnership with local businesses on placemaking strategies to support vibrant and unique precincts. We need to work with government and other partners to develop marketing campaigns for these unique Sydney precincts.*
- 

## Monitoring and evaluation

The City will continue to monitor the performance of Sydney's visitor economy sector using the following measures as set out in the new economic development strategy:

- Drive visitation across the daytime, night-time and weekend periods
- Drive attendance at and production of diverse cultural offerings
- We will measure international and domestic visitor arrivals, nights and spend.



# Tech Startups Action Plan - close out report

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## Strategic context

The Tech Startups Action Plan, released in 2016 aimed to provide strong support to the tech startup ecosystem in Sydney. It was developed in response to the strong needs from the tech startup sector and seeks to support Sydney's tech startup sector to grow and achieve its potential.

The goal of the action plan was to encourage our technology entrepreneurs to start and grow global businesses and help Sydney's tech startup ecosystem mature, which in turn would create more jobs, boost Sydney's economy, strengthen global connections and improve talent attraction.

In 2016, the city already hosted the largest innovation ecosystem in Australia, with over 64% of Australia's tech startups located in its local government area. However, the sector was still in the early stages of development, facing various challenges as well as competitions from domestic and global cities.

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## Key action areas

### 1. Build the entrepreneurial culture

The aim of this focus area was to encourage more people to become technology entrepreneurs who start and develop high-growth companies. There are **15 actions**, which are grouped into 3 themes:

- Help the ecosystem create data, and report on the economic, cultural, and social impact of entrepreneurs and tech startups.
- Increase awareness of Sydney's entrepreneurs and tech startup ecosystem to increase the number of people engaging and investing in startups.
- Partner with other startup champions to increase support for tech startups and position Sydney as a global tech startup city.

### 2. Create skilled and connected entrepreneurs

The aim of this focus area was to build a robust ecosystem in which technology entrepreneurs have the capacity and networks to launch local companies that become global companies. There are **12 actions**, which are grouped into 2 themes:

- Increase business education, entrepreneurial skills and access to mentors and networks, and foster an entrepreneurial culture
- Increase computer science education and entrepreneurial skills in the community, especially among young people.

### 3. Increase the density of the ecosystem

The aim of this focus area was to ensure startups and the organisations that support them are able to scale, and can be located close to one another so they can connect, share ideas, mentor and partner with others. There are **6 actions**, which are grouped into 3 themes:

- Investigate the creation of an entrepreneurship centre.
- Use planning regulations to encourage more innovation spaces and/or affordable spaces.
- Create affordable work spaces.

#### 4. Support entrepreneurs' access to funding

The aim of this focus area was to generate more investors and more investment in tech startups, and connect entrepreneurs with investors and businesses. There is **1 action**:

- Increase the number of informed investors.

#### 5. Develop entrepreneurs' access to markets

The aim of this focus area was to increase the number of consumers prior to and after the release of an entrepreneur's product/service. There are **6 actions**, grouped into 3 themes:

- Encourage more opportunities for entrepreneurs to increase business.
- Encourage more opportunities for startups to become suppliers to the City through its procurement practices.
- Open our data resources to spark ideas and tools that serve business and community.

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## Action status

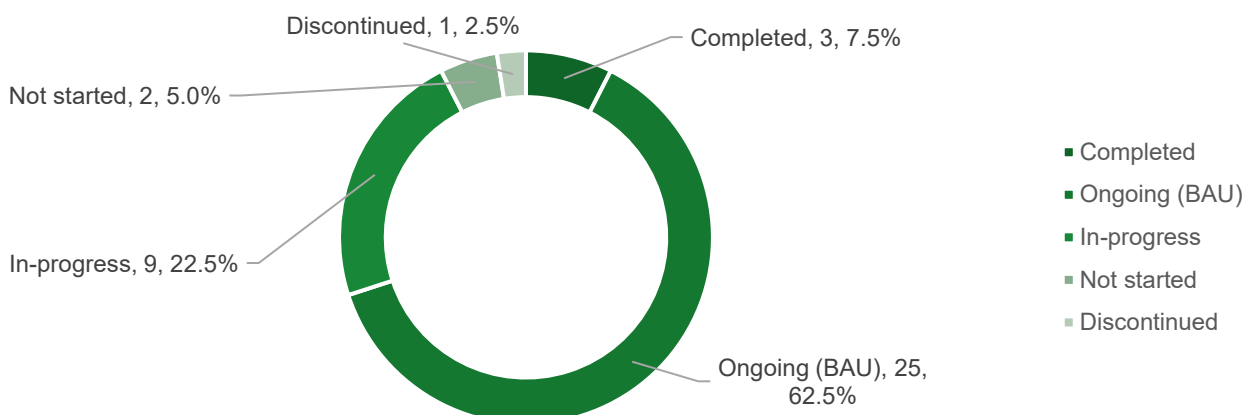
The status of all 40 actions in the action plan were reviewed and grouped into four categories:

- Completed – actions that have been completed without a plan to repeat.
- Ongoing (BAU) – actions that are well-established and have become business as usual.
- In-progress – actions that have commenced but are not fully delivered.
- Not started – actions that are under consideration but have not commenced.
- Discontinued – actions that are no longer relevant and discontinued.

Of the 40 actions, 28 (70% of all actions) have been either completed or delivered as BAU, while 9 actions (22.5%) are in progress. Only 2 actions have not commenced and 1 action is discontinued.

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## Figure 9. Tech Startup Actions by implementation status



The discontinued action is:

*5.2 Investigate increasing the number of Sydney-based companies the Advance Innovation program supports and boosting its impact.*

This was discontinued as the Advance Innovation program ceased operation. Subsequently, the City either directly delivered or supported programs that built the entrepreneurial skills of local startup founders. Programs include Business Innovation program, Visiting Entrepreneur Program, Tech Ready Women program, and Future Asia Business Summit.

The two actions that are not started are:

*1.8 Formally acknowledge the contribution of entrepreneurs and other members of the tech startup ecosystem, for example, through a Sydney innovation or young entrepreneur award.*

*2.9 Devise an advocacy campaign to support relevant, exciting and accessible early education in digital technology, particularly for girls.*

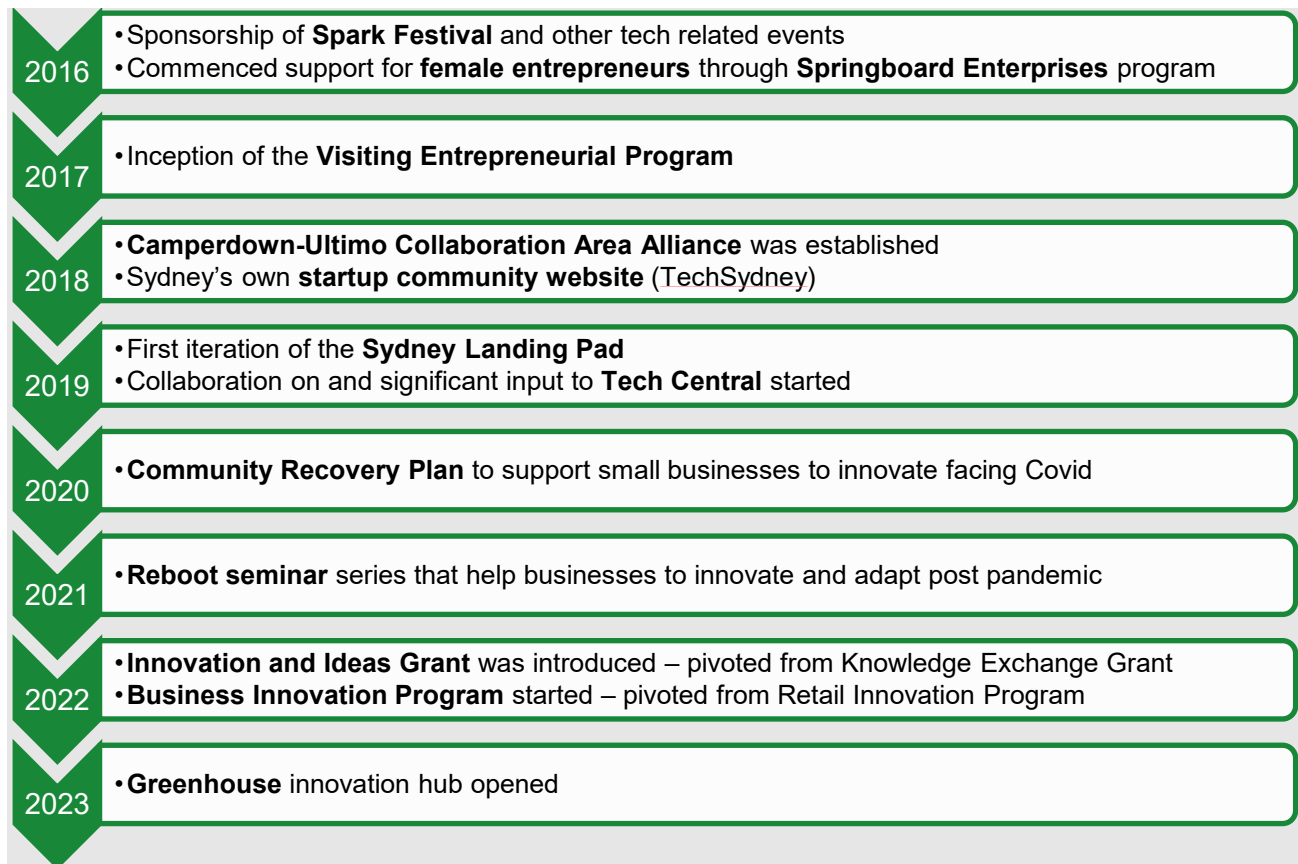
We considered these actions but did not commence them due to resource and capacity constraints. We will integrate these actions into the implementation plan of the new economic development strategy and explore opportunities to progress the aims of these actions.

## Key programs

Actions have been delivered or implemented through providing direct business services, delivering programs, organising events, sponsoring festivals, supporting enablers, offering grants, sharing information and key data, providing affordable space, and advocating for the startup ecosystem.

Over the years, the City has made significant progress in introducing new programs and reviewing and pivoting existing programs to strengthen our support to Sydney's tech startup sector. The following chart highlights some key programs and milestones achieved each year and showcases the City's commitment to fostering a thriving tech ecosystem.

## Figure 10. Highlights of key program achievements



## Implementation Case Studies

### Case study 1 – Visiting Entrepreneur Program

The Visiting Entrepreneur Program (VEP) stands as the flagship initiative within this action plan. This program has offered a unique opportunity for global and local experts, along with successful entrepreneurs, to engage directly with Sydney's vibrant tech startup community.

Each year, the program focused on a specific theme, with participants sharing invaluable insights into technological breakthroughs and innovation trends.



The aim of the program was to educate local startup founders, investors, and talent to facilitate knowledge exchange and networking among key players in our local ecosystem. By doing so, it fostered a thriving culture of entrepreneurship and innovation while also elevated awareness of Sydney's tech startup ecosystem on a global scale.

Since its inception in November 2017, the VEP has successfully covered a wide array of themes, including social impact tech, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, blockchain, space, extended reality, cleantech, biotechnology, and quantum technology.

Partnering with over 100 organisations, such as Sydney Startup Hub, StartupAus, Spark Festival, USYD, UNSW, UTS, and Cicada Innovation, the program has orchestrated 74 events, attracting more than 12,800 participants from our local tech startup ecosystem.

The VEP program supports multiple action areas including build the entrepreneurial culture and community; create skilled and connected technology entrepreneurs and support technology entrepreneurs' access to funding

Image: Visiting Entrepreneur Program 2022, The Grounds, South Eveleigh Photo: Cassandra Hannagan / City of Sydney

### Case study 2 – Greenhouse, business innovation space at Circular Quay



In 2019, the City made a substantial investment to collaborate with an experienced operator to establish a world-class business innovation hub known as Greenhouse.

This ambitious venture aims to offer a world-leading and affordable home for startups focused on tech solutions to tackle climate change.

Greenhouse is strategically positioned across three floors of Salesforce 56-storey tower at 180 George Street. With an expansive area of approximately 3,800 sqm, the hub offers an array of high-quality spaces tailored to the needs of startups and scaleups.

In addition to workspace, the hub provides essential support to emerging tech companies in the form of investment capital, talent acquisition, and growth services. The vision is to support these climate-tech scaleups realise their global ambitions, firmly establishing Sydney as the



epicentre of smart, inclusive, and green innovation. Greenhouse aims to nurture over 100 high-performing businesses, creating a wealth of 1,500 new jobs within the span of a decade.

To make Greenhouse a reality, the City has committed \$31m towards fitout costs and an accommodation grant over ten years. This significant investment ensures the hub will be affordable and inclusive to many communities, including startups founded by female entrepreneurs and Indigenous businesses.

Greenhouse opened in October 2023, was fully tenanted in early 2024, and hosted Sydney's first Climate Action Week in May 2024. Greenhouse is already having significant positive impact on our local innovation ecosystem and the broader community.

Greenhouse project supports multiple action areas, such as building the entrepreneurial culture and community; increasing the density of the tech startup ecosystem; supporting technology entrepreneurs' access to funding and developing technology entrepreneurs' access to markets

Greenhouse Climate Tech Hub was officially launched on 25 October 2023. Photo: Daniel Kukec photography

### Case study 3 – Sydney Landing Pad Program

Sydney Landing Pad Program is supported through a Knowledge Exchange grant. It encourages international tech companies with growth potential to successfully expand into Australia, via Sydney and is free to participate.

The program assists overseas companies in familiarising themselves with the Australian market dynamics.

Participants gain valuable insights through access to mentors, legal experts, and recruiters, facilitating a smooth transition into the Australian business landscape.

Moreover, the program actively facilitates the formation of strong networks with potential partners and clients, along with establishing connections with potential investors.

Since 2019, the program has gained international traction and attracted 185 applications from 40 cities around the world with an average valuation of \$25 million. To date, 37 companies have successfully participated in the program.

The Sydney Landing Pad Program is an exemplary demonstration of the City's dedication to fostering innovation and global partnerships and the City is now in discussion with industry partners to explore the opportunity to launch the second iteration of the program.

The Sydney Landing Pad program supports multiple action areas as building entrepreneurial culture and community, creating skilled and connected technology entrepreneurs and develop technology entrepreneurs' access to markets

Image: Promotional image for the Sydney Landing Pad. Photo: Haymarket HQ / City of Sydney



## Case study 4 – Tech Central

In 2018, the NSW Government unveiled an ambitious plan to establish a world-class innovation and technology precinct within the city called *Tech Central Innovation District*.

The district encompasses six dynamic innovation precincts – Camperdown, Ultimo, South Eveleigh, Darlington/North Eveleigh, Haymarket, and Surry Hills.

Tech Central enables and promotes collaboration through the co-location of education, industry, talent, infrastructure, and investment, including high quality public domain, space for people, active and public transport, excellent pedestrian connectivity and digital infrastructure.

The economic potential of Tech Central is vast. It'll provide up to 250,000 sqm of space for technology companies, including 50,000 sqm at affordable rates for startups and scaleups, in a connected location brimming with heritage, culture and activity.

Host to the largest innovation ecosystem in the country, with an estimated value of \$68b, attracting \$1.3b early-stage funding annually, Sydney ranks 20<sup>th</sup> among all global start up ecosystems, and is ranked number one in the Oceania region.

The City has been involved in Tech Central from the start, sitting on the Tech Central Alliance alongside universities, hospitals, and government stakeholders. We are also actively investing in several key areas to support Tech Central including reviewing place strategies and updating planning controls for more commercial space, housing, and jobs

The Tech Central project supports multiple action areas as building the entrepreneurial culture and community; creating skilled and connected technology entrepreneurs; increasing density of the tech startup ecosystem; supporting technology entrepreneurs' access to funding and develop technology entrepreneurs' access to markets

Image: Concept design for central square. Photo City of Sydney



## Case study 5 – Spark Festival sponsorship



Spark Festival is an exceptional celebration of innovation, creativity, and technological advancement that brings together a diverse community of visionaries, entrepreneurs, innovators, high-skilled talent, investors, and forward-thinkers.

This annual event, held in the heart of Sydney, serves as a catalyst for collaboration and knowledge exchange

within Australia's thriving innovation ecosystem.

Spark is a not-for-profit, grassroots festival that aims to inspire everyone to participate and unlock their full potential in the innovation ecosystem. As a community-driven event, it has offered a mix of free and ticketed events, ensuring it is accessible and open to our broad community, including younger generations and the public.

Since 2016, the City has provided Spark Festival with grants to support its development, promotion and successful delivery over the years. To date, the City's sponsorship has amounted to a total cash value of \$300,000 and a further \$45,246 as value in kind for street banners and provision of venue space.

Spark festival has so far delivered over 1,000 events with 1,500 collaborators and attracted 70,000 attendees over the years.

*"I've worked with councils across Australia, and I've never seen more considered or effective support of startup activity than I have from the City of Sydney. They don't just have an action plan, they take action, and ensure those actions generate results for residents, visitors and workers. The Tech Startup Action Plan has resulted in the intelligent, high-leverage activities that Australia's leading tech startup city deserves and needs to continue its further growth."*

– Murray Hurps, Chair, Spark Festival

The Spark Festival sponsorship supports multiple action areas including building the entrepreneurial culture and community, creating skilled and connected technology entrepreneurs, and supporting technology entrepreneurs' access to funding.

Speakers at the Spark Festival event.

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## Collaboration and partnerships

The City cannot deliver the action plan alone. It takes a joint effort with many other key stakeholders in the innovation economy to bring meaningful and material impacts to Sydney's tech startups ecosystem and advance Sydney's reputation as a leading global innovation hub. The City has forged strong partnerships and worked closely with a wide group of organisations throughout the implementation of the action plan, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Academy Xi
- Airtree
- Antler
- Artesian
- Asialink
- Atlassian
- Blackbird Ventures
- BlueChilli
- Canva
- Cicada Innovations
- EnergyLab
- Fishburners
- General Assembly,
- Greater Cities Commission
- Haymarket HQ
- Heads Over Heels
- Incubate, Innotribe, Innovation NSW
- InnovationAus
- Inspiring Rare Birds
- Investible
- Investment NSW
- Macquarie University
- Mirvac
- Q-CTRL,
- Right Click Capital
- SheEO
- Slingshot
- Spark Festival
- Springboard Enterprises Australia
- StartCon
- Startup Daily
- Startup Digest
- StartupAus
- Stone & Chalk
- Sydney Business School
- Sydney Knowledge Hub
- Sydney Quantum Academy
- Sydney School of Entrepreneurship
- Sydney Startup Hub
- Tank Stream Labs
- Tech Central Alliance
- Tech Council of Australia
- Tech Ready Women,
- TechSydney
- The Studio
- The University of New South Wales
- The University of Sydney
- University of Technology Sydney
- University of Wollongong,
- UNSW Founders Programs
- Zambesi

## Measures and indicators

In the past few years, Sydney's tech startup ecosystem has been growing fast, maintaining Sydney's position as Australia's capital for startups. According to Startup Muster surveys, 55% of startup founders in Australia are in NSW in 2023, rising from 41% in 2016.

The workforce in the city has become better educated, providing a strong support to the growth of Sydney's knowledge and innovation economy. The proportion of workers with bachelor or higher degree increased from 57.3% in 2016 to 66.4% in 2021.

Sydney's startup ecosystem has matured significantly, with the emergence of several successful companies as unicorns in recent years, including Immutable, Safety Culture, Zip, and Afterpay, in addition to Atlassian and Canva.

Between 2018 and 2022, there were 277 successful exits, over three times the global average. The cumulative value of exits was over US\$12.3 billion in this period. The estimated ecosystem value has grown to US\$78 billion (calculated as total startup valuations, including exits from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2020 to 2022), while it was only USD 6.6 billion in 2016 as single year.

In 2023, 210 startups located in the city secured investment at the total value of \$3.45 billion, accounting for 42% of the total funding to startups in Australia. The growth was tremendous, up from \$1.83 billion in 2019. (reference: [Techboard data](#)).

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## New challenges and opportunities

The landscape of Sydney's tech startup ecosystem has changed significantly since the action plan was released. While the ecosystem has experienced strong growth and maturity, new challenges and opportunities have emerged, requiring strategic interventions to sustain and further enhance the city's position as a leading innovation hub.

### Challenges

#### 1. Space Affordability

One of the persistent challenges faced by tech startups in Sydney is a scarcity of affordable and suitable spaces, especially during the early stages of their development when funding is limited. The city also lacks affordable event spaces that hinder networking and collaboration opportunities.

Post-COVID, an opportunity presents itself with high office vacancy rates and the potential for reduced rents in the city. Some suitable under-utilised commercial space could be adapted for startups as co-working spaces, incubators and accelerators, creating a more inclusive and vibrant tech community.

#### 2. Need for talent

Sydney's tech startup ecosystem heavily relies on talent from overseas, including international students. However, the pandemic has disrupted the inflow of international talent, leaving a gap that could hinder the further development of Sydney's innovation economy. While other global cities are making significant investments to compete for talent, Sydney faces challenges to win the talent war.

In addition to attract and retain global talent, Sydney must also focus on nurturing local talent and encouraging them to thrive in the tech sector. Stronger collaboration is needed between educational institutions and industry partners to strengthen STEM education, promote creativity and entrepreneurial culture.



### **3. Access to funding and investment**

Sydney's tech startup ecosystem has witnessed substantial growth in early-stage investment for promising startups and scaleups. However, a notable challenge remains for startups at the ideation and very early stages, as they struggle to secure seed funding.

Sydney needs to attract more active and experienced angel investors. High-quality networking events need to take place more often to allow frequent and stronger interactions between investors and startup founders. Government also has an important role to play in providing small funding through innovation grants.

### **4. Other Australian Cities**

As the leading innovation hub in Australia, Sydney faces growing competition from other cities like Melbourne, which has been steadily catching up in the tech startup space. While Sydney maintains its prominent position, it is essential to acknowledge that the gap between the two cities is narrowing, reflecting the need for proactive measures.

To reinforce its position as the capital city for startups and innovation, Sydney needs more efforts and investments to accelerate the growth of its tech startup sector.

Collaboration, rather than competition, presents the path towards collective growth and success. By complementing each other's strengths, sharing best practices, and creating a united front, Australian cities can collectively enhance the nation's reputation as a thriving and competitive destination for tech startups. Through joint efforts, Sydney and other Australian cities can elevate the entire Australian tech ecosystem, reinforcing their positions on the global stage and attracting more opportunities for innovation and growth.

## **Opportunities**

### **1. Specialisation and established tech companies**

Sydney's innovation ecosystem stands out with its strong specialisation in key areas, including FinTech, CleanTech, Quantum computing, healthTech, and eduTech, among others. These competitive advantages present an excellent opportunity for further advancement and growth.

Notably, established tech giants like Atlassian and Canva, which have emerged from Sydney's ecosystem, are now giving back to the sector. Through mentorship programs, knowledge-sharing initiatives and collaboration projects, these successful companies are empowering the next generation of innovators. By providing invaluable insights and guidance, they help startups chart their way to success, instilling confidence, and resilience in the aspiring entrepreneurs.

### **2, Tech Central innovation precinct**

Tech Central presents a significant opportunity for Sydney's tech startup ecosystem. This dedicated innovation precinct brings together startups, research institutions, investors, and industry players in one central location, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange.

The state government's strong commitment and investment in Tech Central ensure the availability of state-of-the-art infrastructure and facilities, attracting top talent and providing startups with a conducive environment to thrive.

The concentration of resources and support within Tech Central enhances Sydney's reputation as a leading global tech hub, encouraging collaboration with industry leaders and increasing access to funding opportunities.

By fostering an innovation-centric culture and promoting local and global visibility, Tech Central plays a pivotal role in driving the growth and success of Sydney's tech startup ecosystem.

To continue thriving as a dynamic tech startup ecosystem, Sydney must address the challenges of space affordability, talent retention, funding gaps, market expansion, and commercialization of innovation. Leveraging the city's specializations, reinforcing its position

among Australian cities, and embracing opportunities like Tech Central will be instrumental in maintaining Sydney's reputation as a leading global innovation hub. By fostering collaboration and innovation, the local government can ensure Sydney remains at the forefront of the tech revolution.

### **3. Connection to global markets**

Sydney's tech startups face limitations in expanding their market reach due to a relatively small size of the domestic market.

However, Sydney's geographical location offers a significant advantage, being close to the fast-growing Asian economy. This proximity provides an excellent opportunity for startups to build strong market connections and tap into the vast potential of the Asian market.

Despite this potential, Sydney has not fully leveraged its geographic advantage, as indicated by its relatively low scores in the market reach assessment by Startup Genome reports.

### **4. Commercialisation of innovation**

Sydney hosts several world-class universities and research institutes that drive innovation. However, commercialising innovation remains a challenge. The gap between research and successful businesses is caused by many reasons, including a lack of entrepreneurial skills, funding, industry partnerships, or market validation opportunities.

To bridge the gap, Sydney must improve in the following areas. It needs to foster collaboration between research institutes and industries.

Sydney also needs to showcase and promote successful stories to encourage aspiring entrepreneurs to pursue their ideas with confidence. Government should also play a pivotal role in supporting and sponsoring pilot projects that turn innovative concepts into viable products, propelling the commercialisation process.

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## **Recommendations**

### **Key projects**

The successful delivery of key projects remain a priority for us. The below projects represent a significant investment by the City and have the capacity to realise substantial impact for the sector and city economy.

- The development and promotion of Tech Central Innovation District in collaboration with state government and other key stakeholders; and
- The delivery and scaling of Greenhouse Climate Tech Hub offering high-quality programming and affordable space to Greentech startups and scaleups.

### **Integration with the new economic development strategy**

The lessons learnt in the delivery of this action plan, as well as the new challenges and opportunities identified in this review are inputs into the City's new economic development strategy.

The new strategy sets a vision to champion a global economy that unlocks innovation, which is sustainable and inclusive, and provides great local experiences. It promotes economic development across four outcome areas – sustainable, inclusive, innovative, and experiential – with success in the innovation outcome listed as:

- Sydney is a destination for talent and ideas, driving an innovation-led transformation of all areas of the economy.

The following high-level actions are listed in the new strategy and either carry forward key actions from the Action Plan or respond to the new challenges and opportunities listed in this review:

- Encourage investment in Sydney that supports the evolution and growth of the sustainable finance sector
- Trial and test new ideas and approaches to support industry innovation in the transition to net zero and circular economies
- Boost Sydney's innovation ecosystem and connect it globally to attract and retain businesses, talent and investment
- Plan for economically competitive and resilient places, including development of quality workplaces supported by infrastructure
- Work with education institutes, industry, and community organisations to provide inclusive career pathways and address skills gaps
- Promote areas with strong sector specialisations and a clustering of complementary economic activities
- Collaborate with enablers in the innovation ecosystem to foster startup communities and provide affordable workspace and event space
- Foster a culture of entrepreneurship through knowledge sharing, festivals, network building and active promotion of experimentation
- Support local business to innovate, build skills and adopt new technologies, including artificial intelligence
- Strengthen connectivity across Greater Sydney and NSW with clean, high-frequency, reliable and safe public transport options

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## Monitoring and evaluation

The City will continue to monitor the performance of Sydney's innovation ecosystem using the following measures as set out in the new economic development strategy:

- Grow worker productivity across key knowledge and innovation intensive industries
- Increase clustering in precincts of knowledge and innovation intensive industries




# **Attachment B**

**Draft Economic Development Strategy  
2025-2035**

# Economic Development Strategy 2025–2035







The City of Sydney  
acknowledges the Gadigal of the  
Eora Nation as the Traditional  
Custodians of our local area.

We acknowledge their continued  
care and protection for the lands  
and waters of this place since  
time immemorial.



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Sydney is more than a great city – it's a world-leading economy. Everything we do at the City of Sydney helps grow the economy by setting the conditions for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

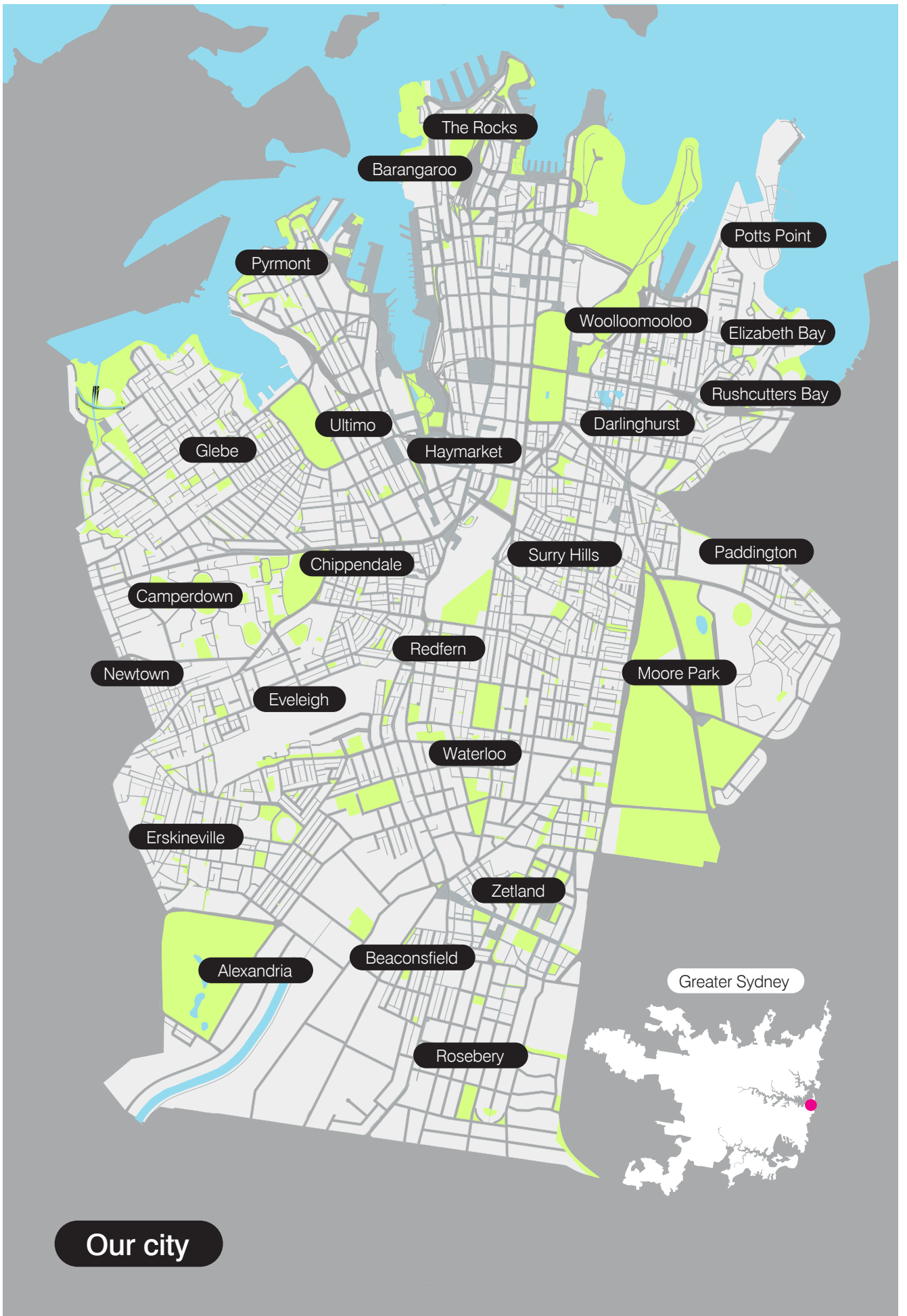


Photo: Daniel Tran/City of Sydney

# Message from Lord Mayor Clover Moore



Message to come





# Sydney's Forward Economy

Our 10-year economic development strategy continues the vision of Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050.

Photo: Florian Groehn



**Its focus is the activity that occurs within the 26km<sup>2</sup> that make up the City of Sydney local area, where more than \$142 billion in economic output is generated each year.**

The local economy has impact and influence well beyond its boundaries, it has recovered strongly from the major economic impacts caused by the pandemic.

However, like all economies it faces challenges to its ongoing success, with the pandemic illustrating its vulnerabilities and the importance of economic resilience.

Climate change threatens key sectors like tourism but also presents an economic opportunity if Sydney positions itself as a global hub for net zero innovation.

Rising inequality, and particularly affordability issues, have the potential to hold back our economy and erode our society's sense of fairness and opportunity.

Slowing productivity and an uncoordinated approach to innovation are leading to lower levels of research commercialisation and impacting Sydney's attractiveness to talent and investment.

While broader economic headwinds and uncertainty are changing how our city is used in the post-pandemic world, these challenges also create opportunities.



Sydney's Forward Economy takes a place-based approach to supporting our economy, with a **vision to champion a global economy that unlocks innovation, which is sustainable and inclusive, and provides great local experiences.**

We're targeting 200,000 new jobs in our city by 2036. To drive an innovation-led transformation of our economy we're targeting 70% of these new jobs to be in knowledge and innovation intensive industries.

With these aspirations, the strategy illustrates the role of our economy at 4 different scales – from global Sydney, through to Australia's economic heart, a city of distinct precincts, and strong local neighbourhoods.

Against these 4 scales, it commits us to 33 actions across the 4 outcome areas of the vision – a sustainable, inclusive, innovative and experiential economy.

Momentum building projects provide immediate focus on 8 complex challenges. These range from accelerating the transformation to a green economy through to exploring innovative approaches to occupying vacant office space.

Collaboration will be key to realising the vision. Sydney's Forward Economy provides the framework to work together to not only move our city's economy ahead, but do so in a way that builds a more sustainable, fairer and more innovative economy for everyone.

**At the City of Sydney, we're already bringing the vision to life,** with bold and visionary investments, sustained over decades that pave the way for our economic future.

- We're **revitalising George Street** with a \$300 million investment to add 20,000m<sup>2</sup> of pedestrian upgrades alongside light rail which has attracted over \$8 billion in private investment.
- We're investing \$31 million in **Greenhouse Climate Tech Hub** supporting innovation to accelerate the transition to net zero.
- We're investing \$44 million over 10 years in **Haymarket** and **Chinatown** to celebrate the diverse Asian cultures that shape this deeply loved part of our city.
- We're **investing in the ideas of our communities**, with more than \$2.4 million provided in grants last year to unlock and support local innovation.
- We're supporting Oxford Street as the heart of our LGBTIQ+ communities and Mardi Gras, including establishing the Oxford Street Pride Business Charter.
- We're making getting across our city easier, with \$22.5 million invested in **bike and cycle infrastructure** in 2024 as part of our \$122 million investment in cycleways over the next 10 years.
- We're making our streets more vibrant, with **outdoor dining reforms and investments** like our \$34 million upgrade of Crown Street to improve business opportunities.
- We're committing to **extend light rail down Broadway to the Tech Central innovation district and Green Square** to support major urban renewal and housing development.

**These investments are instrumental in creating the conditions for economic growth – the foundations of a good city.**



Image (left): Artist impression of proposed light rail to Green Square to support urban renewal and housing development.

Image: Artist impression of proposed light rail along Broadway through the Tech Central innovation district.

Our commitment to extend light rail will renew our city and evolve our economy





# Our Economy

Ranked one of the most liveable cities in the world, Sydney is a financial capital of the Asia-Pacific. The city is a centre for jobs and trade, and a magnet for talent, migration, tourism, international students and investment.

The land on which the area known today as the City of Sydney is Aboriginal land – the land of the Gadigal of the Eora Nation. On these lands Aboriginal people were united by language, strong ties of kinship and a rich economy on the shores of Warrane (Sydney Harbour).

From these shores Sydney is recognised the world over for its iconic harbour and waterways, distinct architecture and city skyline, diverse communities, sunny coastal climate, beaches, bays and bush lifestyle, and prosperous economy. **A global city, every day more than 1 million people are drawn to the City of Sydney to work, visit, study, play or shop.**

The city's advanced knowledge economy is supported by leading universities and a highly skilled workforce. It is Australia's premier city for commerce, hosting one in 3 of the top 100 Australian Stock Exchange listed companies, and Australia's creative heart, home to many of the nation's and NSW's most significant cultural institutions.

**The city's economy generates more than \$142 billion per annum or around 6% of Australia's gross domestic product (GDP).**

Finance and insurance (\$44 billion) and professional services (\$28 billion) are the city's largest industries by value and biggest employers, while more than 200,000 international students are enrolled in our local area and they are a major contributor to education being the second largest export industry for NSW.

Over 10 million domestic overnight visitors, 25 million domestic daytrippers and 3.2 million international visitors come to

experience Sydney each year, supporting around 8,000 businesses in the food and drink, retails and personal services, and tourist, cultural and leisure sectors. All this economic activity drives construction, with over \$15 billion of private development completed in the past 5 years.

**Across our city there are more than 520,000 jobs located onsite in more than 22,000 businesses and 16.7 million square metres of commercial floorspace.**

On top of these fixed address jobs, there are an estimated 100,000+ jobs connected to our economy through construction activity, home-based businesses and transient jobs. Transient jobs move from place to place and include cleaners, taxi and delivery drivers, trades people, and workers temporarily visiting a location for work, such as a co-working space or business conferences. These types of jobs fluctuate significantly throughout the year but add to the overall employment in the city.

**By 2036 there will be around 200,000 more jobs in our city. To drive an innovation-led transformation across our economy, we're targeting 70% of these new jobs to be in knowledge and innovation intensive industries.**

These high-value jobs are clustered in defined precincts across our city, with clustering supporting specialisation, innovation and productivity.

The success of these precincts will be critical to growing our economy and spurring the innovation that will help solve some of the biggest societal challenges we face, including climate change.



Photo: Getty Images

22,000+

businesses<sup>1</sup>

---

Top 7

most liveable city<sup>5</sup>

---

16.7 million m<sup>2</sup>

employment floor space<sup>1</sup>

---

3.2 million

international  
visitors a year<sup>6</sup>

---

1 in 3

of top 100 ASX company  
headquarters<sup>2</sup>

---

10.9 million

overnight domestic  
visitors a year<sup>6</sup>

---

#1

startup ecosystem in  
Southern Hemisphere<sup>3</sup>

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200,000+

international student  
enrolments<sup>7</sup>

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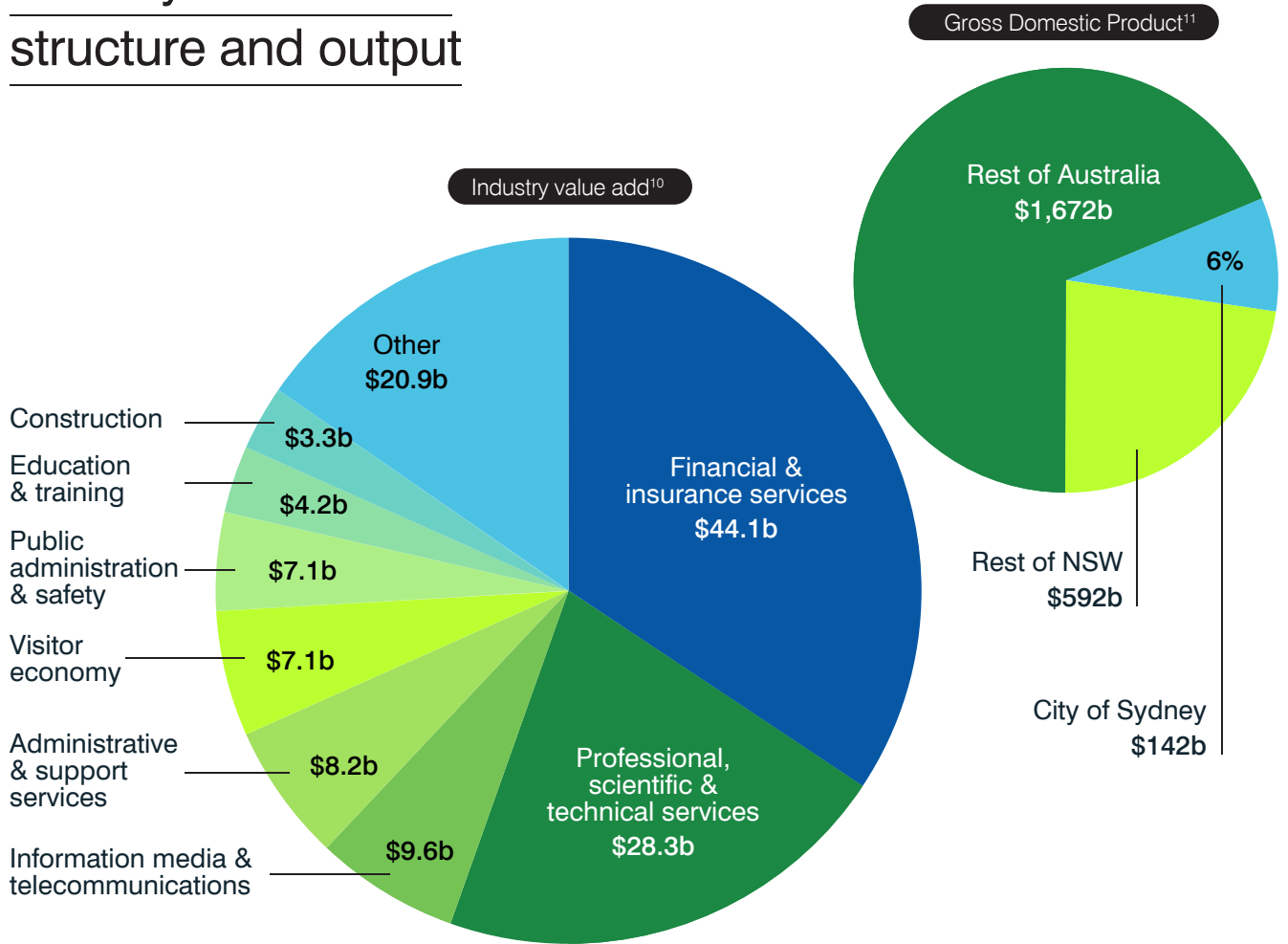
2

universities ranked  
in global top 20<sup>4</sup>

1 million+

daily city users<sup>8</sup>

# Our city's economic structure and output



## Our jobs target – a focus on innovation

By 2036 there will be around 200,000 new jobs in our city, with a greater proportion of all jobs secure jobs. To drive an innovation-led transformation across our economy, we are targeting 70% of these new jobs to be in knowledge and innovation intensive industries<sup>9</sup>.



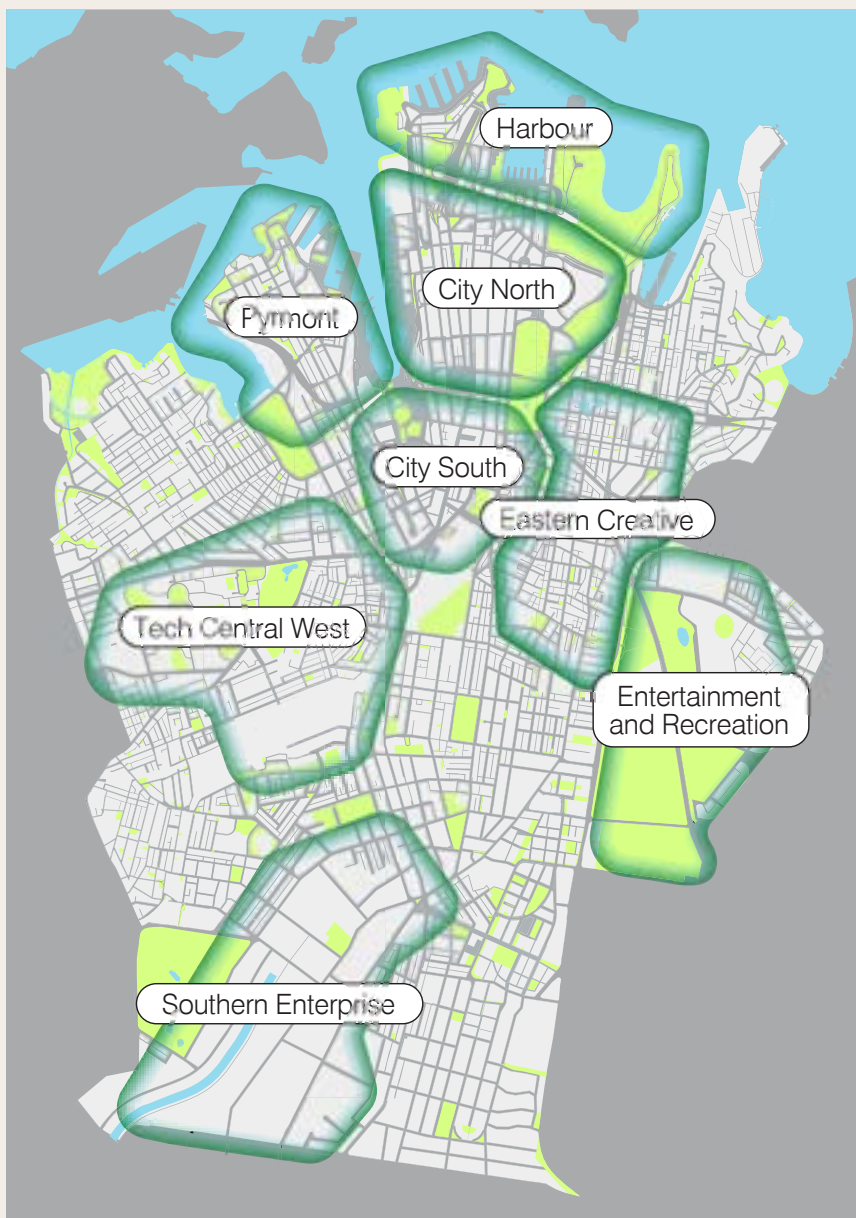


# Our economic precincts

Across our city, knowledge and innovation intensive industries and jobs are clustered in distinct economic precincts.

Transport connections are the lifeblood of these precincts, allowing them to draw on a wide and deep pool of talent from across Sydney.

The proposed extension of light rail down Broadway through Tech Central and to Green Square presents further opportunities for businesses and research institutions to connect and collaborate, driving innovation, specialisation, exports and improved productivity for all of NSW.



## Entertainment & Recreation – 6,100 jobs

- 2,000 creative industries jobs
- 1,700 tourist, cultural and leisure jobs
- 500 retail/personal services jobs

## City South – 76,400 jobs

- 10,100 government jobs (35% of LGA)
- 18,600 financial services jobs
- 5,000 higher education jobs
- 5,900 tourist, culture and leisure jobs

## Tech Central West – 48,500 jobs

- 15,200 higher education jobs (55% of LGA)
- 4,700 health jobs (27% of LGA)
- 5,500 creative industries jobs

## Southern Enterprise – 17,800 jobs

- 1,500 manufacturing jobs (49% of LGA)
- 2,900 transport/logistics jobs (28% of LGA)
- 1,400 creative industries jobs
- 1,000 of motor vehicle jobs (42% of LGA)

## Harbour – 12,400 jobs

- 2,800 creative industries jobs
- 1,500 tourist, cultural and leisure jobs
- 1,800 Food and drink jobs
- 2,600 Professional services jobs

## City North – 253,000 jobs

- 94,000 financial services jobs (75% of LGA)
- 59,000 professional services jobs (63% of LGA)
- 21,300 ICT jobs (55% of LGA)
- 9,900 retail/personal services jobs (39% of LGA)

## Pymont – 23,000 jobs

- 6,000 ICT jobs
- 3,200 creative industries jobs
- 4,400 tourist, cultural and leisure jobs

## Eastern Creative – 39,600 jobs

- 7,300 professional services jobs
- 5,800 creative industries jobs
- 3,700 food and drink jobs (10% of the LGA)
- 4,000 ICT jobs

# Drivers of Change

Sydney's economy has grown from strength to strength despite significant challenges, showing great resilience and an ability to adapt to change. But climate change, rising inequality, slowing productivity and a limited strategic approach to innovation, and economic uncertainty present underlying vulnerabilities to the economy and our way of life. If left unaddressed, these vulnerabilities pose significant threats to the economy's ongoing prosperity and fairness.

Photo by Josh Withers on Unsplash



1

### Climate change poses a significant threat to the economy and society

- The early effects of climate change were partially responsible for Australian natural disaster-related insurance claims rising to \$3 billion per annum in 2022.<sup>12</sup>
- Sydney is ranked 29th in the Global Destination Sustainability Index in 2023, behind Melbourne, Paris, Singapore and Stockholm.<sup>13</sup>
- The share of green jobs in the City of Sydney area is around 3%, well behind the estimated 7% in other global cities.<sup>14</sup>
- Climate change is expected to directly impact on the productivity of the Australian tourism sector.<sup>15</sup>
- The potential economic pay-off of a circular economy for Australia is around \$23 billion per annum.<sup>16</sup>

**How do we transition our economy to shield ourselves from the impacts of climate change and realise the opportunity to grow green industries and jobs?**

3

### Productivity is slowing and innovation is hindered by the lack of a coordinated and targeted strategic approach

- Sydney's overall productivity rated 89th among 159 major urban economies in the OECD.<sup>22</sup>
- Sydney's ranking as a global innovation ecosystem slipped to 20th in 2023 from 16th in 2016.<sup>23</sup>
- Australia ranks 7th for academic excellence but 32nd for firms cooperating on innovation activities with higher education.<sup>24</sup>
- Sydney ranked 31st in the 2022 Global Cities Talent Competitiveness Index, down from 12th in 2017.<sup>25</sup>
- Artificial intelligence (AI) was found to be deployed in the operations of only 44% of Australian businesses in 2023.<sup>26</sup>

**How do we unlock innovation and promote technology adoption, translate research into commercialised products, and fill critical skills gaps?**

2

### Rising inequality jeopardises long term prosperity

- Sydney housing is considered chronically unaffordable, costing the economy \$10 billion a year in lost productivity from longer commute times, reduced innovation and out-migration of young talent.<sup>17</sup>
- In 2020 Australia's Gini coefficient for income indicated that Australia had the 14th highest level of inequality among 28 OECD countries with available data.<sup>18</sup>
- Within our city, 17% of Indigenous residents are jobless and looking for employment, compared with only 4% among non-Indigenous residents.<sup>19</sup>
- Since 2011 our city lost more than 170,000m<sup>2</sup> of creative employment and production space, and 2,000 creative workers.<sup>20</sup>
- Up to 20% of the Australian urban population face digital exclusion, with 8% highly excluded.<sup>21</sup>

**How do we ensure the opportunities presented by our growing economy are accessible to all and our city remains harmonious?**

4

### Economic uncertainty and change are driving a rethink on how cities function

- With rising geopolitical tensions and high interest rates, only 35% of our city's businesses surveyed expect the Australian economy to be better off in a year.<sup>27</sup>
- City centre office occupancy rates fell to 75% in 2023, down from 94% before the pandemic, with the distribution across the week now more varied.<sup>28</sup>
- While the night-time economy has grown, only 51% of our female residents surveyed feel safe late at night in the places they go out.<sup>29</sup>
- Visitation to our city on weekends is at record highs and around 15 to 30% higher than before the pandemic.<sup>30</sup>
- Over 21% of international visitors engaged in Indigenous culture activities in 2023, growing from 16.8% in 2019.<sup>31</sup>

**How do we adapt our city to meet the changing needs and demand for a more diverse and deeper experience?**

# Vision and Outcomes

We will champion a global economy that unlocks innovation, which is sustainable and inclusive, and provides great local experiences.



## Outcomes

# Measuring Success

	Success looks like	Success measures	Jobs targets
Sustainable	Sydney has competitive advantage as a global hub for sustainable investment and net zero innovation, driving the growth of green jobs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grow the proportion of <b>green jobs</b> in the city</li> <li>Increase Sydney's position on the <b>Global Destination Sustainability Index</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2036 there will be around 200,000 new jobs in our city</li> <li>Jobs growth will focus on innovation with 70% of all new jobs in knowledge and innovation intensive industries<sup>9</sup></li> <li>By 2036, an increased proportion of all jobs will be secure jobs</li> </ul>
Inclusive	Sydney is a prosperous city where opportunities to participate and benefit from the economy are shared.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the supply of subsidised <b>social, affordable rental and supported housing</b></li> <li>Increase <b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed</b> in the local area</li> </ul>	
Innovative	Sydney is a destination for talent and ideas, driving an innovation-led transformation of all areas of the economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grow <b>worker productivity</b> across key knowledge and innovation intensive industries</li> <li>Increase <b>clustering in precincts</b> of knowledge and innovation intensive industries</li> </ul>	
Experiential	Sydney is a great experience city, with vibrant street life, a 24-hour economy, and diverse and deep cultural experiences to engage with.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase <b>visitation</b> across each of the day-time, night-time and weekend periods</li> <li>Increase attendance at, and production of, <b>diverse cultural offerings</b>.</li> </ul>	



# Our Role – grassroots to global

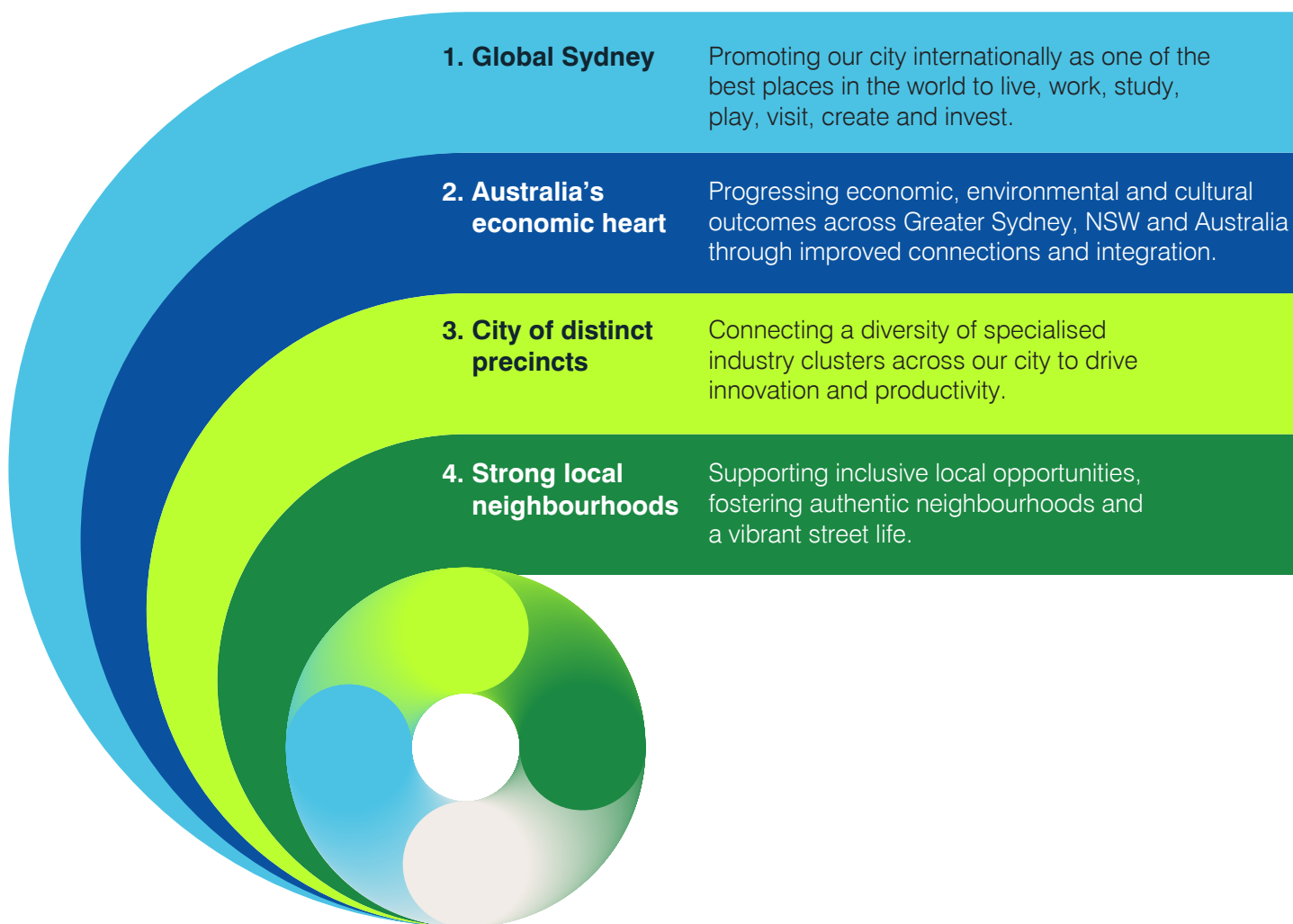
We aim to influence economic  
outcomes at **four scales**

Vision and outcomes

**The influence of the City of Sydney's economy extends well beyond the boundaries of our local area.**

This strategy establishes a framework to implement the vision by strengthening our local economy and in doing so, reinforce Sydney as a leading global city.

In the following chapters the economic vision for our city is illustrated at 4 different geographic scales, with the role of the City of Sydney and actions articulated at each scale. It emphasises that the local and the global are deeply interconnected – if high streets struggle or local inequality rises, the image and experience of Sydney as a global city suffers too.



**Vision and outcomes**



OUR ROLE 1

# Global Sydney

## Promoting our city internationally

For more than 65,000 years the coves of Warrane (Sydney Harbour) were, and remain, the home of the Gadigal of the Eora Nation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures have endured, and as the international gateway to Australia our city is proud to connect the global community with the world's longest living cultures.

Welcoming millions of international visitors and hundreds of thousands of international students each year, and with more than half our local residents born overseas, our city is one of the world's most multicultural.

Sydney is Australia's gateway to the world. Iconic, bold, beautiful and fun, the imagery of Sydney at its finest is renowned globally. This strategy seeks to lead and guide collaboration, to strengthen the competitive advantages of Sydney as one of the best places to live, work, study, play, visit, create and invest.

Offering a safe and diverse society, Sydney is deeply connected with the global economy. A beacon of the Asia-Pacific, the city is a capital for business headquarters and ranked within the top 25 global startup ecosystems.

The image of Sydney broadcast globally is of a harbour city with a fine climate that boasts economic opportunities and a lifestyle of beaches and bushland, global events and great food.

Maintaining the quality of our environment and ensuring these opportunities are inclusive and accessible to everyone will be critical to Sydney's ongoing success.

Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney





## Actions



Recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and history, and embed it in the experience of Sydney



Invest in and leverage major events, festivals and business conferences to promote Sydney and its values to global audiences



Collaborate to create world class visitor services to deepen the visitor experience in Sydney



Boost Sydney's innovation ecosystem and connect it globally to attract and retain businesses, talent and investment



Enhance Sydney's reputation as a global study destination by providing opportunities for students to participate in all aspects of city life



Showcase Sydney as a global champion of net zero



Encourage investment in Sydney that supports the evolution and growth of the sustainable finance sector

# How we've supported Global Sydney

Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney



## Learning about Country along Yananurala

**Yananurala, meaning 'go, walk on Country' in the Aboriginal language of Sydney, is a 9km walk that highlights Aboriginal history and culture at places along the spectacular Sydney Harbour foreshore.**

As visitors walk the shoreline, interact with public art and stories, hear whispers of language, and place their feet in the water, they introduce themselves to Country.

Yananurala invites us all to celebrate and learn. It deepens the visitor experience and allows locals and visitors to better understand Country in a way Aboriginal people have experienced for millennia.

Photo: Matt Lambley / City of Sydney



## Placing Sydney on the world stage with a bang

**As the clock strikes midnight Sydney New Year's Eve celebrations showcases to the world our creative talents through a magnificent fireworks display.**

Launched from the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney Opera House, harbour platforms and city rooftops, about one million people watch from the city and harbour foreshore, joined by around 425 million viewers around the country and the world.

Sydney New Year's Eve places our city proudly on the world stage. It adds about \$280 million to the local economy and provides a global platform to promote the work of our local artists and creatives.

Critically, the festivities showcase an inclusive and diverse city, with all City of Sydney vantage points provided free of charge. The midnight show is complemented by the 9pm Calling Country fireworks, which celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.



Photo: Murray Harris

## Joining the dots in the Tech Central innovation district

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**The Tech Central innovation district represents Australia's deepest and broadest research and technology ecosystem. The district is a breeding ground for innovation, ideas and talent development.**

It is home to 3 world-leading universities, the Southern Hemisphere's top ranked startup ecosystem, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and its research capabilities. Industry innovation leaders include Atlassian, Canva, CSIRO Data61, the Australian Space Industry, and it has the highest concentration of 'unicorns' in Australia (privately owned startup companies valued at more than US\$1 billion).

Tech Central is the thread that holds together and promotes collaboration between leading sector specialisations across an area with more than 100,000 students and 100,000 jobs, stretching from Camperdown to Surry Hills, and Ultimo to Eveleigh.

Bringing together industry, research, entrepreneurs and investors, the skills, research and ideas generated in Tech Central will drive the next wave of innovation.



# How we've supported Global Sydney

Photo: Jaimie Joy



Photo: Daniel Kucek



## Evolving the SXSW identity in Sydney

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**South by Southwest (SXSW) is considered by many to be the Olympics of the creative industries. It brings together the best in tech and innovation, games, music and screen.**

Sydney is the proud home of the Asia-Pacific edition of SXSW. The city is the perfect setting to host the week-long yearly festival with more than 1,000 events and inaugural attendance nearing 300,000.

Held centrally, SXSW Sydney provides a launch pad for local talent to go global.

## Supporting climate tech companies

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**The largest climate tech hub in Australia, Greenhouse is designed to inspire innovation and support climate tech companies in the transition to a net zero future.**

It provides flexible workspace for up to 500 people from climate-tech companies to collaborate and connect with corporates, capital, government agencies and subject matter experts.

At 180 George Street, Circular Quay, it establishes Sydney as an epicentre for climate action. It was made possible by a \$31 million investment from the City of Sydney.

Photo: Damian Shaw / City of Sydney



Photo: Damian Shaw / City of Sydney



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## Welcoming international students

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**With over 200,000 international students enrolled in the inner city, Sydney is one of the most popular and desirable study locations in the world.**

International students contribute greatly to Sydney's cultural diversity, vibrancy and liveability, and provide vital skills needed in the future to grow the economy.

The Lord Mayor's Welcome for International Students and our social leadership programs for international students are important opportunities to extend a friendly hand to new students in Sydney that help them settle into life in Australia.

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## Partnering for a more sustainable destination

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**Sydney is Australia's leading destination for tourists and tourism is a vital component of the economy. But the sector contributes significantly to carbon emissions, water use and waste generation.**

The Sustainable Destination Partnership seeks to improve environmental performance across the tourism, cultural and entertainment sectors and build Sydney's reputation as a leading sustainable destination.

Led by the City of Sydney, the partnership includes more than 40 members from leading hotels, event centres, cultural institutions and tourism bodies, all with a shared commitment to environmental action.



## OUR ROLE 2

# Australia's economic heart

## Progressing outcomes beyond our borders

**Key to our city's economic strength is accessibility, with over a century of infrastructure investment making our local area the easiest place to access from across NSW.**

This provides businesses in our city with unparalleled access to labour and skills, collaborators, suppliers and markets.

High accessibility promotes higher density, and the planning framework for Central Sydney supports a critical mass of commercial tower clusters close to public transport.

Home to several of Australia's leading universities and cultural institutions, this dense economic environment promotes collaboration and innovation.

With so many employment opportunities in our city, improving access to affordable housing will be critical to long-term economic health. Our city is committed to meeting local housing targets and working with others to improve access to affordable and social housing across Greater Sydney and NSW.

Sitting at the centre of many systems, our city must also lead and use its prominence and purchasing power to support regional energy and circular economy initiatives.

The City of Sydney is an economic powerhouse, responsible for 6% of Australia's economy. What happens in Sydney matters, with our city influencing economic, environmental and cultural outcomes well beyond its boundaries. This strategy seeks to keep the heart healthy by improving connections and integration with Greater Sydney, NSW and the rest of Australia.

Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney



# Australia's economic heart

## Actions



Strengthen connectivity across Greater Sydney and NSW with clean, high-frequency, reliable and safe public transport options



Increase access to and supply of diverse and affordable housing to support equitable workforce participation



Plan for economically competitive and resilient places, including development of quality workplaces supported by infrastructure



Work with education institutes, industry and community organisations to provide inclusive career pathways and address skills gaps



Collaborate to develop sustainable mechanisms to secure affordable and fit-for-purpose creative production space



Facilitate the growth of net zero or circular economy markets to provide greater business opportunities and reduce costs



Advocate for the development of circular economy infrastructure systems across Greater Sydney to boost resource recovery





# How we've supported Australia's economic heart

Promoting development  
that supports our economy

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**The City's Central Sydney Planning Strategy is our 20-year plan to guide growth in Central Sydney and underpin changes to our city's planning controls.**

It reinforces Central Sydney as the economic heart of Australia, ensuring enough space is made available to grow the economy over the long term by increasing the number of jobs, workers, visitors and students that can locate here. It recognises Central Sydney's important role in metropolitan Sydney, NSW and Australia, and the need to maintain and grow its status as a global city with a dynamic economy and high quality of life.

The strategy creates opportunities for extra building height and density in the right locations, while protecting the amenity of parks and public spaces.

It unlocks almost 3 million square metres more floor space for commercial, cultural and retail uses. It also leverages major investments in new metro and light rail lines to support highly productive tower clusters.

While it prioritises employment growth, it recognises that Central Sydney is a mixed-use area and residential uses are an important part of the city's character. Residential development is permitted throughout Central Sydney, with draft planning incentives to support build-to-rent in Central Sydney and co-living accommodation, such as student accommodation in the city's south.

To remain a destination of choice, the strategy promotes great architecture, sustainable building practices, and design excellence while protecting the amenity of our city's treasured public spaces.

Photo: Ethan Rohloff



## Housing for all – essential to our economic sustainability

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**Unaffordable housing presents significant risks to the social and economic sustainability of Sydney. It increases inequality and homelessness while also impacting on productivity as people must live further from where they work, increasing commute times and worsening congestion.**

The City's Local Housing Strategy sets a vision for a city where everyone has access to affordable and diverse housing.

We are on track to meet our overall housing target. Sufficient land is already zoned to provide 56,000 more dwellings in our local area between 2016 and 2036. Specific to affordable and social housing, we have ambitious targets for 7.5% of private housing to be affordable housing and 7.5% of all housing to be social housing.

To contribute to affordable housing we have distributed developer contributions, sold or leased land and properties below market rates. We've also provided funding and streamlined processes to support for-purpose organisations to meet the housing needs of a range of groups. To promote supply and diversity in the private housing market we've also used our planning controls. We're supporting increased housing capacity in Pymont and the Botany Road corridor and draft planning incentives are proposed to boost build-to-rent and co-living accommodation, such as student housing.

While we can influence some housing outcomes, the factors with the most influence on the supply and cost of housing are outside our control. Our housing strategy strongly advocates for changes to state and federal government housing policies and programs to reduce the cost of housing, support providing more social and affordable housing, address homelessness, and build infrastructure to support population growth.



Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

# How we've supported Australia's economic heart

Connecting Sydney for a  
more accessible, inclusive  
and productive economy

**Sydney Metro will see the first major increase in inner Sydney rail capacity since the late 1970s, creating 66km of new metro rail through the heart of our city.**

It will connect existing metro services from the North Shore and the Hills District with the city centre and then onto the Bankstown Line. In our city, new stations will be built or expanded at Barangaroo, Martin Place, Gadigal (Pitt Street), Central and Waterloo.

Sydney Metro will greatly improve travel times, service reliability and frequency across our city. A train will run every 4 minutes (up to 15 trains an hour) in each direction, up to 22 hours a day. The city centre will see up to 200 train services an hour, a 60% increase in capacity.

By creating high speed connections to Greater Sydney and key economic centres such as Macquarie Park, Chatswood and North Sydney, the metro will make the jobs and opportunities in the city centre more accessible. It will also encourage new business to business connections and increase co-located economies and greater productivity.

By 2032, Sydney Metro West will further improve accessibility with a new 24km metro line linking the city centre with Greater Parramatta. With new stations already confirmed at Pyrmont and Hunter Street, Sydney Metro West will support the growth of Sydney as a global economic powerhouse. We continue to advocate for extending metro West to Zetland and UNSW in the south-east to further support economic growth and productivity by linking the city centre with leading health and education institutes.

**While multiple metro lines will improve accessibility and the inclusiveness of economic opportunities, it will also change the way people think about travel and how they organise and structure their lives across Sydney.**

Image: Sydney Metro







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## Supporting green economies across Australia

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**Committed to a net zero future, we use our purchasing power to progress green initiatives at scale.**

We buy 100% renewable electricity sourced from wind and solar farms in regional NSW. This reduces our annual operational emissions by 24,000 tonnes and saves \$500,000 a year. It also supports renewable energy projects that stimulate economic activity, add capacity to the grid and provide green jobs.

We purchase our certified offsets through an Indigenous organisation that practises carbon farming and supports jobs, skills, traditional knowledge, and income opportunities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Photo (left, top): Bomen Solar Farm  
Photo (right, top): Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney



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## A capital for creative industries

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**From the Sydney Opera House steps or downstairs at Belvoir St Theatre, to the walls of the MCA or Gallery 4A, our city is where much of our nation's creative talent is introduced to the world.**

A UNESCO City of Film, we are a major international centre for the screen industry, the primary presenter of Australian-produced performing arts and home to the country's most prestigious tertiary-level arts training.

Cultural productions and artworks, big and small, all draw from diverse creative talent in a long supply chain of smaller local businesses. These are the lifeblood of the sector, but with urban redevelopment and rising rents, many of these smaller creative operators are under threat.

Our efforts are focused on protecting and growing our vital grassroots and small-scale creative industries. We maintain a diverse portfolio of theatres, studios and subsidised arts spaces to support local cultural production. We champion planning and regulatory reform to support the industry, and we produce our own major events featuring local content. We know our creative industries will be key to the innovation and experiences that will drive Sydney's future prosperity. Global cities thrive when culture is woven through their everyday fabric.

OUR ROLE 3

# City of distinct precincts

## Connecting clusters of economic activity

Due to geography, history and anchors like universities, company headquarters or cultural institutions, areas across our city have high concentrations of knowledge intensive economic activity.

These clusters support a highly productive environment that provides quality jobs, attracts and trains talent, promotes collaboration and disproportionately contributes to innovation and national exports.

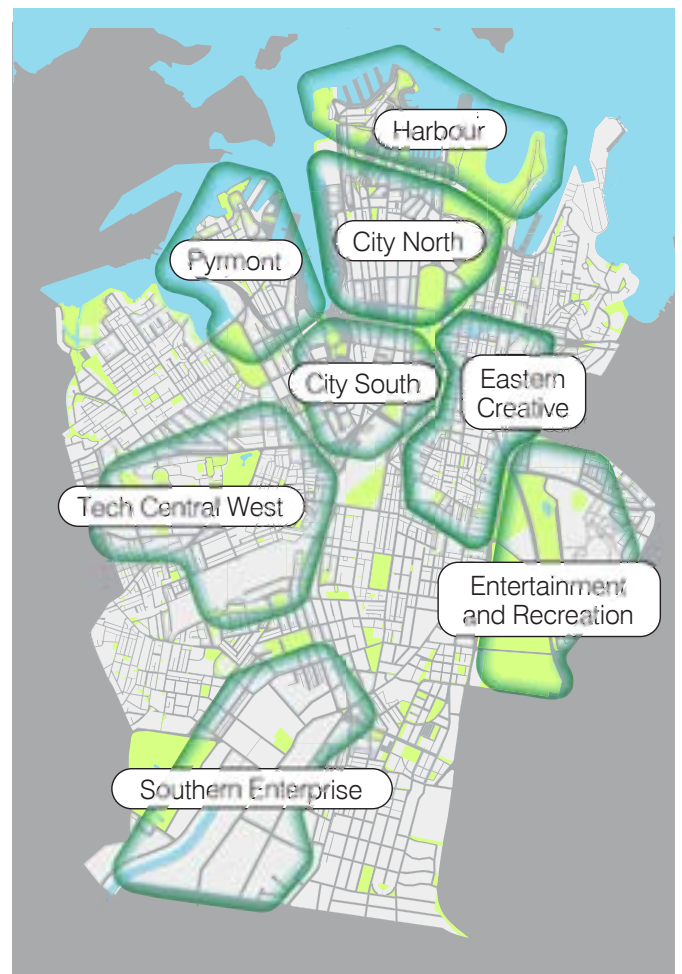
Quality public spaces and transport are critical to the success of these areas, linking economic precincts, promoting opportunities to connect, and improving amenity and vibrancy.

Revitalising George Street and introducing light rail shows how physical infrastructure can drive economic outcomes.

Our commitment to extend light rail down Broadway and to Green Square will further support economic growth and specialisation in these precincts. It will also better connect these precincts to one another, presenting more opportunities for collaboration.

With innovation central to the identity and success of these areas, we will continue to provide opportunities to test innovative ideas and support more affordable opportunities for startups, creative industries, Indigenous and for-purpose enterprises to join these precincts.

Our city provides a home for a diversity of industries to cluster in highly productive economic precincts. Providing fertile ground for innovation and creativity, the success of these precincts further enhances their attractiveness to like-minded business. This strategy seeks to connect and encourage collaboration, reinforce specialisation and promote experimentation to strengthen the performance of these areas.





# City of distinct precincts

## Actions

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→ Promote areas with strong sector specialisations and a clustering of complementary economic activities

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→ Collaborate with enablers in the innovation ecosystem to foster startup communities and provide affordable workspace and event space

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→ Invest in public domain, walking and cycling options that improve safety and the visitor experience

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→ Provide targeted support for Indigenous enterprises, social enterprises, and for-purpose businesses

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→ Trial and test new ideas and approaches to support industry innovation in the transition to net zero and circular economies

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→ Monitor and campaign for planning and regulation reform with a focus on entertainment, sound and liquor reform

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→ Explore community wealth building approaches that create more opportunities for diverse, inclusive, and local-ownership business models

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Our **Harbour Precinct** will deepen the visitor experience and connection to our national cultural identity

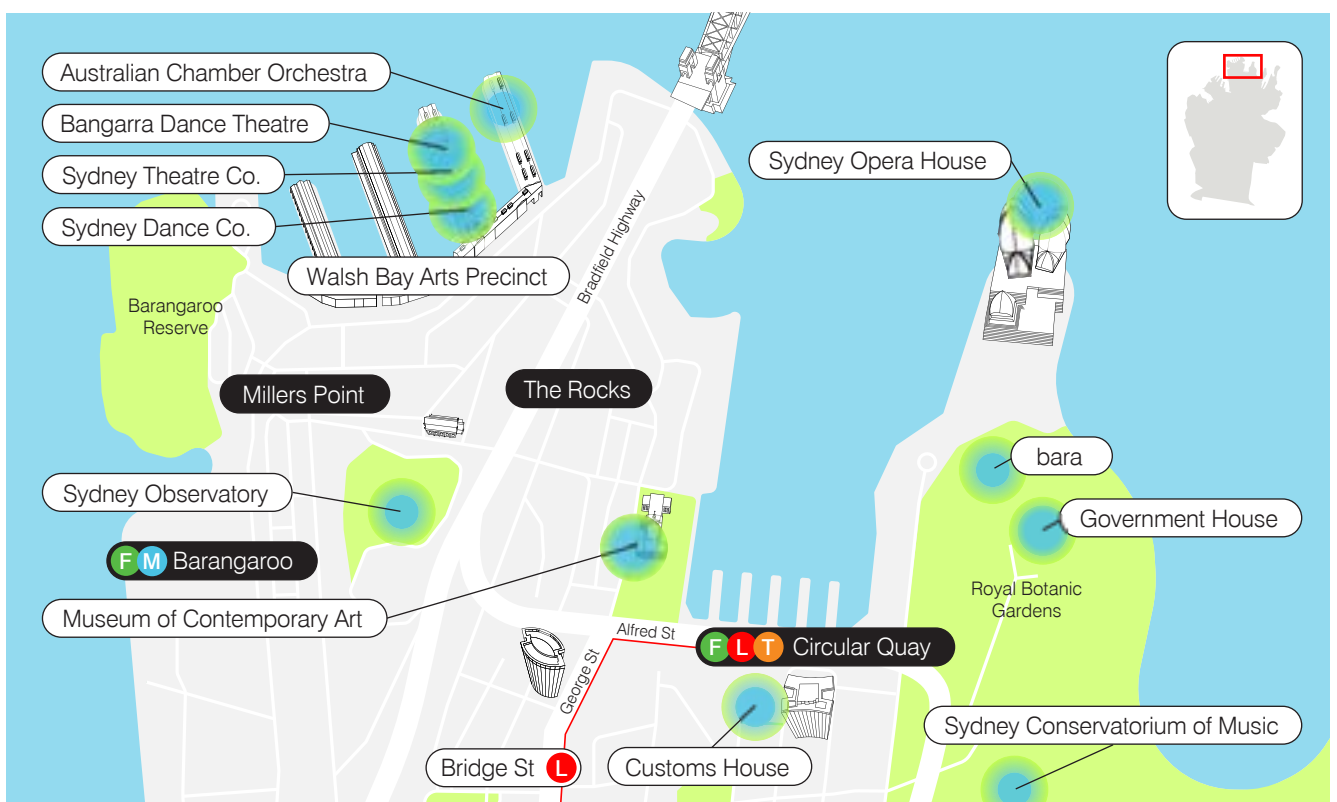
A significant place for Aboriginal people to catch fish, **Warrane (Sydney Cove)** was the place of first contact between the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and Europeans.

Today, the area is the most iconic tourist destination in Australia with the **Sydney Opera House, Sydney Harbour Bridge, The Rocks, Royal Botanic Gardens** and **The Domain, Museum of Contemporary Art, Walsh Bay arts precinct, bara, Yananurala and Barangaroo Reserve** surrounding the harbour. Including major events such as Sydney New Year's Eve and Vivid Sydney, it attracts millions of domestic and international visitors throughout the year.

The influx of visitors from near and far drives a vibrant experience economy, with more than 50% of the precinct's jobs in the hospitality, tourism, entertainment and creative industries.

**Place-based economic guidance**

- Welcome people from around the world to Sydney and showcase Australia's cultural and artistic excellence
- Connect to Country on Sydney's waterfront, acknowledging and embedding the importance of the harbour to Aboriginal culture
- Produce and support inclusive, accessible and affordable cultural and social events, activities and programs
- Deepen the visitor experience and provide opportunities to understand and explore other areas of the city
- Support a modern and accessible transport interchange, both at Circular Quay and at the new Barangaroo metro station





# City North

will further its  
place as a  
premier  
destination for  
commerce  
in the Asia-Pacific

The City North precinct has long been Australia's commercial and financial heart and is an economic hub of the Asia-Pacific. It is home to many of the region's corporate headquarters as well as key government and judicial functions.

Characterised by premium high-rise office buildings, the area has more than 150,000 jobs in the finance, insurance and professional services sectors. It is home to the **Australian Stock Exchange**, major banks, finance companies, consultancies and legal firms.

Sydney's retail core centres around **Pitt Street Mall**, with department stores, luxury brands and signature stores lining surrounding streets, with bars, restaurants, theatres and hotels nearby.

The area has high accessibility to Greater Sydney, with several existing train stations and new metro stations to open at **Barangaroo** and **Gadigal** (Pitt Street) in 2024 and **Hunter Street** in the future with Metro West.

## Place-based economic guidance

- Prioritise the growth of commercial and office space attracting local and international businesses
- Promote the growth of green finance, sustainability startups and scaleups, and green economy jobs
- Support quality retail, cultural and 24-hour hospitality experiences including outdoor dining and pedestrianised environments
- Provide accessible and inclusive public domain that supports local and international events and active transport
- Leverage transport infrastructure investment to connect to other jobs centres, develop around metro stations and integrate Barangaroo into the existing commercial core of the city





# Tech Central

## West will attract the best minds and drive the next wave of innovation

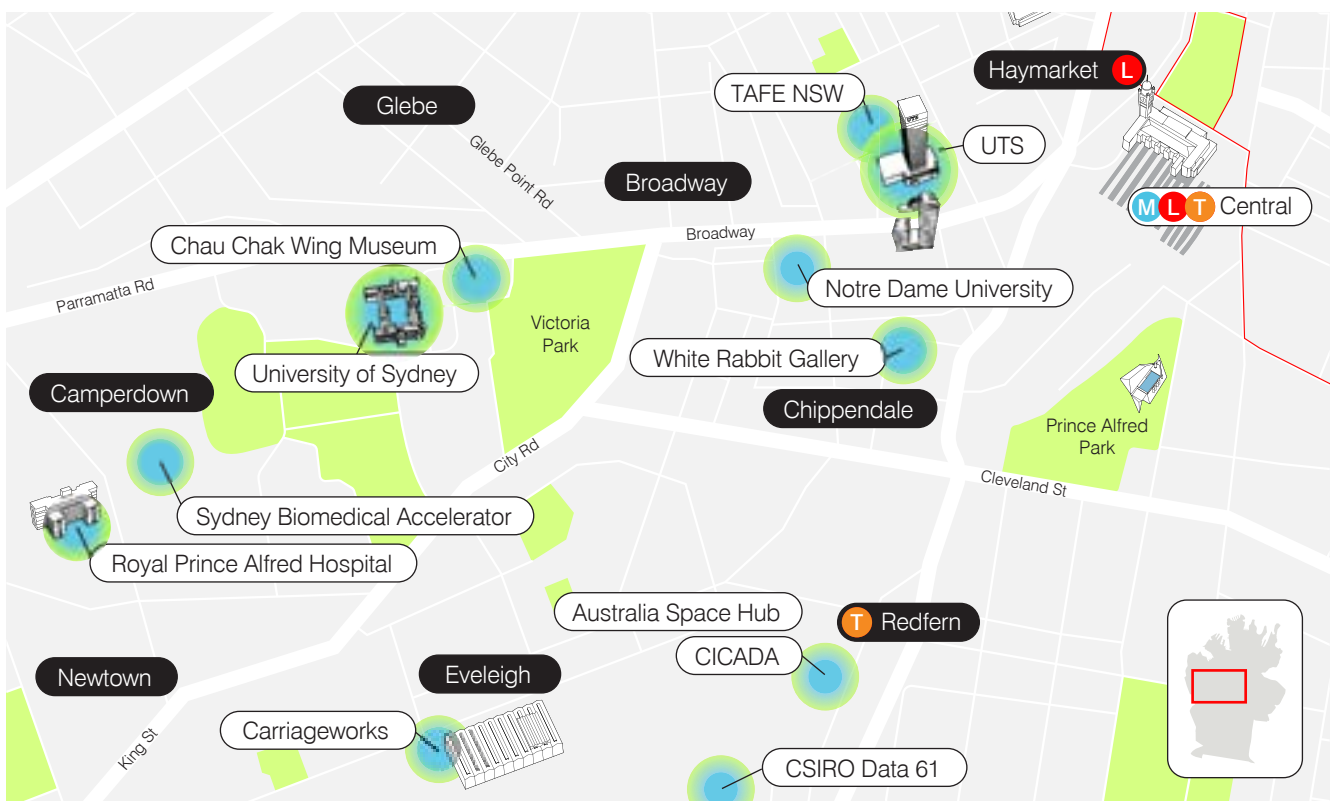
The area brings together **world leading universities, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, cultural institutions, startup incubators and scaleup accelerators**, and home grown and international **innovation and tech companies**.

The area is at the heart of Tech Central and has more than half of our areas higher education and research jobs. More than 100,000 students progress research and development across critical future industries as diverse as quantum, biotech, fintech, cyber security, artificial intelligence, health-sciences, deep tech and green-tech.

New metro rail lines will further reinforce the accessibility of **Central station**, and our **commitment to extend light rail down Broadway** will provide a green, high amenity and people focused boulevard lined by hospitality and music venues. A rejuvenated Broadway will be the community connector, unlocking ideas and collaborations within this globally significant innovation precinct.

### Place-based economic guidance

- Reinforce Sydney as a global capital for education, innovation, creative-tech and technology
- Promote inclusive employment and education pathways into the tech and innovation sectors
- Foster collaboration opportunities between industry, government, education institutes, entrepreneurs and investors
- Support a vibrant, liveable, and inclusive public domain centred around Broadway that showcases innovation
- Provide opportunities for startups and scaleups to locate and prosper, including access to purpose-built facilities and equipment



The **Eastern Creative Precinct** will embrace creative talent and LGBTIQ+ communities

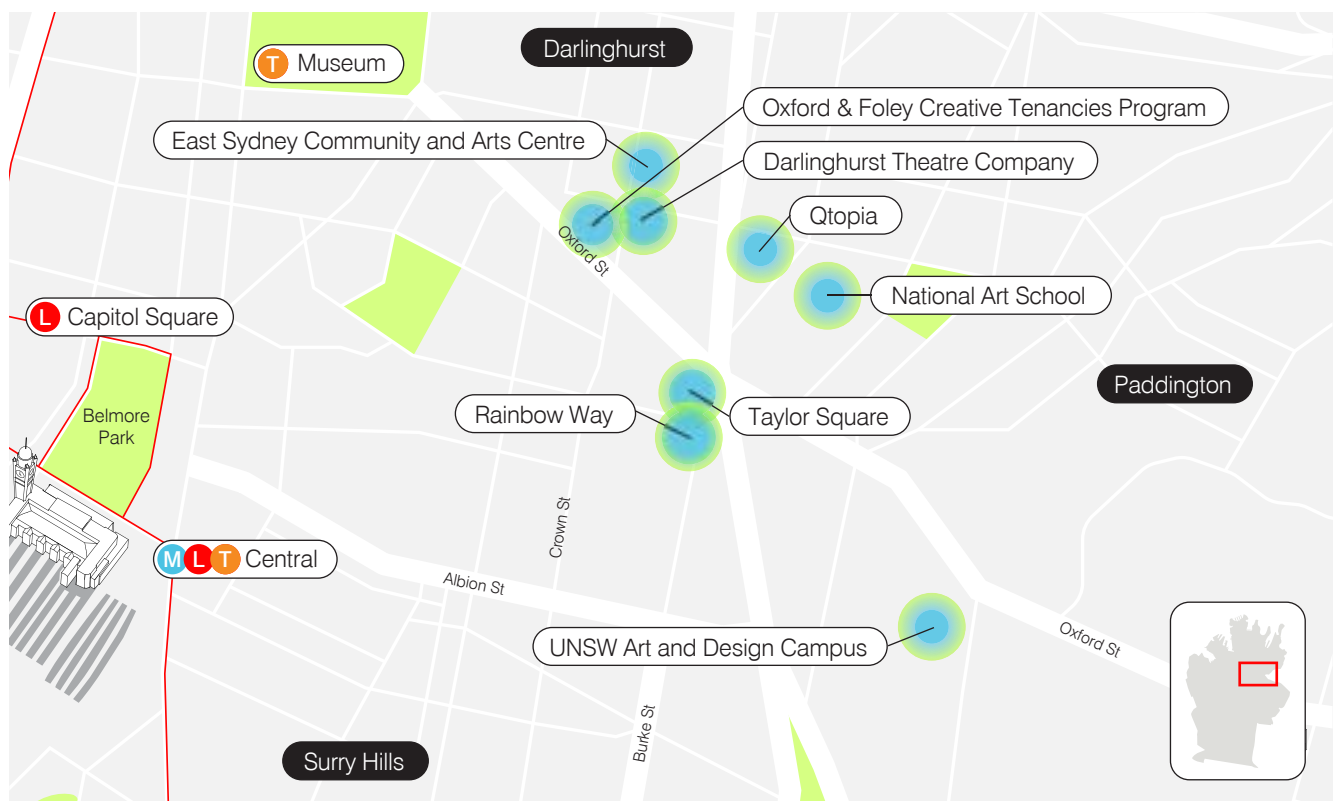
A focal point for Sydney’s creative and cultural landscape, **Surry Hills** and **Darlinghurst** form the eastern edge of Tech Central, with this precinct’s high concentration of venture capital firms.

The area hosts a mix of authentic small to medium scale businesses, cultural and educational institutions, residential warehouse conversions, and key public spaces such as **Taylor Square**. The fine grain streets and laneways attract creative businesses, particularly in the tech, design, marketing and advertising fields, with more than 7,300 creative industries and 4,000 ICT jobs clustered in this precinct.

**Oxford Street** has long been recognised as the home of Sydney’s LGBTIQ+ communities with the area host to Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade, **National Art School**, **UNSW Art and Design Campus**, and Sydney’s first queer museum, **Qtopia**.

**Place-based economic guidance**

- Respect the scale, heritage and design of local urban and built form that is well suited to a diversity of businesses
- Acknowledge and celebrate LGBTIQ+ identity and culture through events and within businesses and public spaces
- Support a 24/7 economy that is inclusive, safe and diverse
- Preserve and create more affordable cultural and creative space
- Encourage convergence and collaboration of local creative businesses with opportunities and institutions in Tech Central





# Pymont will be an exemplar of quality mixed-use development and the home of media

Surrounded by water, the **Pymont** peninsula has transitioned from an industrial port town to one of the densest mixed-use suburbs in Australia.

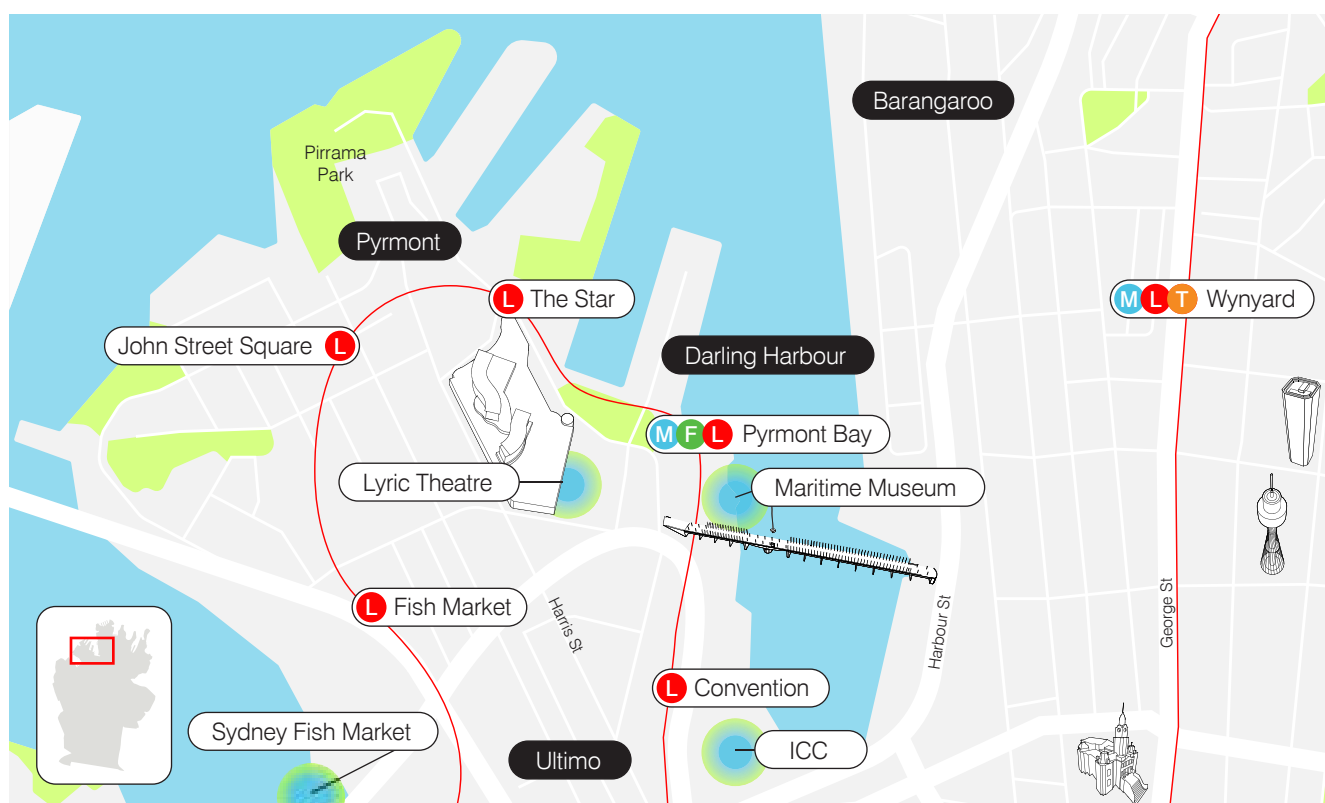
Sydney's home of media, it houses traditional and emerging broadcasting, publishing and technology companies, including headquarters of television stations, startups, and Google Australia.

**The Lyric Theatre, Maritime Museum, redeveloped Sydney Fish Markets**, major entertainment facilities and the neighbouring **Darling Harbour** and **International Convention Centre (ICC)** drive the visitor economy.

Guided by the NSW Government's Pymont Peninsula Place Strategy, the area is expected to accommodate 4,000 more homes and 23,000 more jobs around a new Pymont metro station.

## **Place-based economic guidance**

- Support a global 24-hour destination for tourism, entertainment, innovation, and technology
- Reinforce a world-class and accessible harbour foreshore and connection to Yananurula
- Work with major employers to promote inclusive employment pathways for a diversity of people
- Encourage higher employment density around Pymont metro station that complements the area's economic strengths
- Integrate the Pymont metro station into the surrounding neighbourhood and provide more space for people



The **Entertainment and Recreation Precinct** will showcase creative and sporting excellence and events

The area is a focal point for creative production and major events, with dedicated facilities including the **Sydney Football Stadium, Sydney Cricket Ground, Entertainment Quarter** and **Disney Studios, Hordern Pavilion** and the **Australian Film Television and Radio School**.

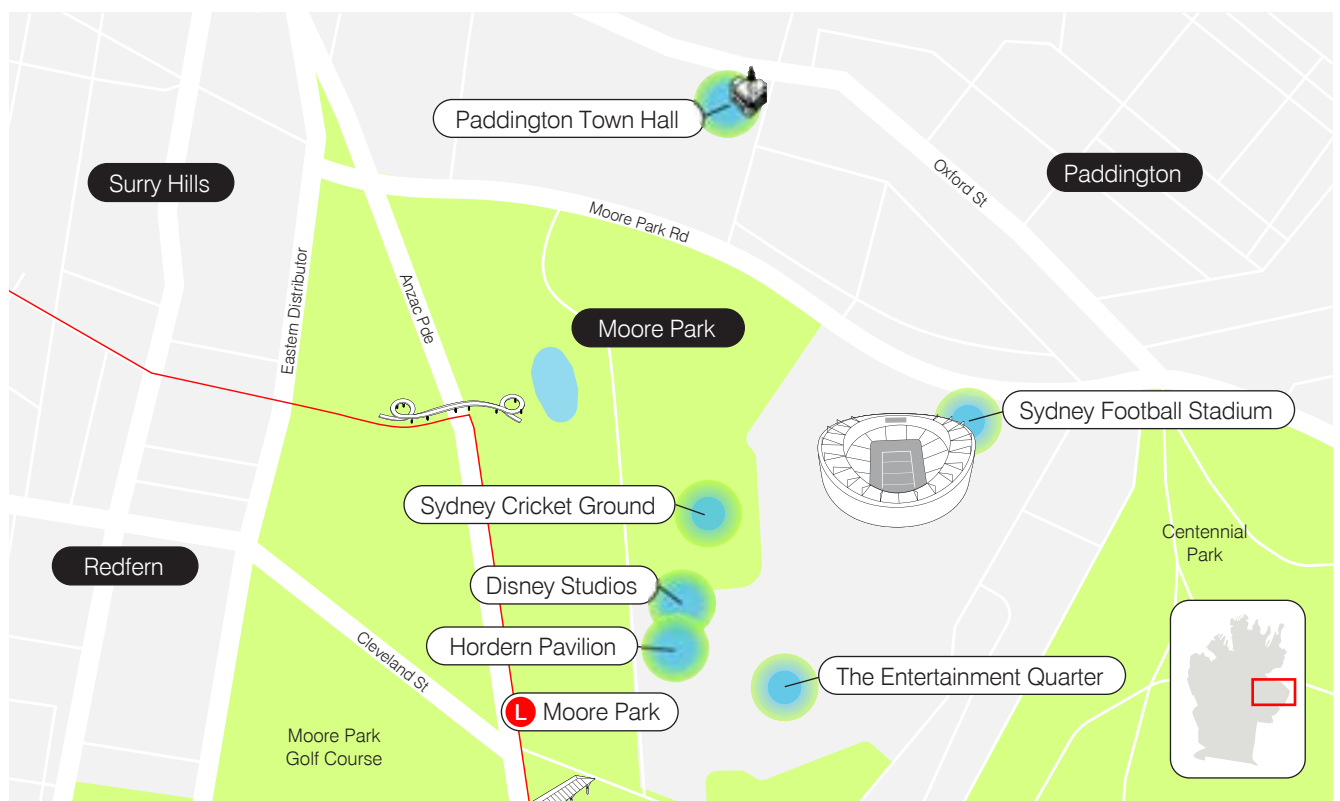
These support numerous sports teams and sporting body headquarters as well as the NSW screen industry, with the majority of jobs in the creative and culture industries.

Connected to **Central station** by light rail and cycleways, the creative clusters of **Surry Hills** and **Paddington** are in walking distance.

To support the growing neighbouring areas, the NSW Government has committed to part of Moore Park Golf Course becoming a new public park.

**Place-based economic guidance**

- Attract and support local and international events, concerts and sports
- Support a world leading film and TV production hub that leverages connections to Sydney’s creative sector, including neighbouring Surry Hills and Paddington
- Provide inclusive employment pathways into the entertainment and sports sectors for a diversity of people
- Preserve and increase open space and recreation uses that are accessible to everyone to play, relax and be entertained
- Promote improved connectivity and accessibility to, from and across the precinct



# The **Southern Enterprise**

**Area will provide the urban services and production spaces essential to our city**

Close to **Sydney Airport and Port Botany**, the area is focused on industrial activity, transport and logistics, creative industries production and a 24-hour entertainment precinct.

As the only remaining **industrially zoned land** in the City of Sydney local area, change must be carefully managed to ensure the city can continue to function productively.

We are **committed to extending light rail to Green Square**, supporting residential and affordable housing growth centred around the existing train station, town square, library and nearby **Joynton Avenue Creative Centre**. This important centre also provides opportunities for growth in professional services, back-office functions and population supporting jobs.

## **Place-based economic guidance**

- Protect and enhance opportunities for a range of economic activities including industrial, urban services, commercial, entertainment, and creative production opportunities
- Improve public and active transport to train and metro stations, Green Square town centre and library, and other key destinations
- Encourage industry links and research collaborations with companies and universities in Tech Central and other innovation precincts
- Support Sydney's international gateways of Sydney Airport and Port Botany
- Grow the Alexandria 24-hour arts, cultural and entertainment precinct



# How we've supported a city of distinct precincts

## Transforming George Street into a people-friendly boulevard

**George Street is the civic spine that stitches together many of our city's neighbourhoods and significant economic precincts. It runs north from Central station, Australia's busiest railway station, through to Circular Quay, Australia's most visited tourist destination.**

Now a pedestrianised boulevard supporting light rail, George Street is enjoyed by millions of people every week. A destination in itself, it is home to some of the city's most iconic retail brands, hospitality venues with outdoor dining, and sought after commercial addresses. Interchanging with several underground train stations, it forms the link between the city's 3 proposed civic squares at Circular Quay, Town Hall and Central station.

With so much life and economic activity bustling along its full length day and night, it's easy to forget that George Street was not always such an inviting place.

Previously clogged with buses and lanes of traffic that discouraged street activity, the major investments made by the City of Sydney and the NSW Government have transformed George Street into a beautiful tree-lined boulevard that proudly sits as the most important in our city.

By putting people first, the revitalisation of George Street is the start of a broader vision for all our city streets.

We are committed to the next phase of investment to extend light rail along Broadway to support innovation in Tech Central and to Green Square to support major urban renewal and new housing developments.

Photo: Shutterstock







Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

## Community wealth building – a framework for local economic development

**Community wealth building is a model of economic development that aims to create an inclusive, sustainable economy embedded in local and broadly held ownership.**

It moves away from traditional economic measures of growth, such as gross domestic product and focuses on the distribution of wealth within the local community and engagement of community members who may not otherwise participate or share in the benefits.

The model is built around 5 key principles:

- **Building the generative economy:** Promoting the growth of enterprises with diverse ownership models (such as social enterprises) to create jobs across a range of sectors and retain and share profits in the community.
- **Progressive procurement:** Harnessing the procurement power of major institutions to maximise expenditure in the local area and produce economic, social, and environmental benefits at scale from that expenditure.

- **Employment:** Targeting prevailing employment issues in the local area, either as individual businesses or by developing partnership agreements or compacts to commit multiple organisations to action.
- **Land and property:** Using land and assets held by key institutions as a platform for generating community wealth.
- **Finance:** Providing enterprises with access to capital that would otherwise struggle to obtain a start, particularly enterprises with environmental and social goals that align with the community.

The principles of community wealth building are central in the design and implementation of our local council services. The momentum building projects of this strategy will further test and trial the framework to support innovation in how we best meet the needs of our changing community.

# Strong local neighbourhoods

## Supporting vibrant streets and inclusive opportunities

The daily life of our city – its economic pulse – is felt on our high streets and local villages. Our people, small businesses and authentic places are the foundation of the economy and provide diverse opportunities for our communities. This strategy seeks to ensure our local economy is vibrant and inclusive to build economic strength from the bottom up.

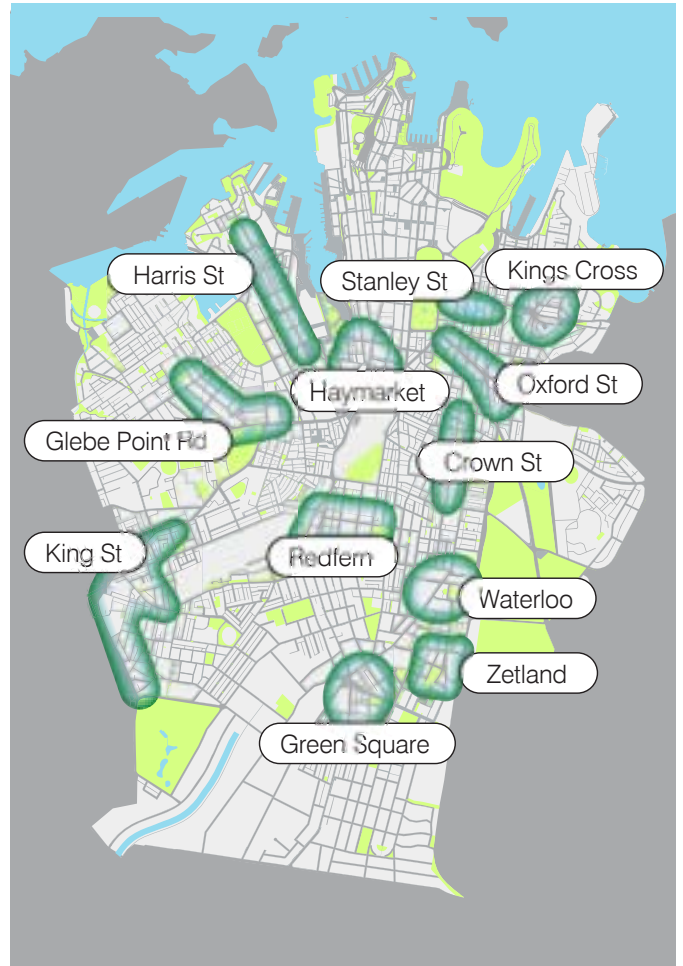
From Potts Point and Paddington, to Glebe and Newtown, our character-filled villages define the experience of visiting our city and provide economic opportunities to a wide diversity of people.

The street is where so much of the economy plays out. On-street trading, high quality public domain, safe and walkable streets, and diverse day and night-time retail, hospitality and entertainment options drive a 24-hour city.

Economic inclusion is critical to economic health with our services, libraries, community centres and programs playing an important role in providing people and businesses with the skills, confidence, networks and training needed to participate and excel in the economy.

This includes opportunities for social, Indigenous, and for-purpose enterprises which, while providing economic opportunities can also address community need.

Working with our communities, our focus is on getting it right at the local level, ensuring Sydney has an economy that is inclusive, vibrant and diverse, because when it's not, the whole economy suffers.





# Strong local neighbourhoods

## Actions

- Reinforce local character and increase visitation by developing and promoting distinct local places and high-street offerings
- Promote the development of a diverse and sustainable 24-hour economy that meets the needs of residents, visitors and businesses
- Support equitable employment for all by removing barriers
- Foster a culture of entrepreneurship through knowledge sharing, festivals, network building and active promotion of experimentation
- Support local business to innovate, build skills and adopt new technologies, including artificial intelligence
- Monitor and advocate for improved digital inclusion for all, with a focus on priority communities
- Build local business and community capabilities to adapt their operations and benefit from the transition to a net zero and circular economy



Photo: Sarah Rhodes / City of Sydney

# How we've supported strong local neighbourhoods

## Our villages and high streets

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**We have long recognised the role of local villages in supporting people's daily lives and sense of community and belonging.**

Based around key community main streets, our local villages offer a diversity of smaller businesses including bespoke retail and fashion stores, restaurants and bars, supermarkets and grocery stores, and salons and flower shops. These villages help meet the needs of the community and provide a buzz on the street, contributing to economic output while also creating attractive places for people to live, work and visit.

Often represented by a chamber of commerce or other business collectives, we work closely with these representative groups to promote local places and tailor programs and services to the needs of their communities.

The rich diversity of local places in our city, each with their own character and appeal, adds depth and detail to the experience of being in Sydney, making it a more attractive location for locals and global visitors alike.



Photo: Adam Hollingworth / City of Sydney

## Inclusive and meaningful employment

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**The City of Sydney is a member of the IncludeAbility Employer Network, an initiative of the Australian Human Rights Commission dedicated to improving the long-term employment opportunities for people with disability.**

This network of public and private organisations commits to creating accessible and inclusive workplaces. It works together to improve meaningful employment pathways by collecting and reviewing data across organisations to assess progress, and advocates for other organisations to improve opportunities and conditions for people with disability.



Photo: Abril Felman / City of Sydney



## Supporting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce

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**Increasing economic equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is an important part of reconciliation and local economic development.**

The City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce strategy seeks to ensure we are a culturally proficient and skilled workplace that invests in ways to develop and maintain an increase in recruitment, and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our organisation.

It demonstrates our commitment to ensuring the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees have lifelong and meaningful careers.



Photo: Abril Felman / City of Sydney

## Children in the city

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**Early childhood education and care is vital in supporting economic growth, social inclusion and gender equality.**

We have a long history of investing in quality child care, providing preschool, long day, occasional and outside school hours care through subsidised leasing of City of Sydney-owned buildings or direct programs.

We have demonstrated that local government can play a significant role in supporting child care with adequate resourcing.



Photo: Peter Bennetts

## Activating Sydney's streets

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**Our Sydney Streets program transforms the city's beloved neighbourhood high streets throughout the year with local festivals of food and drink, retail and free entertainment.**

In Surry Hills, Pyrmont, Darlinghurst, Redfern, Haymarket, Glebe and Potts Point, these street festivals have brought communities together while providing more local business opportunities.

Increasing local spend by more than 10% on average, Sydney Streets has played an important role in our city's economic recovery and shows what is possible when the streets are temporarily reclaimed for people.



Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

## Public spaces

### for people

**Sometimes the simplest solutions are the most effective. Every day hundreds of tables and chairs are temporarily placed in our most prominent city squares, providing a free and inclusive casual, and comfortable way to enjoy the city (and your lunch!).**

Chairs in Squares is a light touch activation that is part of our commitment to provide people-friendly environments that can support businesses.

Often acting as the initial invitation for people to explore a recently renewed space, this program complements our major upgrades of the public domain, such as revitalising George Street.



Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

## An outdoor

### dining city

**Sydney's great climate and food culture is a perfect pairing. Our outdoor dining program has brought more life to the city and improved the bottom line for our local businesses.**

Revised guidelines have enabled fast tracked approvals, more flexibility for businesses, and allowed the reallocation of on-street parking for use by people rather than cars.

Initially a response to the pandemic, the program sees hundreds of new outdoor dining areas approved annually.



Photo: Jessica Lindsay / City of Sydney

## Upskilling our

### local businesses

**Making time to work on the business rather than just working in it is a common concern among small business owners.**

Our business innovation programs are designed to bring dedicated local businesses and for-purpose organisations together with professional trainers to further develop skills and nurture an entrepreneur mindset.

Operating as an intensive accelerator program, the skills developed range from online marketing, branding and social media, to financial model development, and innovation and sustainable practice adoption.



Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney





Photo: Damian Shaw / City of Sydney

## Supporting startups to flourish

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**Propelling Sydney's startup ecosystem up the global rankings starts at home by building the confidence, networks, and skills of our budding entrepreneurs.**

From providing networking events, awards celebrations and skills workshops, to introducing startups to globally esteemed thinkers, we play an important role priming our local creative talent to establish new ventures or scale their existing ones.

This includes support for our city's incubators and accelerators that provide free or low-cost workspaces and programs to our emerging startup talent.

## Our libraries are the anchor points of community

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**Our libraries are a point of pride for many of our neighbourhoods. Accessible, inclusive and free, they embody the ethos that if people can participate in society, society wins.**

They expose our communities to new ideas and provide access to technologies and skills that can build confidence and give people the tools to participate.

Promoting life-long learning, our libraries provide everything from children's literacy and school holiday programs, through to adult learning and job ready skills courses, maker spaces and meeting rooms for communities of interest.



Photo: Dempstah

## Unlocking great ideas through our grants

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**Every year the City of Sydney provides hundreds of grants to great community and business proposals to strengthen the social, cultural, economic and environmental life of our city.**

From funding new climate tech festivals to circular economy initiatives that extract reusable fibres from unwanted clothing to create new high-quality yarn, our grants programs provide the kickstart for good ideas to become realities.



Photo: Abril Felman / City of Sydney

# Momentum building projects



**We're proposing a series of momentum building projects to support our economic development strategy.**

These projects seek to trial and test different ways of doing things by experimenting, partnering and learning by doing.

The momentum building projects target 8 areas that were identified through our community engagement as needing focused attention to unpack, interrogate and explore novel and innovative approaches.

The projects – their design, challenges, successes and impact – will be regularly monitored and reported to promote a culture of experimentation and share learnings with others.

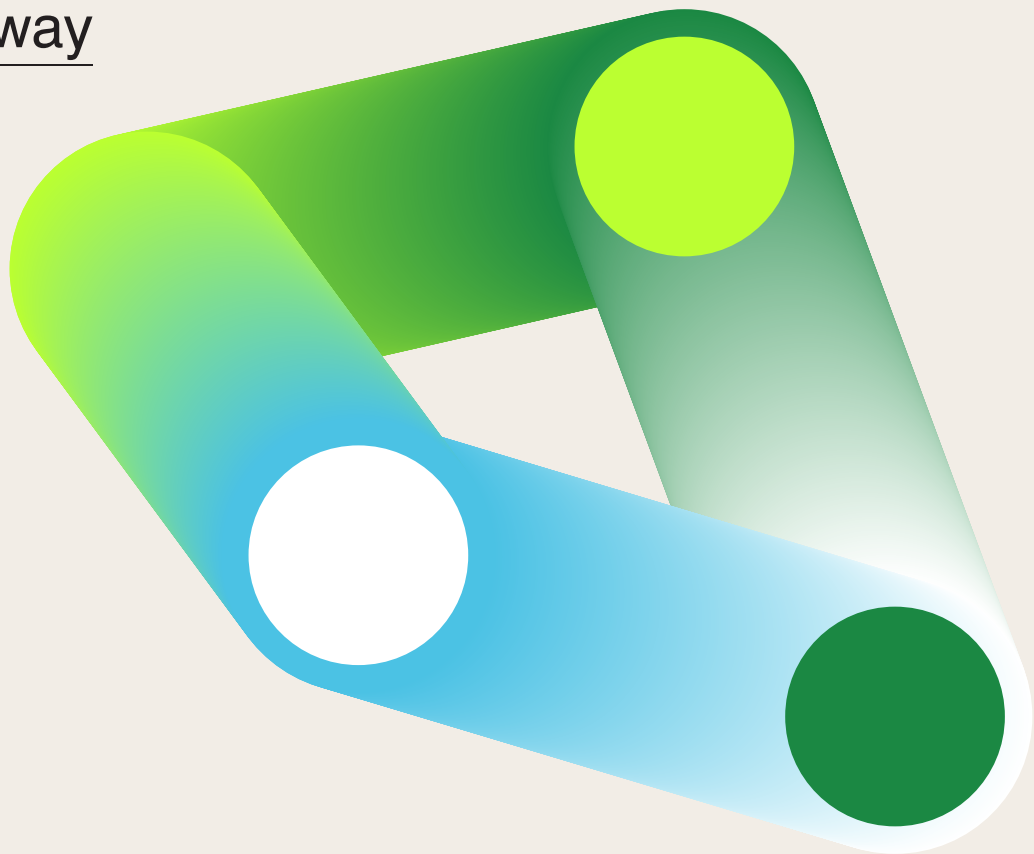
The City of Sydney cannot achieve these projects alone and success will require broad collaboration, particularly with the NSW Government.

The momentum building projects are a call to action for partners who share our ambition for the future of Sydney's economy.



# Unlocking Tech Central

## via Broadway



### The problem and opportunity

The Tech Central innovation district is a global opportunity for Sydney. Already home to world-leading universities and medical research institutes, with more than 100,000 students and 100,000 jobs, and Australia's biggest cluster of tech startups and global companies, Tech Central will be the focal point of our innovation-led economic transformation.

Critical to unlocking its full potential will be providing an environment that promotes collaboration and linkages between industry and research, transport connectivity that draws talent and ideas from across Sydney and beyond, and public spaces and amenities that are walkable, safe, inclusive and vibrant.

We are committed to extending light rail along Broadway to Tech Central, a game-changing investment that will be the lifeblood of Tech Central's long-term growth.

However, Broadway is currently an 8-lane roadway that acts as a major barrier to movement and collaboration right at the heart of Tech Central, negatively impacting on the street-level experience and the attraction of talent and investment.

The light rail extension will involve a substantial construction phase, and this project seeks to explore immediate and incremental opportunities to improve Broadway and unlock the potential of Tech Central before light rail is built.

### Project goals

Working in partnership with Tech Central precinct and government partners:

- Commit to a partnership approach to realising Tech Central and revitalising Broadway
- Align placemaking, events and innovation ecosystem support programs to connect the Tech Central community
- Work with partners to develop and deliver incremental place improvements and activations that improve Broadway
- Coordinate transitional placemaking activities with long-term light rail and capital works planning and delivery

# Accelerating the green economy transformation



## **The problem and opportunity**

From more vulnerable supply chains to substantially increased insurance premiums and weather events that threaten many tourism and agricultural activities, the potential impact of climate change on our businesses and economy is immense.

While finding solutions to the challenges driving climate change will be critical to protecting what we have, purposefully growing our green economy also presents a major opportunity for economic growth.

At the City of Sydney we are proud to be a leader in our commitments to a net zero future. However, commitments alone will not get us to where we need to be – we need to unlock and leverage our talent to combat the many real-world problems we face.

Sydney is ideally placed to be a global hub for climate action. Attractive to talent from around the world with leading universities, research institutes, professional services and one of the world's top financial centres, we have all the necessary ingredients to grow our green economy and be an exporter of impactful innovation.


To realise this opportunity, we must better connect entrepreneurs to problems, showcase and scale innovations, promote technology adoption and translation across industries, and target and attract more of the types of jobs and technologies that will support Sydney being a global destination for sustainable investment.

## **Project goals**

Working in partnership with government, industry, research institutions and peak bodies:

- Establish partnership approaches to grow green innovation and investment
- Map industry, sector and talent networks to identify strengths, gaps and opportunities
- Foster and connect networks committed to net zero, sustainability and impactful investment
- Develop an investment attraction strategy with clear targets to grow the green economy, emerging industries and technologies

# Exploring localised circular economies



## **The problem and opportunity**

More than 158,000 tonnes of waste is generated each year in the City of Sydney local area by restaurants, eateries, pubs and clubs – 28% of all commercial waste. Of this, around 60% goes straight to landfill and 40% is recycled.

This represents a potential loss of up to 90,000+ tonnes a year of resources from our economy, compounding the city-wide challenge in disposing of waste and adding costs to business.

NSW has the highest waste levy in Australia. After accounting for collection, processing and transport to the final destination, many businesses are paying more than \$400 per tonne to send waste to landfill. This represents a significant cost to businesses, but also a price incentive to explore and realise more circular economy outcomes.

There are more than 4,000 accommodation and food service businesses in our city. The majority are small businesses employing one to 19 people. While the cost of waste disposal may be high for small businesses, the quantities produced may not justify adopting a more circular or scaled approach to waste disposal.

To regain value from the waste system and bring down costs, a collective approach may be required to overcome the barriers associated with aggregating, storing, collecting and processing of larger quantities of waste.

## **Project goals**

This project seeks to work in partnership with collectives of small businesses to:

- Quantify common waste and material streams generated by small businesses in a close geographic area
- Identify opportunities to collaborate on innovative ways to reduce waste, increase reuse and recycling, and repurpose materials
- Explore the space, equipment, infrastructure, training and systems requirements to realise circular opportunities at a precinct scale
- Provide and promote opportunities to test, showcase and scale innovative approaches, technologies and products

# Supporting Indigenous enterprise



## **The problem and opportunity**

Our city has a proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, with Redfern and Waterloo in particular a historical focal point for communities from across Sydney, NSW and Australia.

**First Nations people of Australia have a rich history of innovation and adaptation that spans tens of thousands of years. Their deep connection to the land and their intimate understanding of the environment allowed them to develop a wide range of ingenious technologies, cultural practices and survival strategies. (First Innovators, 2023).**

Reflecting this depth of experience, ingenuity and understanding, the number of Indigenous enterprises has grown, presenting economic opportunities that benefit the whole community.

Our local area is home to the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander urban population in Australia, presenting opportunities to foster, engage and support a larger number of Indigenous enterprises, through networking, upskilling and building business connections.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entrepreneurs and enterprises do face barriers to establishing successful businesses including accessing low-cost finance, building a customer base, winning contracts and establishing links to reliable suppliers.

Holistically addressing these barriers can help seed and scale more Indigenous enterprises in our city and complements actions in our 10-year Eora Journey economic development plan.

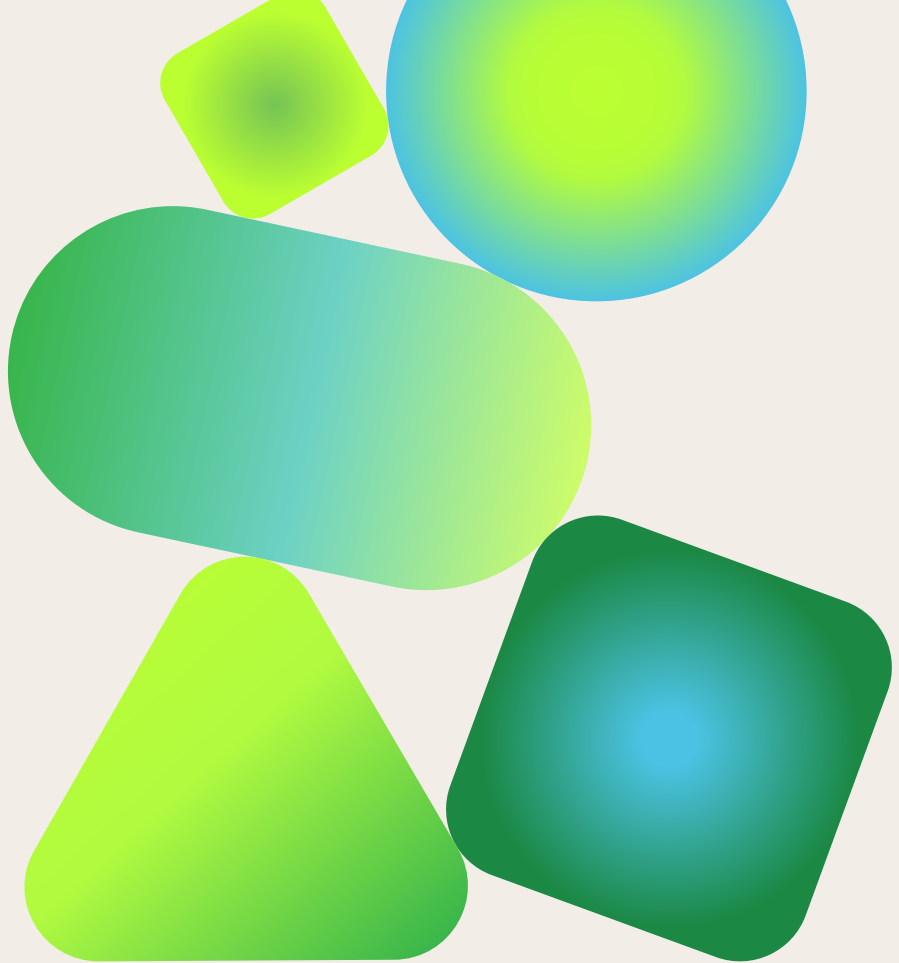
## **Project goals**

Working in partnership with Indigenous enterprises, this project seeks to:

- Support Indigenous enterprise through dedicated City of Sydney staffing and resourcing, network building and promotions
- Seed opportunities for Indigenous enterprises through partnerships, business upskilling and by making connections with capital markets
- Broker space to support Indigenous enterprises to work, trade, connect and host events
- Scale opportunities through procurement pathways, championing authentic art, hosting significant cultural events and promoting deeper visitor experiences



# Putting vacancy to creative use



## **The problem and opportunity**

Demand for office and retail space has changed as the long-term implications of remote working are felt and new operating models begin to emerge. While still strong compared with other international cities, in our city centre office vacancy has risen to 12.2% and occupancy is down<sup>32</sup>. Retail vacancy has risen to 7.9% overall but sits at 8.1% in centre retailing<sup>33</sup>.

Underused spaces mean less people in the city and poorer outcomes for property owners through unrealised rents and the reduced attractiveness of a building lacking life and energy. They also represented missed opportunities to house employment uses that are critically important to our economy, such as the creative industries.

Since 2011 Sydney is the only capital city in Australia to have lost 'core creatives' – artists, musicians, writers and performers. The loss of these jobs doesn't only impact individuals in the industry, but also the innovation, visitor and experience economies that are so dependent on the content these creatives produce.

There are several reasons that lead to space being underused and not matched to uses looking for space. This includes the cost and hassle of temporarily filling space, challenges in finding and aggregating smaller tenants, the impact on valuations of leasing below market rate, and complexity in navigating regulations. This project seeks to find creative approaches to occupying vacant commercial spaces to bring spaces back to life and provide much needed workspace for our creative industries.

## **Project goals**

This project seeks to work in partnership with the property sector and creatives to:

- Unpack and breakdown the real or perceived barriers to using vacant commercial space
- Develop a framework that demonstrates how value exchange can be realised between property owners and creative tenants
- Establish and trial a matching mechanism that reduces burden and creates a win-win for all parties
- Research and evaluate the benefits of co-locating creatives in commercial spaces and assess the scalability of the approach

# Retaining international student talent



## **The problem and opportunity**

Our city is a leading global destination for education. Inner Sydney hosts more than 200,000 international students, which represents the majority of international students in NSW and about one third of all international students in Australia.

Most international students are enrolling in higher education or vocational education and training (VET) qualifications, presenting the opportunity to train the talent of the future and address local skills shortages in critical areas such as tech, IT and engineering.

But across Australia the retention rate of international students is low. Only 28% exercise their post-study visa rights and just 16% become permanent residents.

Why international students choose not to stay in Sydney or Australia can reflect a range of factors. These include personal reasons, difficult visa pathways, challenges connecting and integrating into the city, and limited opportunities to develop professional networks, 'job ready' skills and confidence.

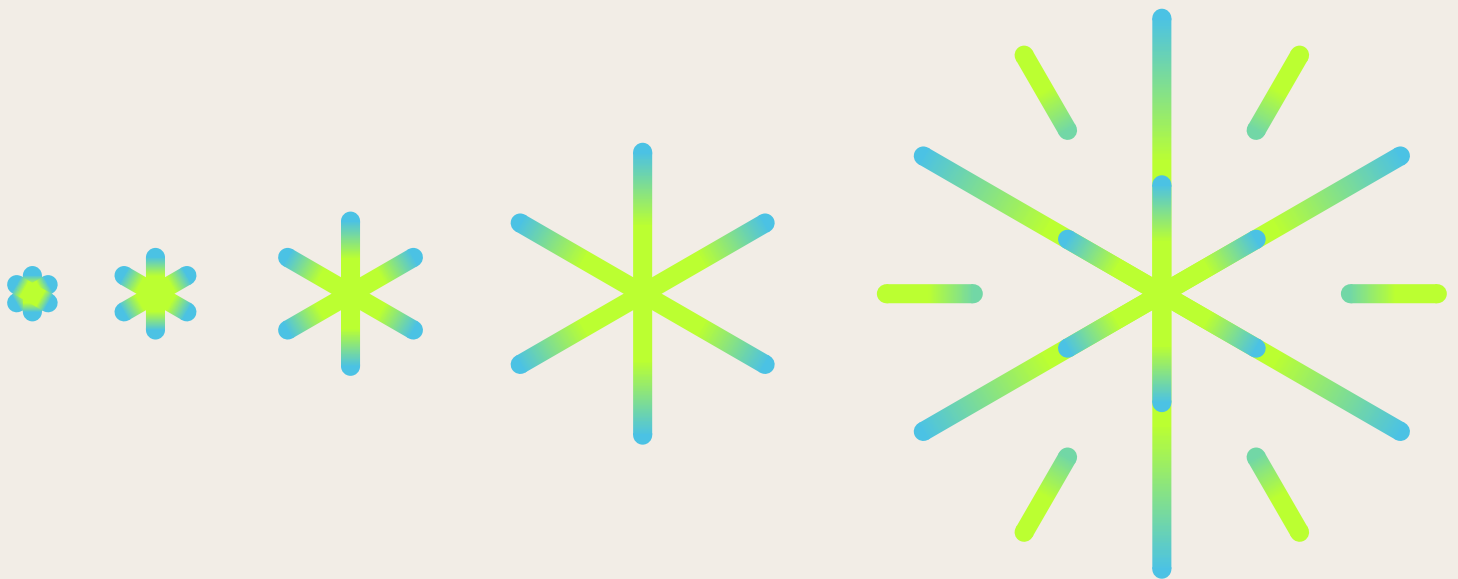
This project focuses on understanding and addressing the variety of local considerations that may be deterring international students staying beyond their studies.

## **Project goals**

This project seeks to work in partnership with government, education institutes and business to:

- Map the barriers deterring students from staying beyond their studies
- Establish a partnership agreement with key stakeholders with a shared interest in student talent retention
- Partner and develop a coordinated program to welcome international students and support their integration into Sydney and opportunities for their transition to employment
- Explore opportunities to grow the EdTech sector and position Sydney as a global hub

# Evolving the visitor experience



## **The problem and opportunity**

Before the pandemic tourism was worth around \$37.1 billion to the NSW economy and employed more than 250,000 people.

From early 2020 to late 2022 international visitor arrivals were suspended and domestic travel restrictions imposed. This virtually shut down the tourism industry, limiting new investment and pausing or discontinuing tourist programs.

Post-pandemic, domestic tourism to Sydney has largely recovered and international visitors are returning steadily. But the traveller profile has changed, with recovery led by English speaking markets, more people travelling to visit friends and relatives, visitors staying longer in Australia on average and visitors more likely to be travelling independently instead of group travel.

These shifts promote a re-examination of who the visitor is, the type of experiences they're looking for and how best to support them when in Sydney.

They also present the opportunity for us to consider the stories we wish to tell about this place, its history, people and cultures.

Evolving the visitor experience is not only about providing services and experiences tailored to the traveller, but also about deepening our and their knowledge and understanding about the many diverse elements that come together to form the story of Sydney.

Although the vast bulk of tourists to Australia visit our city, tourism is of state and national significance and supporting the visitor is a shared responsibility.

## **Project goals**

This project seeks to work in partnership with governments and visitor economy businesses to:

- Understand and map the visitor journey
- Establish coordinated governance with key partners who support the visitor experience
- Identify gaps in service and experience offerings, both physical and digital
- Develop a shared plan to address gaps and evolve the visitor experience
- Implement and review the rollout of the plan and continually refine the model

# Promoting vibrant streets



## The problem and opportunity

Across our neighbourhoods, suburbs and villages, the street is often the connecting point of a community and the place where people walk, cycle, meet, recreate, shop, play, eat and drink.

Collectively our streets make up a big proportion of public space and, if activated during times of lower use, present opportunities to improve vibrancy, support a wide diversity of activity, drive visitation and strengthen community connection.

But activating certain areas of the city, such as temporary street closures, can hit significant hurdles from complex and overlapping approval processes, to concerns around safety or community support, and high costs, particularly associated with managing traffic or installing temporary infrastructure.

Attempting to overcome these challenges can consume significant resources and present barriers for activations to occur, particularly for smaller businesses or community organisations.

This project seeks to reduce the cost and complexity of activating our streets, proactively bringing together businesses, community and government to trial a place-based partnership approach to activation.

This approach could consider upfront the approvals and compliance processes to activate a location over several years, seek efficiencies in event and traffic management planning, and consider the merits of sharing infrastructure which might reduce the cost of individual activations.

## Project goals

This project seeks to work in partnership with neighbourhood or business collectives to:

- Document the barriers to safely activating streets for more active and people focused uses
- Collaborate with neighbourhood or business collectives to partner on a street activation trial program
- Work in partnership with NSW Government to streamline the process for activating streets
- Research and evaluate the benefits of a trial program to refine the model







## Engagement and implementation

Sydney's Forward Economy builds on our guiding strategy, Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision. It has been shaped by community engagement undertaken on the draft economic strategy discussion paper and by the expert insights provided by our Business, Economic Development and Covid Recovery Advisory Panel.

Photo: Bryn Davies / City of Sydney



### **Engaging with our community**

The feedback we received on the draft economic strategy discussion paper was incorporated into Sydney's Forward Economy. We engaged more than 175 businesses directly, briefed 11 councils, hosted multiple community and industry forums, and invited feedback from Sydney Your Say subscribers. Feedback strongly supported a focus on green transition, innovation, inclusive growth and revitalising the city centre post-pandemic.

During 2023/24 we worked closely with our Business, Economic Development and Covid Recovery Advisory Panel. We appreciate the panel's expert insight and advice on the direction and content of Sydney's Forward Economy.



Photo: Daniel Tran / City of Sydney

Meeting quarterly, our advisory panel is represented by these organisations:

- Committee for Sydney
- Business Sydney
- Property Council of Australia (NSW)
- University of Sydney
- Placemaking NSW
- Supply Nation
- Canva
- Australian Retailers Association
- BridgeClimb Sydney
- Indigenous Chamber of Commerce
- YCK Laneway Association
- Investible
- Four Pillars Gin
- Stone and Chalk
- Greater Cities Commission (now NSW Government)

### **Monitoring and reporting**

Sydney's Forward Economy will monitor and track the performance of our economy over time against the measures and targets presented in this strategy, as well as against measures presented in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision and the community strategic plan.

Progress will be reported yearly, including detailed updates on the 8 momentum building projects, with lessons learnt documented and widely shared.

A holistic mid-term review of this strategy will be conducted to assess progress against the vision and outcomes. The strategy will be updated where required based on new opportunities or changed circumstances.



# Sydney's Forward Economy – bringing it all together



Photo: Christopher Burns on Unsplash



# Vision

We will champion a global economy that unlocks innovation, which is sustainable and inclusive, and provides great local experiences

Sustainable

Inclusive

Innovative

Experiential

Outcome	Transitioning to net zero and circularity to mitigate risks to the economy and create new jobs.	Ensuring equitable access to participate and share in our prosperity.	Embracing new ideas to support our competitiveness and resilience.	Fueling vitality for a culturally rich, diverse and safe city.
<b>Global Sydney</b>	<p><b>01.</b> Showcase Sydney as a global champion of net zero</p> <p><b>02.</b> Encourage investment in Sydney that supports the evolution and growth of the sustainable finance sector</p>	<p><b>07.</b> Enhance Sydney's reputation as a global study destination by providing opportunities for students to participate in all aspects of city life</p>	<p><b>14.</b> Boost Sydney's innovation ecosystem and connect it globally to attract and retain businesses, talent and investment</p>	<p><b>21.</b> Recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and history, and embed it in the experience of Sydney</p> <p><b>22.</b> Invest in and leverage major events, festivals and business conferences to promote Sydney and its values to global audiences</p> <p><b>23.</b> Collaborate to create world class visitor services to deepen the visitor experience in Sydney</p>
<b>Australia's economic heart</b>	<p><b>03.</b> Advocate for the development of circular economy infrastructure across Greater Sydney to boost resource recovery</p> <p><b>04.</b> Facilitate the growth of net zero or circular economy markets to provide greater business opportunities and reduce costs</p>	<p><b>08.</b> Increase access to and supply of diverse and affordable housing to support equitable workforce participation</p> <p><b>09.</b> Collaborate to develop sustainable mechanisms to secure affordable and fit-for-purpose creative production space</p>	<p><b>15.</b> Plan for economically competitive and resilient places, including development of quality workplaces supported by infrastructure</p> <p><b>16.</b> Work with education institutes, industry and community organisations to provide inclusive career pathways and address skills gaps</p>	<p><b>24.</b> Strengthen connectivity across Greater Sydney and NSW with clean, high-frequency, reliable and safe public transport options</p>
<b>City of distinct precincts</b>	<p><b>05.</b> Trial and test new ideas and approaches to support industry innovation in the transition to net zero and circular economies</p>	<p><b>10.</b> Provide targeted support for Indigenous enterprises, social enterprises, and for-purpose businesses</p> <p><b>11.</b> Explore community wealth building approaches that create more opportunities for diverse, inclusive, and local-ownership business models</p>	<p><b>17.</b> Promote areas with strong sector specialisations and a clustering of complementary economic activities</p> <p><b>18.</b> Collaborate with enablers in the innovation ecosystem to foster startup communities and provide affordable workspace and event space</p>	<p><b>25.</b> Invest in public domain, walking and cycling options that improve safety and the visitor experience</p> <p><b>26.</b> Monitor and campaign for planning and regulation reform with a focus on entertainment, sound and liquor reform</p>
<b>Strong local neighbourhoods</b>	<p><b>06.</b> Build local business and community capabilities to adapt their operations and benefit from the transition to a net zero and circular economy future</p>	<p><b>12.</b> Support equitable employment for all by removing barriers</p> <p><b>13.</b> Monitor and advocate for improved digital inclusion for all, with a focus on priority communities</p>	<p><b>19.</b> Foster a culture of entrepreneurship through knowledge sharing, festivals, network building and active promotion of experimentation</p> <p><b>20.</b> Support local business to innovate, build skills and adopt new technologies, including artificial intelligence</p>	<p><b>27.</b> Reinforce local character and increase visitation by developing and promoting distinct local places and high-street offerings</p> <p><b>28.</b> Support the development of a diverse and sustainable 24 hour economy that meets the needs of residents, visitors and businesses</p>
<b>Enabling Processes</b>	<p><b>29.</b> Encourage innovation and experimentation in project and program design and implementation</p> <p><b>30.</b> Support continuous learning and process improvement</p>	<p><b>31.</b> Build and maintain relationships with cities, councils and organisations around the world and locally to share ideas, learn from each other and lead the way</p>	<p><b>32.</b> Gather, track and share data and insights that show how the city is changing and allow for performance to be measured</p>	<p><b>33.</b> Explore evolving approaches to place governance tailored to local circumstances</p>
<b>Momentum building projects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accelerating the green economy transformation</li> <li>Exploring localised circular economies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting Indigenous enterprise</li> <li>Putting vacancy to creative use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unlocking Tech Central via Broadway</li> <li>Retaining international student talent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evolving the visitor experience</li> <li>Promoting vibrant streets</li> </ul>

# Notes

## Economic measures

We will monitor and track the performance of our economy over time against the following measures and targets presented in this strategy:

- Grow the proportion of green jobs in the city
- Increase Sydney's position on the Global Destination Sustainability Index
- Increase the supply of subsidised social, affordable rental and supported housing
- Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people employed in the local area
- Grow worker productivity across key knowledge and innovation intensive industries
- Increase clustering in precincts of knowledge and innovation intensive industries
- Increase visitation across each of the day-time, night-time and weekend periods
- Increase attendance at and production of diverse cultural offerings
- By 2036, there will be approximately 200,000 new jobs in our city, with an increased proportion of all jobs to be secure jobs
- By 2036, 70% of these new jobs will be in knowledge and innovation intensive industries

We will also monitor and track performance against measures presented in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision and the community strategic plan.

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Photo: Annie Spratt on Unsplash



# Green Global Connected



# **Attachment C**

**Engagement Report – Sector Consideration  
for a Draft Economic Development Strategy  
2025–2035**

# Engagement Report – planning our economic development strategy



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- Background 2
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# Overview

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## Background

This Engagement Report documents the engagement activities that occurred from 2019 - 2024 to support the development of the City of Sydney's new economic development strategy. It summarises feedback received and includes highlights from data insights, surveys, and research.

In 2013 we adopted a 10-year Economic Development Strategy to strengthen our economy and support business. As the lifecycle of this strategy comes to an end, we have experienced climate crises and a pandemic. While these events greatly impacted our economy and community, they have heightened the importance of fostering innovation and ensuring that everyone benefits and shares in the prosperity created.

To inform the development of the new strategy, we researched best practice, analysed emerging global and local trends, and generated a discussion paper. We conducted surveys, interviews, and workshops with a wide range of business and community members. As lockdowns ended and borders reopened, a new normal emerged, allowing us to deepen engagement, workshop the strategy's development, and incorporate fresh insights.

The new strategy aligns with our vision set out in Sustainable Sydney 2030 – 2050 Continuing the Vision, in particular Direction 9 for a transformed and innovative economy. Its focus is on maintaining our position locally, nationally, and globally as a destination for business, investment, and talent. Recognising innovation as pivotal to economic growth, it anticipates industry-wide transformation and ensures equitable sharing of wealth and benefits.

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## Key engagement periods

This report outlines the engagement activities that shaped the development of the new strategy. The Covid-19 pandemic influenced short-term economic priorities and limited engagement opportunities. Following the lifting of restrictions, a further period of engagement took place to incorporate the changes that evolved as a 'new normal' emerged. As a result, engagement for the development of the strategy occurred in three phases.

**Strategy development phase: January 2023 – June 2024**, we incorporated feedback from the economic strategy discussion paper. We conducted and analysed the results of our business needs surveys. We provided quarterly economic updates through City Insights. The City of Sydney Business, Economic Development and Covid Recovery Advisory Panel provided ongoing feedback and insights through workshop style sessions on a quarterly basis.

**Discussion and feedback phase: March 2022 – December 2022**, we developed an economic strategy discussion paper. We sought public engagement and invited feedback from businesses and the community. Activities included workshops, interviews, public consultation, surveys, and expert advice. We provided case studies to help spark further ideas.

**Research and listening phase: June 2019 – February 2022**, we engaged with business and community through research studies that were informed by interviews, workshops, and exploration of economic models. The studies identified high-level themes and directions for the community strategic plan Sustainable Sydney 2050, and the economic development strategy.



## Purpose of engagement

- Establish a conversation about the next economic development strategy with community.
- Inform the development and adoption of an economic development strategy.
- Identify collaboration opportunities.

## Outcomes of engagement

The following shows the reach of the engagement to a wide range of audiences in our community.

### Submissions and engagement activity

Quantity	Description of activity
240	Businesses directly engaged/briefed
11	Local Government Councils engaged
27	Survey submissions
4	Written submissions
998	Sydney Your Say webpage visits
362	Discussion paper downloads
357	Stakeholder emails sent
7088	E-news article sent to Sydney Your Say subscribers
2	Community briefings were held
11	Advisory panel briefings were held
8	Industry briefings were held
3	Office of the Lord Mayor roundtables
541	City Insights quarterly economic insights views
1088	Business Needs Survey respondents
17	In-depth interviews with business operators and industry representatives
4	Workshops with business operators and industry representatives
241	International Education Forum 2023 participants

# Strategy development

## Strategy development phase: January 2023 – June 2024

1. Advisory Panels
2. City Insights
3. Business Needs Surveys

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## Advisory panel briefings

From October 2022 – June 2024 ongoing advice has been sought from the City's various expert advisory panels. In the first instance advice was sought on the economic strategy discussion paper, and subsequently the Business, Economic Development and Covid Recovery Advisory Panel has provided guidance on a quarterly basis to inform the development of the new strategy.

Five briefings were delivered across the City of Sydney Advisory panel meetings during October - November 2022 to seek feedback on the discussion paper, with a focus on its vision and strategic directions. Presentations were provided to the following panels:

- Business, Economic Development and Covid Recovery Advisory Panel
- Cultural and Creative Sector Advisory Panel
- Inclusion (Disability) Advisory panel
- Multicultural Advisory Panel
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel

The Business Advisory Panel was strongly supportive of the discussion paper including the vision and four directions. The Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel agreed that the proposed strategic directions were sound, noting that the specific actions and principles of implementation will be crucial to the success of the strategy.

In 2023 -2024, we continued to receive critical insights and strategic guidance from our Business Advisory Panel on the changing nature of the city and its economy.

Over six meetings, the panel's advice influenced the shaping of the new strategy. The panel provided feedback on the published discussion paper, reviewed the key themes, workshopped areas of the strategy and strategic actions, and identified major projects for delivery that require collaborative effort from business and community organisations working together.

The panel includes members highly recognised in relevant professional fields and who have demonstrated experience, seniority, and knowledge of economic areas. Their areas of expertise cover trade and investment, attracting talent, the innovation economy, green economy and sustainable finance, creative economy, community wealth building, the night-time economy, and the visitor economy. The members of the panel are:

Anita Mitchell, Chief Executive at Placemaking NSW

Chris Low, Head of Vibe, Canva

Creel Price, Founder of Investible

Deb Zimmer, Chief Executive Officer of Bridgeclimb and Group Chief Financial Officer of Hammons Holdings.

Debbie Barwick, Chair and Executive Officer at NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce.

Karl Schlothauer, President of the Independent Bars Association NSW, and Chief Executive Officer at House of Pocket and Vice President of YCK Laneway Association.

Katie Stevenson, NSW Executive Director, Property Council of Australia

Kirsten Andrews, Vice-Principal, External Relations, University of Sydney

Matt Jones, Co-founder, and Brand Director at Four Pillars Gin.

Paul Nicolaou, Executive Director Business Sydney

Kate Russell, Chief Executive Officer, Supply Nation

### **Feedback from the Business Advisory Panel**

- Importance of technology to address climate issues.
- Sustainable future and circular economy.
- Talent attraction is key for innovation.
- Retain creative/arts industry and talent with diversity across industry.
- Tech Central – needs to be an inclusive, sustainable destination with local wealth generated and Indigenous outcomes.
- Aboriginal business must be included in supply chain and opportunities for upskilling/capacity building programs.
- Importance of fairness and social cohesion.
- Importance of secure jobs and fair-working conditions.
- Importance of career pathways.
- Affordable housing needed for workers, students and key workers including creatives/culture post-pandemic.
- Welcoming city for students – Sydney gateway experience.
- Conditions for the 24-hour economy and transport services to respond to changes i.e., retail to consider the delayed start and later evening, potential move to Friday night late-night shopping, to start the weekend trade earlier.
- Importance of hygiene factors – safe, clean, walkable, connected, transport infrastructure.
- Future of workplaces – flexibility, hybrid models, collaboration needs, and experiences.
- Importance of workplace, but there are staff and skills shortages.
- Visitors and students from China.
- Visitor experience – holistic approach.
- Suggested approach – precinct-based.
- Importance of advocacy, collaboration and partnership.
- Need to respond to global city needs, national and state alignment, and local needs.
- Sydney is Australia's economic heart, and we need to state this position from the beginning – it's where the world and our boundaries come together.

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## **City Insights economic updates**

City Insights has provided a quarterly economic snapshot that explores emerging economic and business trends and seeks to understand longer-term impacts on the city. It assists conversations

with stakeholders by providing information on the changing use of the city. It was developed in-house and published on our website from early 2023.

City Insights is distributed through all communication channels including business e-newsletters, panel meetings and shared directly with stakeholders. It is an essential tool to demonstrate changes including consumer spend, people movement and the overall economic performance of the city. It helps to elicit further observations and insights on how trends are playing out in real life business situations. These insights informed the new economic strategy.

### **Changes highlighted in City Insights**

- Broad economic recovery but uneven across industries and with economic headwinds.
- Public transport patterns to CBD to 85-95% of pre-pandemic across the week.
- Busiest commuter days Wednesday and Thursday, biggest commuter drop off on Fridays.
- Substantial growth of visitors on weekends, between 15-30% above pre-pandemic.
- Spend above pre-pandemic, particularly on weekends, reflecting higher visitor spend.
- Return of international visitors, but from different markets, driving different experiences.
- Return of international students in record numbers.
- “Flight to quality” in the office market, with higher vacancy in lower grade stock.
- Clustering of key growth industries in economic precincts across our city.

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## **Business Needs Surveys**

Our Business Needs Surveys (2022 and 2023) were designed to gain insights into business needs, priorities, and operational challenges, and help shape future support initiatives.

The sample of businesses were broadly representative of the business population. The 2022 survey had 564 respondents from Sydney businesses across 30 suburbs, and 16 industries. In the 2023 survey, there were 524 respondents from 31 suburbs, and 16 industries.

### **Top priorities identified in the surveys:**

- Strengthening local business marketing capabilities, customer acquisition and retention.
- Consumer-dependent businesses focused on the need for precinct-focussed support.
- Office-based businesses focused on the need for business support grants as well as less red tape and regulation.
- Many businesses showed interest in shifting their focus away from product and service development towards business continuity and resilience, and this increased from 36% to 40% of businesses across the two surveys.
- Interest in cyber security and new technologies are an emerging focus.



## **Takeaways from 2023 Business Needs Survey**

### **Economic outlook**

- The local economy grew by 3.5% in the 2023 financial year, outpacing the national growth rate of 2.1% and reaching 110% of its pre-pandemic level.
- Foot traffic in the city centre has increased to 70% of pre-pandemic levels from September to November and weekly average consumer spend is at 95% of pre-pandemic levels.
- The local economy, and in particular consumer-dependent businesses, have benefitted from a strong rebound in overseas migration as international students return to Sydney.
- Challenging macroeconomic conditions are influencing consumption and business sentiment. Interest rate and inflation pressures are partially offsetting some of these recent benefits to consumption and impacting business confidence.

### **Impact on operations**

- Half of all City of Sydney businesses surveyed are operating below pre-pandemic capacity.
- As the transition to hybrid working starts to stabilise, office-based businesses in the city continue to have mixed experiences with productivity, collaboration, and culture.
- Consumer-dependent businesses remain affected by spending patterns post-pandemic.
- Labour market pressures for businesses eased with only 25% requesting support to find employees – down from 38% in 2022.
- Experiences of businesses in central versus eastern, western, and southern parts of the city reversed. Centrally located businesses have performed stronger in 2023 compared to other areas, particularly consumer-dependent businesses, as foot traffic returns.

### **Support**

- The top priorities identified over the next 12 to 18 months are strengthening their marketing capabilities and customer acquisition and retention.
- Consumer-dependent businesses are more likely to need precinct-focussed support.
- Office-based businesses prefer business support grants and less red tape and regulation.

### **Industry insights**

- Hospitality businesses are struggling financially and are more pessimistic about the next 12 months compared to other sectors. 75% of hospitality businesses are still operating at below pre-pandemic capacity and 40% have reduced staffing since last year.
- Despite a large share of retail businesses being financially worse off, the sector remains optimistic. Half of retail businesses are still operating below pre-pandemic capacity and 66% indicated they are financially worse off compared to last year.
- Financial services have the highest share of businesses that are financially better off this year. They are optimistic about their performance over the year to come. Professional and service-based businesses have worsened slightly over the year.
- Office-based creative businesses are generally confident about the year to come, despite mixed financial performance over the past year. Consumer-dependent creative businesses have struggled and are overwhelmingly pessimistic about the future.
- Tourism businesses optimistic about performance as international visitors return. Most tourism businesses indicated they were financially better off this year compared to last.

## **Takeaways from 2022 Business Needs Survey**

### **Economic outlook**

- There's been a surge in business confidence compared to the previous 2 years.
- 75% of respondents expect their business will be financially better off in 12 months – a significant jump from 2021.
- The local economy overall has now recovered to pre-pandemic levels, but recovery has been uneven across sectors.

### **Impact on operations**

- 79% of consumer-dependent businesses in the city centre have seen reduced capacity levels since the pandemic.
- 50% of businesses are still operating at below pre-pandemic capacity, particularly very small businesses with under 5 employees and consumer-dependent industries.
- Consumer-dependent businesses across our more suburban southern and eastern areas have seen less impact on operations.

### **Support**

- Consumer-dependent businesses are generally looking for financial aid such as grants, precinct promotion, marketing and events that will boost foot traffic.
- Office-based businesses are looking for less red tape and regulation, and assistance with finding skills-based employees.
- Over a third of respondents indicated they require support in finding employees and skilled workers.
- 52% of respondents are looking to strengthen their social media marketing and communication skills while 46% of respondents are looking to improve customer acquisition and retention.
- Businesses are also looking for more strategy and planning support as well as resilience and continuity.
- 22% of businesses are looking for mental health and wellbeing support.

### **Industry insights**

- The hardest economically hit industries have been hospitality, retail, and tourism.
- The return of students, tourists and migrants is set to drive economic growth over 2023.
- We'll use the insights of this survey to design programs and initiatives to support our local business community to thrive.

# Discussion and feedback

## Discussion and feedback phase: March 2022 – December 2022

1. Economic Strategy Discussion Paper
2. Community Briefings
3. Survey Responses

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### Economic strategy discussion paper

From September – December 2022, we engaged with business and community on our economic strategy discussion paper, which was published online to prompt conversations about how to make our economy more resilient. The paper included a vision statement and proposed four strategic directions to achieve that vision. Case studies were provided to give examples of each strategic direction and provide further conversation and thought starters. A summary of the discussion paper was added to the online resources in November 2022.

The paper was shaped by many voices, and incorporated previous engagement and consultation with key stakeholders, the NSW Government, industry, precinct partners, local businesses, and community.

The economic strategy discussion paper was downloaded 230 times. The case studies were downloaded 90 times. The summary was downloaded 42 times.

We engaged with stakeholders on the paper with industry and community briefings, as well as providing an online survey. Given the engagement took place during the pandemic, engagement was through online communication channels.

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### Community briefings

In October and November 2022, two 60-minute briefing sessions were held online. The sessions were promoted on the webpage and through stakeholder emails. Feedback was received from participants in the online community briefings around the directions of the paper.

#### **Feedback received at community briefings.**

#### **Direction 1 – Transition to a green and circular economy**

- Knowledge gaps and the importance of education.
- How to approach this in a way that maximises economies of scale.
- How small business can manage the costs and effects.
- Opportunity to rethink how success is measured.

### **Direction 2 – Build an innovation economy**

- Defining ‘innovation’ and ‘creative industries’.
- The challenge of adapting to Australian workplace culture. Other global cities are perceived as more considerate of differences, so are more attractive as places to work.
- How technology can be applied to other systems to provide equal benefit for emerging communities. Can the Tech industry help with community building?

### **Direction 3 – Strengthen our inclusive economy**

- The importance of access to affordable spaces, who manages those spaces, and are they the type of space that will bring people in?
- How do people who are new to the area, or have a disability, know where to find community spaces, or where they are welcome?
- Importance of integrating community wealth building principles.
- How do we ensure equitable access to work, living, and housing?

### **Direction 4 – Revitalise our city centre**

- The need to prepare for future growth.
- The challenges of balancing what is needed for daytime versus nighttime.
- Tech Central provides opportunities to use its vast space for various purposes
- Lessons from what is successful in Melbourne – mixed use spaces, good public transport.
- Concerns about transport, intimidating policing and poor customer service deterring people.
- The need to aim for higher standards or ambitions as a City to match the global mindset.

### **Suggestions for actions:**

- Promote different ways of embracing a global mindset so Sydney is an attractive for work
- Provide/promote an innovation champion in each precinct to provide leadership
- Encourage cohesion and development
- Lead by example on social procurement
- Education needed on social procurement
- Lead by example with diversity and meaningful employment
- Activate and promote a sense of belonging and ownership of community spaces
- Provide or support improved local storytelling (e.g. storyboards on streets, local entertainers)

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## Survey responses

During the engagement on the economic strategy discussion paper, October – December 2022, an online survey tool was used. Respondents were asked to indicate their support for the vision and for the four proposed strategic directions. They were also asked to give a reason why they did, or did not, support the vision and if there were any other priorities they thought were important to achieve the vision for our economic future. They were asked to indicate which areas of focus were important to them, and if they would like to recommend a group, organisation or government agency who could partner with us to deliver on the vision.



There was a good spread of age ranges surveyed, with respondents ranging from 18 to 65+. The highest proportion of respondents were aged 18 to 35 years (42%), followed by 36 to 50 years (29%). Amongst the 18–35-year age group, support for the vision was moderate (60% agree or strongly agree), but support for the four strategic directions was very strong, with 80% feeling that all four were either important or very important. Support for Direction 1 – transition to a green and circular economy was especially high, with 80% of 18–35-year-olds saying this is very important. Those who agreed only somewhat with the vision felt it needed to be more specific.

Survey respondents were asked to nominate their main connection to the City of Sydney LGA and were able to choose more than one answer. Most said they live or work in the LGA. Of the 15 people who said they live in the LGA, 10 also said they work here. Twelve people said they own property. Of those 12, 11 also live in the LGA and five also own a business. Of the five students who responded, three also work here and two also live here.

Respondents were asked to provide their postcode. Of the 24 responses given, 16 are in the City of Sydney LGA, five are within 20km of the city centre, one from the Liverpool area, one on the Central Coast, and one from Western Australia. Survey responses showed very clear support for the vision and the strategic directions in creating a sustainable and resilient economy.

### Support for strategic directions

- Transition to a green and circular economy 89% very important or important.
- Build an innovation economy 89% very important or important.
- Strengthen our inclusive economy 85% very important or important.
- Revitalise our city centre 85% very important or important.

Survey respondents were asked to nominate which areas of focus within the four strategic directions were important to them. They could choose as many areas as they liked.

### Top 4 nominated areas of focus

Create better spaces and places	(18 responses, 67%)
Activate and promote places and precincts	(15 responses, 56%)
Access to affordable spaces	(14 responses, 52%)
Leadership and commitment	(14 responses, 52%)

'Locally shared wealth' replaced 'leadership and commitment' in the top 4 areas of focus for 18- to 35-year-old respondents.

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## Email submissions

During the engagement of the economic strategy discussion paper, 4 email submissions were received, 2 from community members and 2 from organisations.

The organisational submissions identified many areas of shared values and principles aligned across the four strategic directions.

One community member expressed strong support for the vision, and one highlighted the importance of conserving nature areas in the city. Their comments are included in the submissions table section of this report.

## Key themes

Below are the key themes that emerged during engagement for the discussion paper across industry and community briefings.

### **Build economic resilience.**

1. Strong value placed on supporting and working with Small to Medium Enterprises (SME's) to create diversity of companies, industries, jobs, and people to build the diversity and resilience of the local economy. Stakeholders want to understand how the City approaches this opportunity and provides support to business to grow a 'diversification' strategy.

### **Transition to a green and circular economy.**

1. There is a strong agreement that we must ensure that the city's economic development is environmentally sustainable. Supporting the development of the green economy and promoting circular economy practice is one of the key areas that the City should focus on and take a leadership role in.
2. There is a high expectation that green and circular economy, in addition to environment protection, will generate great economic value, create more quality jobs, and provide business opportunities for the city's economy.
3. There is a knowledge gap with our business and resident communities on best practice, the availability of various green products, as well as their economic and environmental benefits. Therefore, education and information sharing are needed to fill gap.
4. Innovation plays an important role in enabling the transition to a green and circular economy. New technologies and innovative business models can provide economically viable solutions to many environment problems.
5. Sustainable finance is becoming more important in the city's context. The city has a comparative advantage with a potential to become a regional sustainable finance hub.
6. We need to acknowledge the First Nation people who are the first practitioners of circular economy - they look after the environment, take from but always give back to nature.
7. There is a need to monitor the city's transition to a green and circular economy, including things that the city is not doing well. We also need to promote high quality disclosures to reduce green wash.

### **Build an innovation economy.**

1. We received a strong support that building an innovation economy is made a priority in the strategy. Innovation is a powerful tool to strengthen economic resilience as it provides solutions to challenges. It contributes greatly to the other three directions in the strategy.
2. Tech Central is a great opportunity for Sydney's innovation ecosystem to take the next step – need a strong connection between Tech Central and other innovation clusters in Sydney.
3. Creative industries, including arts and cultural businesses, is an integral part of the innovation economy. It did not receive adequate support in the past but must be co-located and integrated with the rest of the innovation ecosystem in the future.
4. The city must foster a strong pipeline of talent for the innovation economy. We need to continue to attract global talent to the city, including international students. It is equally important to train and upskill our local talent.
5. It's important to foster an entrepreneurial culture, especially for our younger generation, through tailored events and festivals, as well as promotion and recognition of successful examples. The city needs more entrepreneurs who can turn innovation to business and have the courage to take the startup journey.

6. Lack of affordable space for innovation and for startups at the early stage is a main barrier.
7. Strong collaboration between government, universities, businesses, entrepreneurs, investors, and other players is a key factor for success in building an innovation economy.
8. Startups and small businesses in the innovation ecosystem would like to have stronger connection and engagement with the City so that the City's programs, grants, and other support to them can be more efficient and impactful.
9. Innovation and the use of modern technology may add barriers to some community members. It is critical to ensure that our innovation economy provides equal benefits for all.

**Strengthen our inclusive economy.**

1. Importance of affordable, accessible space to work, and to live close to work raised in all feedback channels as a crucial topic for workers, students and key workers including creatives/culture post-pandemic.
2. Shortage of cultural infrastructure including lack of theatre space.
3. Suggestion to revitalise more parks, creating safe spaces for people with dogs given their popularity in places like San Francisco and Seattle.
4. Inclusive approach ensuring people feel welcome, enjoy, and have access to what they need and benefit from economic growth was emphasised across all channels of feedback.
5. Young people, First Nations people, people with disability, people who are new to the City, international students, students, international workers, emerging communities, and families were mentioned as important groups to include and share information with on where they are welcome and able to find accessible spaces.
6. Fairness and social cohesion, ensuring equitable access to career pathways.
7. Include Aboriginal businesses in supply chain and opportunities for upskilling programs.
8. Importance of integrating community wealth building principles
9. Suggestion to create a board for citizens from suburbs to contribute their perspectives.

**Revitalise the city centre.**

1. Strong and consistent support to look across the 24-hour economy and focus on how this will help in the revitalisation. Include how public transport must meet the needs of workers, visitors, and residents to safely manage walking and transport options across the 24 hours.
2. Ensure creative talent and our cultural and creative sector is built into our thinking as we look at revitalising and growing the city offering. Not only does this build diversity of thinking, people and jobs but supports the 24-hour economy and acts as an attractor for global talent. We need to use our buildings much more creatively.
3. Deepen the visitor experience and share Sydney's Eora history and living culture.
4. Build the identity and brand of precincts, places and neighbourhoods that tells the story of each unique place and distinct offerings.
5. We need to continue to support business through the ongoing recovery of our city.

# Research and listening

## Research and listening phase: June 2019 – February 2022,

1. Business and community interviews and workshops
2. Economic Futures Study

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## Business and community interviews and workshops

From December 2021 – February 2022, EY Sweeney was engaged to conduct a detailed Economic Strategy - Business Stakeholder Consultation with business and community. The objectives of the consultation were to understand and explore the immediate needs and impacts on stakeholders, as well as test the proposed transitional economic strategy directions and outcomes including the proposed actions. The consultation sought to identify stakeholders with collaborative project ideas, including projects using new economic models.

There were 17 interviews conducted with key industry and community stakeholders. The hour-long interviews were conducted online or via telephone between December 2021 and February 2022.

The interviews were followed by a series of four co-designed workshops undertaken with around 60 stakeholders to explore contextual dynamics in more detail as well as unpack and ultimately optimise the elements of the proposed strategy. The findings from the engagement informed the development of the economic strategy discussion paper.

### Feedback from the consultation:

- A collaborative journey to the new normal is considered critical for success. Business and community cohorts seek to input into navigating the new normal with the city.
- A new mix of locations and experiences needs to be explored, as the role of the city is redefined. A strong sense that the strategy should let go of former 'truths' and reimagine the purpose and role of the city into the future with people using the city differently.
- There's a need to cut through red tape to enable easier entry points and support for businesses. The strategy should focus on creating tangible benefits and supports for businesses locating within the local area, particularly in relation to cost savings.
- Provide a viable destination for work and play, as consumers need a reason to return. Need for ongoing engagement with workers and acknowledgement of shifting work patterns and priorities.
- Precinct positioning is considered an exciting direction, especially with discovery and clear direction. Clear delineation between different 'zones' could help locals and visitors discover new experiences and diversify their relationship with the local area.
- Engaging local experiences that are unique is needed. Business, leisure, and education stakeholders seek a local focus in the short term with a view to engaging visitors as a secondary benefit.
- It's a city for everyone, so it needs to be inclusive of diverse needs and expectations.
- The proposed pillars largely hit the mark for these stakeholders. Clarity and transparency across the strategy pillars of the propositions are essential to measure success.



- Awareness raising through clear communication and advertising could give consumers a reason to believe. Stakeholders see an opportunity to better engage locals and visitors with impactful and enticing communications to encourage visitation and engagement.

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## Economic futures study

In June 2019, we published our City of Sydney Economic Future: Towards a New Cycle research study. The study was cross-disciplinary in nature rather than taking a narrow-siloed approach. The study provided high-level themes and directions for the development of our community strategic plan, Sustainable Sydney 2050 and the new economic development strategy.

The purpose of the economic future study was to provide:

- a global perspective of Sydney's economic performance
- global trends impacting city economies
- workforce and demographic trends
- consumer and industry trends

The study analysed current City policy, comparative city performance and local and global economic trends. Key public, private and third sector stakeholders from across the ecosystem were then consulted to test and further develop emerging economic imperatives, research insights and to build a perspective on priority policies and locations. The study asked the following questions:

- What are the City's economic challenges and opportunities over the next few decades?
- What key global city trends will have most impact on the city's economy?
- How is Sydney performing compared to others – how to ensure resilience and inclusivity?
- What is the contribution of the City's economy to NSW and the nation?
- What should the 'economic stewardship' role of the City be – and how should it collaborate with public and private sector partners to ensure an economically successful and just city?

### **The study identified the following priorities:**

- Maturing the ecosystem needed for growth, productivity, and innovation. Need to include a networked and efficient metropolitan economy as well as working with and promoting specialised places and clusters in the City.
- Stewardship of specialised precincts, corridors, and interchanges.
- A diversified and 24-hour economy.
- Community strengthening.
- Amplify the role of culture and creativity.
- A business identity and narrative that aligns with the core values and DNA of Sydney.

# Engagement activities

## Overview of engagement undertaken

### Feedback from organisations and business

Representatives of the following organisations and businesses attended a variety of briefing sessions and were emailed to give feedback on the proposed vision and strategic directions as proposed in the discussion paper, as well as during the development of the new economic development strategy.

This list includes engagement during the process with 240 businesses directly engaged/briefed, 11 local councils, and 4 organisations providing emailed submissions on the discussion paper.

Businesses & Organisations engaged	
24 H Commissioner	NAB Corporate & Institutional Banking
ACON	National Council for Single Mothers and their Children
All Nations Cooperative	National LGBTI Health Alliance
AMP Capital	NCOSS
Animal Logic	Neami - mental health and wellbeing
Antler	New Energy Nexus
ANZ	New Sydney Waterfront Company
Art Pharmacy Consulting, Art Pharmacy and Culture Scouts	Night Time Industry Association
Artesian	NSW Anti-Racism Working Group
Asylum Seeker Centre	NSW Health International Students Health Promotion
Atlassian	NSW Indigenous Business Chamber of Commerce
Australia China Business Council	NSW Police Force
Australian Fashion Council	NSW Treasury
Australian Hotels Association (AHA) NSW	NUAA (NSW Users and AIDS Association)
Australian Retailers Association	Office of the 24-Hour Economy commissioner
Australian Sustainable Finance Initiative and UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative	old Ways, New
Aware Super	Oz Harvest
B Lab Australia (BCorp)	Paddington Chamber of Commerce
Beehive Industries	Placemaking NSW
Blue Tongue Cooperative	Positive Life NSW
Boomerang Labs	Potts Point Partnership
BridgeClimb	Practera
Hammons Holdings	Property Council of Australia
Business Advisory Panel	Pymont Ultimo Chamber of Commerce
Business Council of Cooperatives and Mutuals	Q-Ctrl
Business Sydney	Redfern Legal Centre

<b>Businesses &amp; Organisations engaged</b>	
AIT - Academy of Interactive Technology	Akkodis Academy
Australian Catholic University	Australian College of Applied Professions
Australian College of Applied Psychology Clinic	Australian College of Physical Education
Australian Pacific College	Charles Darwin University
Charter Australia	CQ University
Canva	Refugee Council of Australia
General Assembly	International Screen Academy
CBD Sydney Chamber	Regen Sydney
CBRE	Restaurant & Catering Australia
Cicada Innovations	Right Click Capital
Circular Australia	Scarlet Alliance, Australian Sex Workers Association
CISA	Scentre Group
Colliers	SECNA
Committee for Sydney	SECNA-Social Enterprise Council of NSW & ACT
Commonwealth Bank of Australia	SEFA
Community Housing Industry Association	Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP)
Co-op Federation	Social Change Central
Counterpoint Community Services	Social Impact Hub
Counterpoint Community Services	Social Traders
Cultural Advisory Panel	Social Ventures
Darlinghurst Business Partnership	SoldOut
Darlo Darlings	South Sydney Business Chamber
Destination NSW	Stone and Chalk
EnergyLab	Student Accommodation Association
Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECCNSW)	Study NSW
Fishburners	Supply Nation
Folklore Ventures	Surry Hills Creative Precinct
Four Pillars Gin	Sydney Community Forum
G5 Innovation Network Australia	Sydney Eastern Local Health District
Gallus Partners	Sydney Gay & Lesbian Business Association
gDiapers /gCycle /gNappies	Sydney Knowledge Hub
Genry Capital	Sydney Local Area Health District
Glebe Chamber of Commerce	Sydney Quantum Academy
Greater Cities Commission	Sydney School of Entrepreneurship
Greater Sydney Commission (Tech Central)	Sydney Uni
Haymarket Chamber of Commerce	TAFE
Haymarket HQ	TAFE NSW
Homelessness NSW	Tank Stream Labs
House of Pocket	Tech Central Innovation Precinct
Inclusive Advisory member	Tech Central/Greater Cities Commission
InCollaboration	Tech Council of Australia
Inspiring Rare Birds	Tesla / Blackbird

<b>Businesses &amp; Organisations engaged</b>	
International Student Leadership and Ambassadors	The Co-op Federation
International students' consortium	The Cooperative Life
International students working group	The Gender Centre
Investible, Greenhouse	The Haymarket Institute
Investment NSW	Tourism and Transport Forum
Investment NSW / Sydney Startup Hub	Twenty10
ISANA	Unions NSW
ISANA International Education Association	University of NSW
Jack Morton	University of Sydney
Judith Neilson Institute for Journalism & Ideas	University of Sydney, Business School
Kirketon Road Centre	UNSW
Knight Frank	UNSW Sydney
LaborCo	USYD
LEAMAC Property Group	UTS
Left Bank Co	UTS Startups
Lend Lease	UTS Multicultural Advisory Panel
MAAS	Vicinity Centres
Macquarie Uni	Villa +Villa Pty Ltd
Mirvac	Walsh Bay Arts and Commerce
Mudgingal Aboriginal Women's Organisation	Waste Transformation Research Hub (Usyd)
Multicultural Advisory member	Wayside Chapel
Multicultural Advisory Panel	Westpac
Multicultural Interagency Working Group	WeWork
Multicultural NSW	Women's Economic Equality Taskforce
Community Migrant Resource Centre	Young Change Agents
King's Own Institute	Kingsford International Institute
KCA Education	Youth Action
Laneway Education	Lantian Consulting Pty Limited
Lloyds International College	Macquarie Business School
MERCURY Colleges	MIT Sydney
MnM Institute	NAPS College
National Art School	2Stay Accommodation
Aboriginal Housing Company	Adactin Group
Advisory Centre for Australian Education	AEC Consulting Pty Ltd
Asialink Business	Aussizz Group
Australia Migrate Pty Ltd	AVENU Learning
Banna Property Group	BlackCap Education
Bluesky Immigration and Students Consultancy Services	Business Sydney
Communitier	CPA Australia
Cultural Perspectives	Education Downunder
EduHub Global	Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW
Expert Education and Visa Services	First Tech Educational Consultancy
Future You Consulting	Giant Star International Education services



<b>Businesses &amp; Organisations engaged</b>	
Global Reach (Aus) Pty Ltd.	Hanoku Pte Ltd
Hireup	ICMYE-Oyunlag Centre
IDP	Allianz Partners
Australia BioMed Careers	BBC
Connexion International	Embrace Australia
LeCompte Group Pty Ltd	nib Health Funds
Public Education Foundation	Solidified
South Eastern Sydney Local Health District	Surf Life Saving NSW
ThePoopCoffee.com	NSW Department of Education International
NSW Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade	NSW Police Force

<b>Councils engaged</b>	
Albury Council	Local Government NSW
Canada Bay Council	Northern Beaches Council
Cumberland Council	Ryde Council
Georges River Council	Shellharbour Council
Inner West Council	Waverley Council
	Willoughby Council

<b>Four written submissions were made on behalf of organisations</b>	
Australian Retailers Association	Dynatech Industries Pty Ltd
UTS Sustainability Alliance of Students and Staff (SASS)	New Sydney Waterfront Company

### **Sydney Your Say webpage**

A [Sydney Your Say webpage](#) was created. The page included an electronic copy of the discussion paper, case studies, survey, and other key information about the consultation. There were 998 unique views of the Sydney Your Say page and 362 downloads of the documents.

### **Online feedback**

The community and stakeholders were able to give feedback using an online feedback form. A link to the feedback form was provided on the Sydney Your Say website.

### **Sydney Your Say e-news**

The consultation was included in the Sydney Your Say October 2022 e-newsletter (7088 subscribers).

### **City Business Digest e-news**

The consultation was included in the City Business Digest e-newsletter on 5 October 2022 (276 subscribers).

### **Property Council e-news**

The consultation was included in the Property Council of Australia's NSW e-newsletter on 4 October 2022.

### **Stakeholder notification email**

An email was sent to 357 key stakeholders inviting them to give feedback on the discussion paper.

### **Community briefings**

Two online community briefings were held on Monday 24 October and Monday 21 November. 30 stakeholders registered and a total of 13 attended. Their feedback has been incorporated into the key findings of this report.

### **Industry briefings**

Two industry briefings were held in November with Stone & Chalk Tech Central scale up hub and Study NSW. More than 50 people participated, representing more than 20 organisations and businesses. Their feedback has been incorporated into the key findings of this report.

### **Industry focus group**

One focus group was held in December with seven members of the Local Government Multicultural Workers' Networking and NSW Anti Racism Working Group. Their feedback has been incorporated into the key findings of this report.

### **Industry Forum workshop**

The International Education Forum was held on 30 October 2023, with participants from Business Sydney and the international education sector. A total of 123 organisations sent representatives to the forum, and feedback from the forum and group workshopping is incorporated into the strategy.

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## **Marketing and communications**

The following is a snapshot of outcomes from marketing and communications activities undertaken to support the consultation. Activities reached a range of audience segments through paid advertising and existing City of Sydney channels.

### **City of Sydney news article**

[A City of Sydney news article](#) was published to promote the consultation. It received a total of 222 page views.

### **LinkedIn**

A LinkedIn organic post was published. It received a total of 32 click throughs, 6 reposts and 29 likes.

# Appendix

## Appendix A: Business Advisory Panel workshop 2023



Appendix B: City Insights economic updates



The City of Sydney's local economy, representing 7% of Australia's GDP and 22% of the NSW economy, is recovering strongly and evolving in the post-pandemic environment.

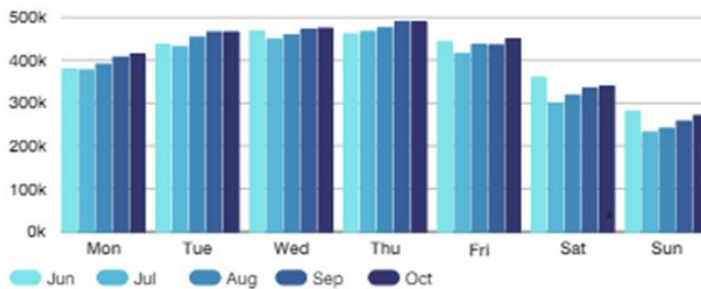
This edition of City Insights explores emerging economic trends with a focus on international students and visitors.

<h1>\$146b</h1> <p>Gross Regional Product p.a.<sup>1</sup> 12 months to June 2023</p>	<h1>464k</h1> <p>International Visitor Arrivals<sup>2</sup> July 2023 to August 2023 (2 times previous year)</p>	<h1>\$455m</h1> <p>Value of Building Approvals<sup>3</sup> July 2023 to September 2023</p>
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### Steady growth in public transport and spend across the week

Public transport to the city centre has steadily increased across all days of the week, rising by 8.7% from July to October to reach 94% of the pre-pandemic level. Similarly, local spend has settled to form a consistent pattern across the week, increasing towards the end of the week, peaking on Saturday (139% of pre-pandemic level). June saw high activity on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays likely due to Vivid, with data showing public transport use after 6pm was on average 40% higher than usual.

Opal tap-offs daily average across the week by month since June 2023<sup>4</sup>  
public holidays adjusted<sup>5</sup>, Sydney CBD, June - October 2023

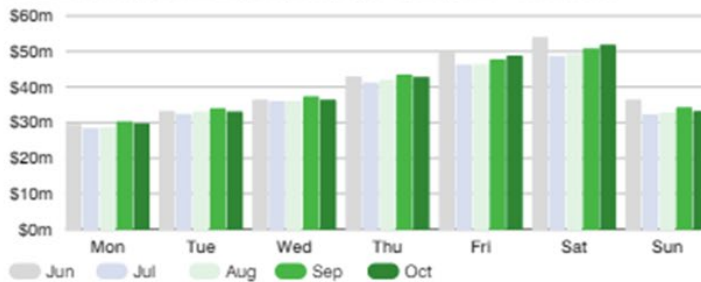


**Weekly average Opal tap-offs**  
in October 2023  
**94%**  
of pre-pandemic  
(up from 67% in October 2022)

**Highest Day**  
in October 2023  
**Thursday 492k**  
86% of pre-pandemic  
(up from 60% in October 2022)

**Lowest Day**  
in October 2023  
**Sunday 273k**  
127% of pre-pandemic  
(up from 87% in October 2022)

Daily average spend across the week by month since June 2023<sup>6</sup>  
inflation adjusted, public holidays adjusted<sup>5</sup>, City of Sydney, June - October 2023



**Weekly average Consumer spend**  
in October 2023  
**95%**  
of pre-pandemic  
(down from 98.6% in Oct 2022)

**Highest Day**  
in October 2023  
**Saturday \$52m**  
114% of pre-pandemic  
(down from 119% in Oct 2022)

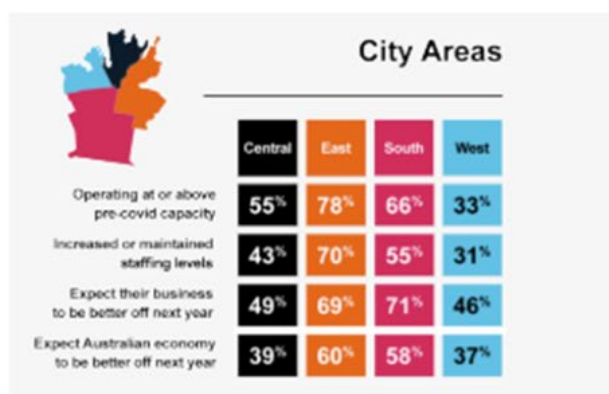
**Lowest Day**  
in October 2023  
**Monday \$30m**  
95% of pre-pandemic  
(up from 91% in October 2022)

Source/note  
 1. Economy.id & National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR). Inflation adjusted using 2020/21 as base year.  
 2. ABS. International visitor arrivals (short-term arrivals) to NSW. It is assumed that international visitors to NSW arrive through Sydney.  
 3. ABS. Building approvals by LGA (all buildings).  
 4. Opal patronage data by Transport for NSW.  
 5. Public holidays during the weekdays are removed as they skew regular visitation and consumption patterns in the city across the week.  
 6. Spendmapp by Geografa (2023), inflation adjusted according to consumer price index by capital cities, ABS, Dec 2020 as base month.  
 Disclaimer: this report includes information publicly available from third-party sources, data procured by the City of Sydney (the City) and analysis by the City. All information presented is provided on an as is basis. The City makes no warranty, representation or guarantee of any type as to errors or omissions, or as to the content, timeliness, or completeness or fitness for any particular purpose or use of any data available from this report.



Appendix C: Business Needs Surveys (2022 and 2023) available on City of Sydney webpage

# Key Insights



## Appendix E: EY Sweeney Business Stakeholder Consultation Report

### Headline findings

A number of overarching points can be made that provide important context as well as insight into responses to the elements of the Economic Strategy explored with these stakeholders, and thoughts on the opportunities and challenges facing the City of Sydney...

**More uncertainty than ever... a sense of truly uncharted waters**

**Re-defining the role of the City of Sydney**

**Easier entry points and support required for businesses**

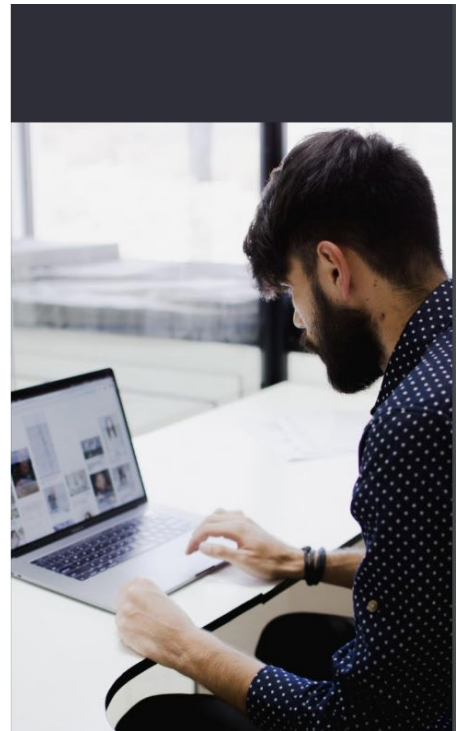
**Consumers need a reason to return**

**Precinct positioning is considered an exciting direction**

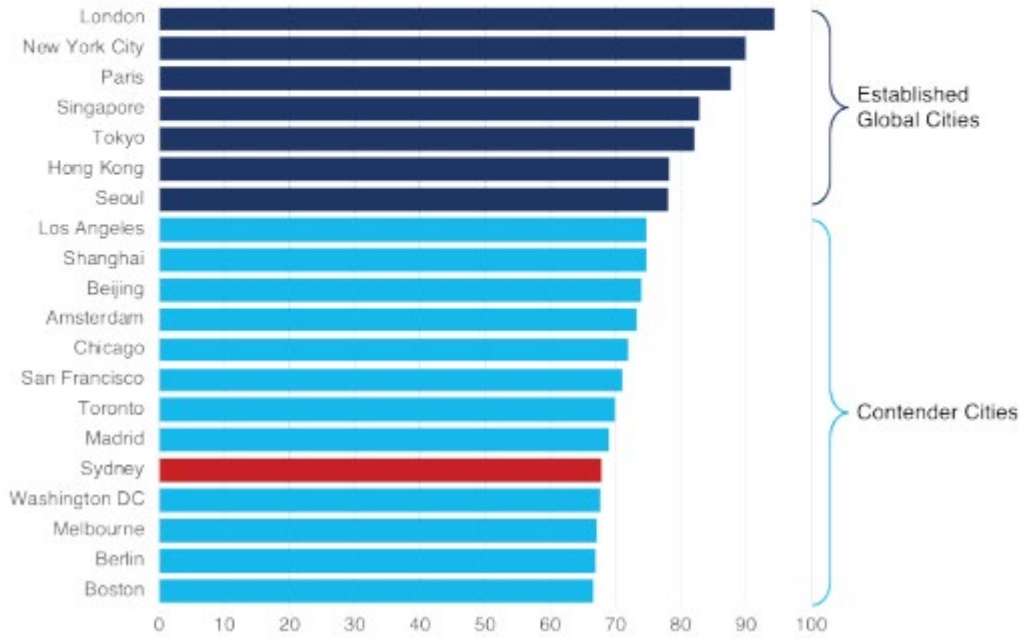
**City for everyone... a need to be inclusive of diverse needs and expectations**

**The proposed pillars largely hit the mark for these stakeholders**

**Awareness raising through clear communication and advertising**



Appendix F: Tables from the Economic Futures Study 2019



The Top 20 Cities Globally in terms of All-round Competitive Performance. Source: JLL and The Business of Cities, 2017.[13][14]

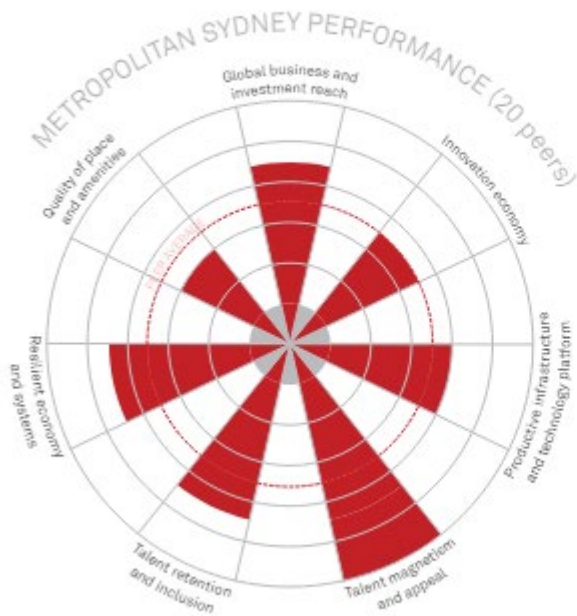


Figure 1: Performance of metropolitan Sydney among a peer group of 20 cities[17]





## Item 4.

### Grants and Sponsorship - Haymarket Activation Grant

File No: S117676

#### Summary

The City of Sydney's Grants and Sponsorship Program supports initiatives and projects that build the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of the city.

The City advertised the Haymarket Activation Grant Program as being open for applications on 14 May 2024. Ten eligible applications were received.

The Haymarket Activation Grant guidelines stipulates one major activation only will be supported through this program. The activation will attract people to Haymarket, celebrate Asian cultures and strengthen community inclusion and cohesion through collaborations, activating multiple spaces in the area.

An assessment panel of five assessed the applications against the published selection criteria and recommended one for \$200,000. The recommended applicant met the selection criteria to the highest standard. The applicant anticipates attracting over 350,000 people to the Haymarket area during the activation and has secured additional funding from the NSW Government for the project.

This report recommends one grant with a total value of \$200,000 in cash and \$356 in value-in-kind in the 2024/25 financial year.

On 24 June 2024, Council adopted the revised Grants and Sponsorship Policy and Guidelines. All grants in this report were assessed in accordance with the Grants and Sponsorship Policy, the Grants and Sponsorship Program Guidelines, the priorities set out in Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision and various other relevant City strategies and action plans.

The grant recipient will be required to sign a contract, meet specific performance outcomes and acquit their grant. All figures in this report exclude GST.

**Recommendation**

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the cash and value-in-kind recommendation for the Haymarket Activation Grant program as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council note the applicants who were not recommended in obtaining a cash grant or value-in-kind for the Haymarket Activation Grant program as shown at Attachment B to the subject report;
- (C) Council note that all grant amounts are exclusive of GST;
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate, execute and administer agreements with any organisation approved for a grant or sponsorship under terms consistent with this resolution and the Grants and Sponsorship Policy; and
- (E) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to correct minor errors to the matters set out in this report, noting that the identity of the recipient will not change, and a CEO Update will be provided to Council advising of any changes made in accordance with this resolution.

**Attachments**

**Attachment A.** Recommended For Funding - Haymarket Activation Grant Program

**Attachment B.** Not Recommended For Funding - Haymarket Activation Grant Program

## Background

1. The City of Sydney's Grants and Sponsorship Program supports residents, businesses and not-for-profit organisations to undertake initiatives and projects that build the social, cultural, environmental and economic life of the city.
2. On 14 May 2024, the City announced the Haymarket Activation Grant program as being open for application on the City's website, with grant applications closing on 17 June 2024.
3. Information about this grant program (such as application dates, guidelines, and eligibility criteria) was made available on the City's website. The City actively promoted the grant program through the corporate website, e-newsletters, and a City of Sydney news announcement. Email campaigns were utilised to target interested parties who have applied previously for grants at the City or who have expressed an interest in the City's programs. An online briefing session was also held on 21 May 2024 where interested organisations could hear about the Haymarket Activation Grant program and how to apply. A total of 13 attendees participated in the session.
4. As per the Haymarket Activation Grant Program Guidelines, the Haymarket Activation Grant program is open to not-for-profit organisations and for-profit organisations.
5. A total of five eligible applications were received from for-profit organisations and nil for-profit organisations are recommended in this report.

## Grants Assessment Process

6. The City's Grants and Sponsorship Program is highly competitive. Applications that are not recommended have either not scored as highly against the assessment criteria as the recommended applications or have incomplete or insufficient information. The City's Grants and Sponsorship team provides feedback to unsuccessful applicants if requested.
7. The assessment process includes advice and recommendations from a suitably qualified assessment panel. The applications are scored against defined assessment criteria for the grant program as well as the integrity of the proposed budget, project plan, partnerships, contributions and connection to the local community.
8. The assessment criteria for the Haymarket Activation Grant program are:
  - potential reach and impact of the activation including proposed timing;
  - capacity and experience of the applicant and their partners to produce the activation;
  - demonstrated partnerships, connection and benefit to Haymarket and the local community;
  - evidence of diversity, inclusion and equity in planning and producing the activation; and
  - how the project meets the funding priorities.

9. The assessment meeting for the Haymarket Activation Grant program was held on 25 June 2024 to ensure applicants were assessed against the assessment criteria.
10. The assessment panel consisted of City staff from the City Business and Safety, City Design, Creative City, Social City and Strategic Planning and Urban Design Teams.
11. Once the recommended application is approved by Council, a contract is developed which includes conditions that must be adhered to and acquitted against.
12. It is expected that the successful applicant will work cooperatively with relevant City staff throughout the project for which they have received funding.
13. The grant is recommended on the condition that any required approvals, permits and development consents are obtained by the applicant.
14. The application recommended for the Haymarket Activation Grant program is outlined in Attachment A to this report.
15. The Haymarket Activation Grant program budget for 2024/25 is \$200,000. Ten eligible applications were received, requesting a total of \$2,000,000 in cash and \$70,438 in value-in-kind.
16. In line with the guidelines, the number of applications recommended for support is one, requesting \$200,000 in cash and \$356 in value-in-kind.
17. If the recommendation is adopted, there will be no cash remaining in this budget for the 2024/25 financial year.

## Key Implications

### Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

18. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This grant is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
  - (a) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - the recommended grant project in this report contributes to community development and support active participation in civic life. They empower the community to address issues that matter to them and drive projects to create a more inclusive and resilient city.
  - (b) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural and creative life - the recommended grant projects in this report contribute to supporting artistic and creative endeavours in our city, helping foster initiative, experimentation and enterprise by creative workers and providing new opportunities for audiences to engage in the city's cultural life.
  - (c) Direction 9 - A transformed and innovative economy - the recommended grant projects in this report contribute to helping stimulate business and promote economic activity. They encourage partnerships with other organisations on business development and assist groups of businesses to work together for the collective benefit.



**Organisational Impact**

19. The grants and sponsorships contract management process will involve key staff across the City of Sydney. Identified staff set contract conditions and performance measures for each approved project, and review project acquittals, which include both narrative and financial reports.

**Social / Cultural / Community / Economic**

20. The City's Grants and Sponsorship Program provides the City with a platform to support cultural, economic, environmental and social initiatives from the communities and business, within the local area.

**Financial Implications**

21. There are sufficient funds allocated in the 2024/25 grants and sponsorship budget, included in the City's approved operating budget for 2024/25, to support the recommended grant. Details and total values are provided in the table above.

**Relevant Legislation**

22. Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993 provides that a council may, in accordance with a resolution of the council, contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons for the purpose of exercising its functions.
23. Section 356(3)(a) to (d) is satisfied for the purpose of providing grant funding to for profit organisations because:
  - (a) the funding is part of the Haymarket Activation Grant program.
  - (b) the details of the program have been included in the Council's operational plan for financial year 2024/25;
  - (c) the program's proposed budgets do not exceed five per cent of Council's proposed income from ordinary rates for financial year 2024/25; and
  - (d) these programs apply to a significant group of persons within the local government area.

**Critical Dates / Time Frames**

24. The funding period for the Haymarket Activation Grant program is for activity taking place from 1 September 2024 to 30 June 2025. The contract will be developed for the successful application after Council approval to ensure their funding is released in time for projects starting in September 2024.

**Public Consultation**

25. An online briefing session was held on 21 May 2024 where potential applicants were notified about the Haymarket Activation Grant program and how to apply. A total of 13 attendees participated in the session.

**EMMA RIGNEY**

Director City Life

Cathy Brown, Grants Coordinator

# **Attachment A**

**Recommended for Funding  
Haymarket Activation Grant Program**

## Haymarket Activation Grant Program 2024/25

### Recommended for Funding

Organisation Name	Project Name	Project Description	\$ Amount Requested	VIK Requested	\$ Amount Recommended	VIK Recommended	Additional Conditions
Haymarket Alliance Inc	Neon Playground 2.0	A three-week activation of the Haymarket area with creative and cultural experiences, lights and music, art and ideas.	\$200,000	Venue hire fee waiver to the value of \$356	<b>\$200,000</b>	<b>Venue hire fee waiver to the value of \$356</b>	Applicant to submit a revised project plan and revised budget. Applicant to work with the City of Sydney to ensure our funding complements funding provided by NSW Government for this project.



## **Attachment B**

**Not Recommended for Funding  
Haymarket Activation Grant Program**

# Haymarket Activation Grant Program 2024/25

## Not Recommended for Funding

Organisation Name	Project Name	Project Description	\$ Amount Requested	VIK Requested
Asian Australian Artists Association Incorporated	Haymarket Triennale	A collaborative series of curated contemporary art and cultural activations and exhibitions in the Haymarket area to boost community engagement and economic benefit to the area.	\$200,000	Street banner pole hire to the value of \$19,800
Bespok3 Pty Ltd	Snack Out Haymarket Festival	A series of events in Haymarket celebrating Asian cultural diversity, boosting the local economy, engaging communities, and highlighting traditions through local food and beverage retailers.	\$200,000	Nil
Louder World Pty Ltd	Maaholi - The Colours Festival	An immersive event in Haymarket blending Asian music, performances, colours and flavours, fostering unity among the City's diverse communities.	\$200,000	Value in kind to the value of \$25,000
Museum of Chinese in Australia Limited	Club MOCA	A two-day outdoor performance in Parker Lane, Haymarket coinciding with the opening of the museum, celebrating Chinese and Asian culture and creativity.	\$200,000	Nil
Oh My Days Events Pty Ltd	Worship Chinatown	A series of unique, curated arts and music events in the Haymarket area collaborating with artists and collectives of the Asian diaspora, attracting visitors to the area, benefiting local businesses.	\$200,000	Street banner pole hire to the value of \$10,800
SPIA Group Pty Ltd	Free Haymarket Food Map	A digital resource to benefit local businesses, promote tourism and foster economic growth to the Haymarket area, showcasing the culturally diverse landscape.	\$200,000	Nil
Sydney Youth Orchestras Inc	Youth Music Month at Haymarket	A month-long festival in Haymarket engaging young people and their audiences in dynamic, participatory, and diverse musical experiences, celebrating the creative and youthful energy of the area.	\$200,000	Nil

Organisation Name	Project Name	Project Description	\$ Amount Requested	VIK Requested
University of Technology Sydney	The Chinatown Free University (CFU)	A series of public lectures and conversations in Haymarket around the themes Technology and Everyday Life; Environment, Climate and the Anthropocene; Design and its Social Context; Health and Wellbeing in Accelerated Times; and Indigeneity, Identity, Migration and Mobility.	\$200,000	Nil
Virtual Event Platform Australia Pty Ltd	InnovAsia: Interactive Culture Fest	A two-day event at the Ideas Space, Darling Square Library and Darling Square Courtyard celebrating the vibrancy of Asian culture through state-of-the-art technology, interactive installations and dynamic performances.	\$200,000	Value in kind to the value of \$14,482

## Item 5.

### Adoption – Child Safety Policy

File No: X102700

#### Summary

This report seeks Council approval of the City's Child Safety Policy (the Policy).

The Policy outlines how the City meets its commitment and obligations to safeguard children's wellbeing and rights to reach their full potential, and by adopting strategies and acting to put the interests of children first and to keep them safe from harm.

The Policy applies to all full-time, part-time, casual, temporary and fixed term City employees (and includes agency staff, students on placement, volunteers, and Councillors). The Policy also applies to the management of contracted services providers delivering services involving child-related work, either on behalf of or with the City.

The Policy has been in place since September 2020 and was last reviewed and approved by Council in September 2022.

A change to the review dates for the Policy and related procedures has been set to every four years, or upon any material change in child safety legislation;

This update has been made to the Policy in accordance with the previous scheduled review period of two years and includes:

- consideration of the requirements of the Child Safe Scheme introduced in February 2022 under the Children's Guardian Act 2019;
- supporting guidance material provided by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian ensuring consistency and alignment with the NSW Child Safe Standards; and
- some minor housekeeping and editorial changes to better communicate our approach to child safety and commitment to children's wellbeing to the community.

The revised Policy is shown at Attachment A with additions in bold, and deletions in strikethrough.



## **Recommendation**

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council adopt the Child Safety Policy as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (B) Council note the obligations of Councillors, as "City employees" for the purpose of the Child Safety Policy, to:
  - (i) conduct themselves appropriately around children while performing duties of their role;
  - (ii) report known or suspected instances of child abuse; and
  - (iii) report inappropriate behaviour by any City employees;
- (C) Council note that under the National Redress Scheme the Lord Mayor may be requested to provide a direct personal response if this is requested by a survivor; and
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make minor amendments to the Child Safety Policy to correct any drafting errors and finalise design, artwork and accessible formats for publication.

## **Attachments**

**Attachment A.** Child Safety Policy (with changes marked)

## Background

1. The City's Child Safety Policy (the Policy) has been in place since September 2020 and was last reviewed and approved by Council in September 2022.
2. The Policy outlines how the City meets its commitment and obligations to safeguard children's wellbeing and rights to reach their full potential, by adopting strategies and acting to put the interests of children first to keep them safe from harm.
3. The Policy applies to all full-time, part-time, casual, temporary and fixed term City employees (and includes agency staff, students on placement, volunteers, and Councillors). The Policy also applies to the management of contracted services providers delivering services involving child-related work, either on behalf of or with the City.
4. Accompanying the Policy, related procedures outline the operational actions consistent with the Policy. Plain English guidance material has been developed to explain the basic responsibilities of everyone working at the City, including Councillors.

## Policy review

5. From 1 February 2023, Part 9A of the Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW) came into force, which allows the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian to take action to ensure organisations comply with the Child Safe Standards. This means where organisations do not comply with the Child Safe Standards, the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian can issue a compliance notice to the organisation, or accept an enforceable undertaking from the organisation.
6. Through its recruitment systems, the City has established effective employee screening practices and record keeping systems to manage the verification and monitoring of Working With Children Check clearances, and to ensure relevant City employees have completed training requirements associated with their role.
7. The Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee has undertaken audits of child protection practices at the City, to assess compliance with current City policies and procedures and inform continuous improvement.
8. In 2020, the Policy was elevated from a corporate to a Council Policy to enable the City to communicate its approach to child safety to both staff and the community.
9. In September 2022, the Policy was updated in accordance with recommendations made following an external review of the City's performance against the NSW Child Safe Standards and was made publicly available via the City's website.
10. The review date for the Policy and procedures has been set at four years, or upon any material change in child safety legislation.

## Scope of policy review

11. This review has considered the requirements of the Child Safe Scheme introduced in February 2022 under the Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW), including the requirement for all local governments in NSW to meet the NSW Child Safe Standards.
12. This review has also considered any supporting guidance material that has been provided by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian released since the last Policy was endorsed by Council in September 2022.

13. The NSW Child Safe Standards incorporate existing child protection compliance requirements including working with children checks; the reportable conduct scheme, mandatory reporting of risks of significant harm and civil liability and criminal offences relating to failure to report known abuse of children and failure to protect children in our legal care.
14. The NSW Child Safe Standards also require organisations to go beyond a compliance mindset and adopt a continuous improvement mindset with a focus on child safety, wellbeing and healthy development. There is also a focus on empowering children to participate in decisions that affect them.
15. The NSW Office of the Children's Guardian is currently taking a capacity building approach to support various sectors meet the requirements of the NSW Child Safe Scheme and meet the NSW Child Safe Standards.
16. At the time of the last review, the City's child safety policies, procedures and practices were assessed against the NSW Child Safe Standards. The City engaged child safeguarding experts to conduct independent assessments, the findings of which informed the City's Corporate Child Safety Risk Management Plan.
17. Priority actions that were identified under the Corporate Child Safety Risk Management Plan for incorporation into this Policy review have also been actioned, to increase the City's alignment with the NSW Child Safe Standards.

**Key changes to the policy:**

18. This review of the Policy has resulted in minor changes including:
  - (a) An additional sentence to describe the collective responsibility of all City staff to maintain a genuinely child safe environment across facilities, programs, venues and events, regardless of whether they are engaged in child-related work or not. This change also reflects the City's commitment to Standard 1 'Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture'.
  - (b) A new sub-section that includes brief descriptions of higher risk activities and how the City mitigates these. This is in accordance with risk management guidance from NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, which states child safety policies should address matters of high risk. This change reflects the City's alignment to Standard 3 'Families and communities are informed and involved', and Standard 10 'Policies and Procedures document how the organisation is child safe'.
  - (c) The inclusion and updating of definitions of key terms including Child abuse, and Corporate Risk Management Plan.
  - (d) Minor wording edits throughout that increase alignment with Standard 4 'Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account':
    - (i) the replacement of references to 'vulnerable' children that reflect strengths-based approaches; and
    - (ii) updated language in the Equity and Diversity section to be consistent with best practice and relevant City guidelines about LGBTQA+ people and communities.

- (e) Housekeeping changes such as, changes to names of related policies and procedures, legislation and business units, sections and roles.

### Supporting activity

19. Beyond this review, the City is taking actions towards greater alignment with the NSW Child Safe Standards, including:
  - (a) publishing the City's Child Safe Code of Conduct – Facilities and Venues on the City of Sydney Child Safety Policy web page, to generate greater public awareness of the behaviours expected of adults at the City.
  - (b) increasing accessibility and understanding of the Child Safety Policy by commissioning an Easy Read version of the Policy; and
  - (c) developing a Child-friendly Policy summary and child-friendly resources describing the City's Commitment to child safety. This is being done in consultation with young people attending several City youth programs and after school programs.

### Key Implications

#### Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

20. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This policy is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
  - (a) Direction 1 - Responsible governance and stewardship - The NSW Child Safe Standards require that the City ensure Child Safety is embedded in corporate leadership, governance and culture.
  - (b) Direction 7 - Resilient and diverse communities - The City of Sydney Child Safety Policy outlines how the City meets its commitment and obligations to prevent abuse and ensure the safety and well-being of the children for whom the City provides a service, and with whom the organisation has contact.

#### Organisational Impact

21. The City has in place numerous operational child safety procedures that give effect to the commitments in the Policy. The Child Safety Policy and related operational procedures will be regularly reviewed as we refine our approach to meeting the NSW Child Safe Standards and /or when new guidance material is issued by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.
22. Meeting the NSW Child Safe Standards is a whole of organisation commitment. The City continues to engage with the NSW Child Safe Standards through its Child Safety Program Control Group, who oversee ongoing reviews of operational procedures which will give effect to the principles of the Policy, oversee the development of child safety risk management plans and foster a culture of continuous improvement for the City's child safety practices within the organisation.



**Risks**

23. The NSW Office of the Children's Guardian is the regulator of the NSW Child Safe Standards.
24. From 1 February 2023, Part 9A of the Children's Guardian Act 2019 came into force, which allows the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian to take action to ensure organisations comply with the Child Safe Standards. This means where organisations do not comply with the Child Safe Standards, the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian can:
  - (a) issue a compliance notice to the organisation, or
  - (b) accept an enforceable undertaking from the organisation.
25. The City may be subject to compliance notices or enforceable undertakings should the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian reasonably believe that children are or may be at risk of harm because the City's systems, policies or processes fail or do not reflect or implement the NSW Child Safe Standards. If an organisation fails to comply with a compliance notice or enforceable undertaking, the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian may commence proceedings to issue penalties.
26. The NSW Office of the Children's Guardian is to maintain a list of compliance notices that are in effect and make the list publicly available on the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian's website. A child safe organisation that produces an annual report must include in the report the details of any compliance notice that applied to the organisation during the period covered by the report. Organisations subject to compliance notices and enforceable undertakings, in addition to the penalties, may be at risk for loss of reputation.

**Social / Cultural / Community**

27. The City recognises the importance of the wellbeing of all children and the significant lifelong impact that disrespect, harm and abuse can have long-lasting effects on healthy development, and that these can lead to serious lifelong consequences. The City recognises that abuse that occurs within an organisational context is not just a problem of the past, it continues today.

This Policy articulates the City's commitment to child safety and wellbeing, to embedding the NSW Child Safe Standards into our organisational leadership, governance and culture and by adopting strategies and acting to put the interests of children first, to keep them safe from harm.

**Financial Implications**

29. Implementation of the Child Safety Policy will be managed within existing staff resources and operating budget.
30. Any additional costs associated with the implementation of the NSW Child Safe Standards will be subject to the annual operational budget process, and Council approval.

### Relevant Legislation

31. Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
32. Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
33. Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
34. Children's Guardian Act 2019
35. Civil Liability Act 2002
36. Crimes Act 1900
37. Local Government Act 1993
38. National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018 (Cth).
39. NSW Child Safe Standards
40. NSW Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
41. Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
42. State Records Act 1998
43. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)

### Public Consultation

44. A targeted number of young people who are members of the City's Youth Civic Participation Program and who attend other youth programs at the City were consulted in the development of an age-appropriate young person summary of the Policy. This is being developed in parallel with the Policy and following further consultation will be published once the Policy is adopted by Council.
45. Extensive internal consultation was also undertaken in the development of this review.
46. Ongoing consultation to be conducted includes engagement regarding the Easy Read Policy with young people with sensory processing needs and/or who are on the autistic spectrum who attend City of Sydney youth programs.

### EMMA RIGNEY

Director City Life

Ryan Nibloe, Manager Social Policy

# **Attachment A**

**Child Safety Policy (with changes marked)**

# Child Safety Policy

## Purpose

The City of Sydney Child Safety Policy (Policy) and Child Safety Procedures outline how the Council of the City of Sydney (City) meets its commitment and obligations to safeguard Children's Wellbeing and rights to reach their full potential, by adopting strategies and acting to put the interests of Children first to keep them safe from harm.

We will achieve this by embedding the NSW Child Safe Standards into our organisational leadership, culture, and practice across the City.

## Scope

This Policy applies to all full-time, part-time, casual, temporary and fixed term City Employees (and includes agency staff, students on placement, volunteers, and Councillors).

The Policy also applies to the management of Contracted Services Providers (see Definitions) delivering services involving Child-Related Work, either on behalf of or with the City.

## Definitions

Term	Meaning
<b>Allegation</b>	Includes an Allegation which involves behaviour that is reportable conduct, as well as behaviour that is exempt from notification to the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, but which is required to be investigated by the City.
<b>Child / Children</b>	For the purpose of this policy <b>and associated procedures</b> , a Child is a person aged 0-18 years.
<b>Child Abuse</b>	<b>Can mean a one-off incident or a pattern of any of the following:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Emotional (or psychological) abuse. Such as bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, name calling, ignoring and isolating a child, and exposure to domestic and family violence.</b></li><li>• <b>Grooming. Where a person manipulates a child or group of children and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and leaders. They do this to establish a position of 'trust' so they can later sexually abuse the child</b></li><li>• <b>Sexual abuse. This includes sexual touching of a child, grooming, and production, distribution and possession of child abuse material.</b></li></ul> <b>Neglect – see 'Neglect of a Child' below.</b>



Term	Meaning
<p><b>Child Safety Law</b></p>	<p>Includes, as updated from time to time, the following legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)</li> <li>• Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 (NSW)</li> <li>• Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)</li> <li>• Children’s Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)</li> <li>• Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 (NSW)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Child Safety Risk Management Plans</b></p>	<p><b>The Corporate</b> Child Safety Risk Management Plan <b>is the City’s</b> overarching description of how <b>the City</b> <del>an organisation</del> intends to keep Children safe.</p> <p><b>A Local Child Safety Risk Management Plan describes the risk management strategies implemented to protect Children from abuse and harm in a specific service, facility, venue, program or event.</b></p>
<p><b>Child-Related Work</b></p>	<p>Work which involves direct contact by the worker with a Child or Children where that contact is a usual part of and more than incidental to the work.</p> <p>It also includes work that is likely to involve contact with a Child in connection with at least one of the 20 legislated categories of Child-Related Work <b>under the <u>Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013</u></b>, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• education and care and Child-minding services</li> <li>• clubs or other bodies providing programs and services for Children</li> <li>• entertainment for Children – includes sporting, cultural or other entertainment venues used primarily by Children and entertainment services for Children</li> <li>• transport services for Children - including school bus services, taxi services for Children with a disability and supervision of school road crossings</li> </ul> <p>It may also include a worker who has access to confidential records or information about Children.</p> <p><b>The direct contact may be physical, face-to-face and/or online.</b></p>
<p><b>City Employee</b></p>	<p>Any person engaged in work for the City in any of the following capacities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full-time, part-time, casual, temporary and fixed term employees</li> <li>• agency staff</li> <li>• volunteers</li> </ul>

Term	Meaning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students on placement, and</li> <li>for the purposes of this policy, Councillors.</li> </ul>
<b>Contracted Service Provider</b>	<p>A third party contracted to provide goods, services or programs on behalf of or with the City. The Contracted Service Provider could be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an organisation (including for profit and not for profit organisations, private companies or government entities) or</li> <li>a sole trader - a business run by one person that is either run in the sole trader’s own name or a separate business name.</li> </ul>
<b>Direct Contact</b>	<del>Means physical or face to face contact and contact online</del>
<b>Hiring Manager</b>	The City Employee who plans, assesses and appoints candidates to vacant positions in line with the City Recruitment and Selection Policy.
<b>Reportable Conduct</b>	<p>Reportable Conduct means the following conduct, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the conduct has been commenced or concluded:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a sexual offence,</li> <li>sexual misconduct,</li> <li>ill-treatment of a Child,</li> <li>neglect of a Child,</li> <li>an assault against a Child,</li> <li>failure to reduce or remove the risk of a Child becoming a victim of abuse or concealing Child Abuse,</li> <li>behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a Child.</li> </ol> <p>Examples of indicators of significant emotional or psychological harm in respect of paragraph (g) include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>displaying behaviour patterns that are out of character,</li> <li>regressive behaviour,</li> <li>anxiety or self-harm.</li> </ol>
<b>Wellbeing</b>	In the context of Child safety, wellbeing means keeping the Child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families to ensure they receive the care and services which support all the different dimensions of their lives.

## Policy Statement

The City of Sydney caters for the needs of Children by providing early education and care services, outside school hours care services, community centres, libraries, and aquatic and recreation facilities.

The City also provides a diverse array of services which may be used by Children including community programs and facilities delivering community events. **The City also delivers and supports a range of major events and festivals.** Some of these services may be managed or provided by Contracted Service Providers on behalf of the City.

### **Our commitment to Child safety and wellbeing**

**The City of Sydney has zero tolerance of Child Abuse in our organisation.** The City is committed to safeguarding all eChildren's sense of wWellbeing, and rights to reach their full potential and to keeping eChildren safe from harm and abuse.

We work to empower children to find their own voices and understand that children play an important role in creating vibrant, positive communities, and are our communities of the future.

We recognise that disrespect, harm and abuse can have long-lasting effects on healthy development, and that these can lead to serious lifelong consequences. We know that abuse that occurs within an organisational context is not just a problem of the past, it continues today. ~~The City of Sydney has zero tolerance of Child Abuse in our organisation.~~

We are working to embed the NSW Child Safe Standards into our organisational leadership, governance and culture and by adopting strategies and acting to put the interests of eChildren first and keep them safe from harm.

At the City:

- We want Children to be safe, resilient, happy and empowered.
- We want Children to be connected to each other, community and culture.
- We respect and uphold Children's right to privacy.
- We support and respect eChildren of all ages, cultures, religions, education levels, Children of diverse sexualities and genders **and intersex Children**, and eChildren with disability.
- We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, the cultural safety of Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with disability, **Children of diverse sexualities and genders and intersex Children.**
- All allegations and safety concerns are treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a Child's safety, or where there is an allegation against ~~one of our employees or volunteers~~ **a City Employee**, which we follow rigorously.
- We are committed to preventing Child Abuse by identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

- We have robust human resources and recruitment practices to reduce the risk of Child Abuse by new and existing ~~employees and volunteers~~ City Employees.
- We work closely with our Contracted Service Providers to ensure the services they are delivering on our behalf are Child safe.
- We are committed to regularly training and educating City Employees ~~volunteers, senior leaders and Councillors~~ on Child Abuse risks and obligations to prevent abuse and respond appropriately.
- We are committed to continually improving our Child safeguarding policies and practices through scheduled policy reviews, audits and by closely examining our policy and practice following any child safety incident or report.

### Operational Procedures

We have specific operational policies and procedures in place that support City Employees to achieve our commitments outlined above.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following operational procedures:

- Child Safety Procedure - Recruitment, Employee Conduct and Training
  - Appendix A: Child Safe Code of Conduct - Employees
  - Appendix B: Child Safety Training Program
- Child Safety Procedure – Reporting Child Safety Concerns
- Child Safety Procedure - Notifying and Investigating Child Safety Concerns
- Child Safety Procedure – National Redress Scheme
- Child Safety Procedure – Contracted Service Providers
- Child Safety Procedure- Recruitment, Employee Conduct and Training
  - Appendix A Child Safe Code of Conduct – Employees
  - Appendix B Child Safety Training Program
- Child Safety Procedure – Contracted Service Providers
  - Appendix A: Guideline: Assessing whether a Contracted Service Provider is doing Child-Related Work on behalf of the City
  - Appendix B: Contracted Service Provider Child Safety Assessment - Template
  - Appendix C: Child-Related Work Procurement Specifications
  - Appendix D: Overview of the Annual Child Safety Statement of Compliance
  - Appendix E: Reportable Conduct Procedure – Management Agreements
  - Appendix F: NSW Child Safe Standards: self-assessment and plan – template
- **Child Safety Procedure – Local Child Safety Risk Management Plans - *in development***

All City Employees have a responsibility to adhere to this Policy and associated Procedures.

## **Our Child safe culture**

The City's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and the Child Safe Code of Conduct are the foundation of our Child safe culture.

All people managers at the City of Sydney are responsible for championing these core values that inform the City's approach to Child safety and ~~w~~Wellbeing.

**Maintaining a genuinely child safe environment across all City facilities, programs, venues and events is the responsibility of all City Employees, whether engaged in Child-Related Work or otherwise.**

### **Child Safe Code of Conduct**

The City's Child Safe Code of Conduct – Employees applies to all employees, volunteers, agency staff, elected councillors and Contracted Service Providers working in City of Sydney staffed facilities, venues and events sites.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct – Employees establishes a clear set of rules and expectations for behaviour that is in line with the City's Child safe culture and values. Having clear rules and expectations of how City Employees are expected to interact with Children helps to prevent Child Abuse and encourage reporting.

The City's Child Safe Code of Conduct - Employees also outlines conduct that is not an offence and does not meet the threshold of Reportable Conduct but is concerning. All City Employees must behave in accordance with the Child Safe Code of Conduct – Employees while at work.

The conduct of City Employees holding a Working with Children Check is subject to the Reportable Conduct Scheme at all times. These employees must behave in accordance with the Child Safe Code of Conduct – Employees, even when not at work.

Any behaviour by City Employees that is consistent with Reportable Conduct and or is a breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct – Employees will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## **Human resource management**

Human resource management – including recruitment, screening, training – plays a vital role in protecting Children from harm.

### **Assigning categories to roles**

Every role within the City of Sydney will be categorised using the City's Child Safety Procedure – Recruitment, Employee Conduct and Training, including newly created, re-profiled positions and existing roles where there has been a change in duties.

These categories determine whether the role requires a Working with Children Check, when to apply Child safe recruitment and screening practices and what type of training, education and supervision is required to ensure the City Employee is suitable to work with Children and has the skills and supervision required to meet the responsibilities of the roles.



## Recruitment and screening

The City's recruitment and screening processes are designed to discourage and screen out people who are unsuitable to work with Children and help ensure that only the most suitable applicants who have a positive attitude to Child safety and Wellbeing are employed.

The Director People, Performance and Technology, the relevant Divisional Director and the Hiring Manager are responsible for ensuring that all recruitment and employment procedures are carried out in accordance with the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, the Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 and the Child Safety Procedure – Recruitment, Employee Conduct and Training.

## Working with Children Checks

The City will meet legal requirements to ensure that only people with valid Working with Children Checks are engaged in Child-Related Work..

If a City Employee becomes a disqualified person during the course of their employment with the City, the City Employee's Business Unit Manager and the HR business partner must immediately remove that employee from Child-Related Work, and the employee may be placed in non Child-Related Work or suspended from duty with pay pending the outcome of an investigation.

## Training

All City Employees will be provided appropriate training and/or induction to ensure that they understand and **develop their understanding of** the City's commitment to Child safety and Wellbeing and their role in safeguarding Children.

All City Employees - including volunteers, students on placement, elected Councillors and Contracted Service Providers working in City of Sydney-staffed facilities, venues and events sites - will receive Child safety training and/or an induction, along with information and resources that:

- includes the City's commitment to Child Safety and wellbeing
- provides an overview of the City's Child safety practices
- provides **City** Employees with knowledge about the nature and indicators of Child abuse and harm, so that all **City** Employees can identify abuse, harm and concerning behaviour
- outlines how to respond to a disclosure of abuse appropriately, and
- outlines the basic reporting responsibilities and processes all **City** Employees must follow if there is an incident, Allegation or concern for a Child's safety or wellbeing.

Relevant workforce areas will receive more specialised Child safety training relevant to their role and responsibilities under Child Safety Law and the City's Child Safety Policy and Procedures. This includes training about protective behaviours, Child safety risk management, identifying and responding to risk of significant harm and responding to Allegations of Reportable Conduct.

All City Employees must undertake training that has been identified as required for their role. Training requirements for each of the Categories of **City Employees** are set out in Appendix B: Child Safety – Training Program.

## Child Safety Risk Management Plans

Identifying risks to Children and implementing controls to prevent and mitigate these risks is an essential factor in keeping Children safe.

**The City's Corporate** Child Safety Risk Management Plans will documents how the safety and Wellbeing of Children participating in events, programs and services delivered by the City are managed **at a high-level**. The plans will addresses the following risk factors:

- **People (including culture):** The attitudes, behaviour and conduct of people who come into contact with or work with Children and the unique vulnerability risks of Children with whom we have regular contact, such as Children with disability, **Children of diverse sexualities and genders and intersex Children**, Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children.
- **Processes:** used by the City of Sydney. A process is an end-to-end activity that can involve actions performed by both people and technology. Ineffective processes can lead to ineffective implementation of our Child Safety Policies and Procedures which may result in a failure to prevent, identify and respond to incidents of abuse or harm.
- **Systems:** City of Sydney systems or other systems that are accessed and used to provide services to Children. Examples include customer databases, internet services, mobile phones and security systems.
- **Physical Environment:** Features of the physical environment, such as spaces with poor line of sight and surveillance, and of the online environment, such as direct, unsupervised and one-on-one contact with Children, that may contribute to the likelihood of a Child being groomed, harmed or abused.

Local Child Safety Risk Management Plans (or **Event Risk Management Plans where applicable**) will address risks factors associated with the unique **online and** physical environment in which our services are delivered. ~~Local Child Safety Risk Management Plans are~~ **A risk management approach to Child safety is** required for:

- each individual City staffed facility where Children attend
- each unique service offered to Children where numerous services operate out of the same facility (regardless of whether or not the service is exclusively for Children)
- each event, program or service provided by City Employees delivered outside of a staffed City facility, where Children are expected to attend or be present, and
- any online programs where Children can interact with City Employees and other members of the community.

**Child Safety Risk Management Plans will be reviewed following any incident and at least annually.**

**Managing higher risk activities at the City**

The City also has a number of robust systems and processes in place to address matters of comparatively higher risk to Children. Some non-exhaustive examples are detailed below:

Example of higher level risks	The City of Sydney manages this risk by ensuring:
<p>A poor Child safety culture, resulting in unidentified risks and unreported incidents of Child Abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Employees are regularly trained and educated on Child safety risks and obligations.</li> <li>• There are a number of regularly reviewed and robust procedures and guidelines in place.</li> <li>• A risk management approach to Child safety is adopted at the Corporate and the site level, to ensure Child safe strategic planning at each City facility, service, program and event.</li> </ul>
<p>Existing City Employees, volunteers, and Contracted Service Providers doing Child-Related Work become unsafe and unsuitable to work with Children during their employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Employees pass a recruitment, screening process and sign the Child Safe Code of Conduct prior to commencing work</li> <li>• City Employees have a Working With Children Check which must be verified prior to commencement of Child-Related Work.</li> <li>• Hiring and contract managers keep records of Working With Children Checks and their verification in the City’s Record Management System.</li> <li>• Senior managers are notified when Working With Children Checks are due to expire in 90 days. These reports are regularly monitored and reviewed.</li> </ul>
<p>Inappropriate behaviour displayed by City Employees working with (or near) Children, adversely impacting a Child’s Wellbeing, experience, health or safety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New City Employees read, acknowledge and understand the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and are given a local induction that includes Child safety requirements.</li> <li>• Relevant guidelines are available in community languages to assist volunteers who may not have strong English skills.</li> </ul>
<p>Facilities, services, programs or events are unsafe or unsuitable environments, resulting in incidents of Child Abuse or harm to a Child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime prevention principles are applied to design of new facilities.</li> <li>• Children are not alone with a City Employee unnecessarily and for more than a very short time.</li> <li>• Parent or guardian consent is given for excursions, staff providing transport and use of photos taken of Children at a City service, program or event.</li> </ul>

## Engagement

### Commitment to authentic engagement

The City is committed to providing Children with meaningful and authentic opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them.

The right to participate is at the core of UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and the NSW Child Safe Standards. When Children feel valued and trust their feedback will be heard and acted **on in decisions affecting them**, they are more likely to speak up when they don't feel safe.

The City will uphold this right by empowering Children to express their views and ideas and to have those views and ideas considered alongside those of adults in two ways:

#### 1. *Engaging on strategies and projects*

The Manager City Engagement together with project managers will ensure the City consults Children on capital works projects and strategies, policies and action plan that impact Children. This includes for example:

- the design of new parks, playgrounds and skate and recreational facilities, and
- key policies and strategies such as our community strategic plan.

#### 2. *Reviewing and developing services and programs*

Business Unit managers will ensure the City seeks feedback when services and programs used by Children are reviewed and evaluated.

This feedback will guide future offerings and provide opportunities for Children to provide feedback on how services are provided and what the City can do to help Children feel safe.

Where services and programs have ongoing contact with a Child or group of Children, the City will also aim to empower Children with resources and learning opportunities about being safe, their rights to be safe and who they can tell if they don't feel safe.

### Families and communities are informed and involved

**The City is committed to meaningful consultation with Children, families and communities to better understand the needs of Children and lower the risk of abuse or harm.**

As part of the delivery of services and programs used by Children, Business Unit Managers will make sure that families and communities:

- are engaged on new services and programs, or changes to existing services and programs

- are engaged in open, two-way communication with families and communities about the City's Child safety approach and make sure relevant information is accessible
- have a say in the City's Child **Safety Policy** policies and practices, and
- are informed about the City's operations and governance including how to give feedback on services and raise issues of concern.

## Equity and diversity

The City is committed to providing inclusive and culturally safe services and programs for everyone, including Children.

The City understands that some Children are more ~~vulnerable to~~ at risk of abuse than others or find it harder to speak up and be heard. This includes Children with disability, Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Children ~~who are of~~ **diverse sexualities and genders** questioning their sexuality or gender **and intersex Children**, and Children who have experienced past trauma.

In the spirit of truth telling and reconciliation, we also recognise that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, families and communities have experienced and continue to experience significant trauma in the name of Child protection. This experience is not just confined to the stolen generation but continues today with the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children in the Child protection system. Such trauma can make it harder for Aboriginal Children, families and communities to feel safe in speaking up.

The City is committed to providing culturally safe services, that focus on listening, strengthening relationships and building trust with Aboriginal Children, families and communities – so together we keep Children safe and connected to culture. Business Unit Managers will make sure that:

- Children's diverse needs are considered in the delivery of all services used by Children, and.
- services offered in their area aim to provide all Children ~~have~~ **with** equal opportunities to feel welcome and participate in activities and programs.

## Child focused complaints management

Information outlining how a Child, parent or family member, or community member can make a report or complaint is provided in all of the City's staffed community facilities and on the City's website at [Our Child Safe Reporting Process](#).

All City Employees must comply with legal requirements and adopted procedures and report known, suspected or alleged abuse or harm of a Child, misconduct or inappropriate behaviour. Requirements and processes are outlined in the Child Safety Procedure – Reporting Child Safety Concerns.

The City's response to any report, complaint, incident or Allegation will be Child focused, prioritising the safety, interests and Wellbeing of the Child or Children involved. The City will:

- ensure that processes for responding to alleged abuse and misconduct are fair and focus on the safety and Wellbeing of the Child



- in the event that a City Employee poses a serious risk of abusing a Child, remove or reduce the risk to the Child
- where there is an Allegation against a City Employee notify the relevant authorities and conduct an investigation
- provide reports and/ or progress updates to the relevant authorities and, where appropriate, people involved in any incident
- provide support or make referrals for support to alleged victims, their families and affected City Employees, such as helping everyone involved understand their rights and the process that will be followed in responding to Allegations of Reportable Conduct, and assistance in accessing counselling or other support as required, and
- undertake timely reviews of ~~organisational Child Safety~~ **this Policies**, organisational procedures and/or relevant Child Safety Risk Management Plans following an incident.

To drive continuous improvement, the Child Safety Policy and related operational procedures will also be regularly reviewed as we progress towards meeting the NSW Child Safe Standards and when new guidance material is issued by the Office of the Children's Guardian.

## Confidentiality and records management

Confidentiality will be maintained for all records and information relating to Child safety and protection matters. All Child safety and protection records will be maintained in secure electronic files and access will be strictly controlled.

Directors and managers are responsible for ensuring that City Employees are aware of procedures relating to record management and that appropriate City Employees understand where files are required to be stored within their Business Units.

Records will be stored in accordance with the requirements of the relevant ~~Child s~~**Safety and protection legislation-Law** and the City's Records Management Policy.

## Contracts involving Child-Related Work

The City has management and service agreements with a number of Contracted Service Providers (commercial sporting/recreational organisations and community organisations) that provide services for the benefit of the community and Children on behalf of the City. These include aquatic and recreation centres, tennis courts, education and care services and recreational programs.

Where any relevant contractual agreements include the delivery of Child-Related Work on behalf of or with the City, the agreement must contain clauses outlining the Contracted Service Provider's responsibilities under all applicable Child Safety Law and the City's Child Safety Procedure – Contracted Service Providers .

Performance measures, compliance, monitoring and reporting systems related to Child safety will be established in relevant agreements and through contract management processes, to ensure the City has appropriate oversight of the Contracted Service Provider's Child safeguarding practice.

## National Redress Scheme

The City acknowledges the life-long impact of institutional Child sexual abuse on survivors and is a participating organisation in the National Redress Scheme.

As a participating organisation, if a survivor of Child sexual abuse seeks access to the National Redress Scheme, the City will act with discretion, in good faith and use its best endeavours to assist people applying for redress by providing **any relevant** information.

## Responsibilities

Detailed responsibilities are outlined in the relevant Child Safety Procedures.

### All City Employees must:

- act in accordance with the City's Child Safe Code of Conduct – Employees
- be aware of, and comply with, their responsibilities under the Child Safety Policy and **Child Safety** Procedures.
- undertake training and /or induction required when assigned to them.

### Chief Executive Officer as Head of Entity must:

- ensure adequate systems and processes, policies and procedures, and codes of conduct are in place to prevent, detect and respond to abuse of Children.

### Business unit managers will:

- ensure Children, families and communities are informed about and have the opportunity to be involved in the development of the City's Child Safety Procedures and child practices specific to their service area.
- ensure Children's diverse needs are considered in the delivery of all services used by Children.

### Directors will:

- will ensure that relevant business units have in place local Child Safety Risk Management Plans, and that these are regularly reviewed.

### Director City Life and Director People Performance and Technology:

- will ensure that the City has a Child Safety Policy and **Child Safety** Procedures which comply with relevant regulations and legislation
- will ensure recruitment and screening practices are conducted in line with relevant Child safety and protection legislation **Safety Law** and the City's Child Safety Procedures
- will ensure Child focused systems and complaints processes are in place for detecting and responding to reports of Child safety concerns
- must ensure that strict confidentiality is maintained for all records and information relating to Child safety and protection matters and that records are maintained and disposed of in accordance with the *State Records Act 1998*, City record keeping policies and any other relevant legislative requirements.

### Director Legal and Governance

- will ensure that a platform exists to manage environmental and situational risks to Child safety..

- will ensure tools and resources are available to enable managers to develop and implement local Child Safety Risk Management Plans.

### Manager City Engagement

- will ensure the City consults Children on capital works projects and strategies, policies and action plan that impact Children, **in accordance with the City's Community Engagement Strategy & Public Participation Plan.**

### People managers

- will champion the Child safe values in City's Commitment to Child Safety **and Wellbeing** and the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

### Consultation

This Policy has been developed in consultation with City Life, City Greening and Leisure, People, Performance and Technology, Indigenous Leadership and Engagement, City Engagement, Procurement and Legal and Governance.

In adopting this Policy, it is recognised that there are specific legislative and procedural requirements to be met by the City and City Employees.

### References

#### Laws and Standards

- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Children's Guardian Act 2019
- Civil Liability Act 2002
- Crimes Act 1900
- Local Government Act 1993
- National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018 (Cth).
- NSW Child Safe Standards
- NSW Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- State Records Act 1998
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)

#### Policies and Procedures

- [Child Safety Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Procedure - Recruitment, Employee Conduct and Training](#)

**Policies and Procedures**

- Appendix A: Child Safe Code of Conduct - Employees
- Appendix B: Child Safety Training Program
- Child Safety Procedure – Reporting Child Safety Concerns
- Child Safety Procedure - Notifying and Investigating Child Safety Concerns
- Child Safety Procedure – National Redress Scheme
- Child Safety Procedure – Contracted Service Providers
- **Child Safety Procedure – Local Child Safety Risk Management Plans – *in development***
- Corporate Child Safety Risk Management Plan *in-development*
- **Local Child Safety Risk Management Plans**
- Child Safe Code of Conduct – Facilities and Venues
- Disciplinary Policy
- Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2021-2025
- Privacy Management Plan
- Records Management Policy
- Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan
- Volunteer Policy
- Volunteer Procedures
- Code of Conduct

**Review period**

This policy will be reviewed every 2-4 years, or upon **material** changes in to Child Safety Law.

**Approval Status**

The Council approved this policy on 19 September 2022.

**Approval History**

Stage	Date	Comment	TRIM Reference
Original Policy (Child Protection Policy)	30 Nov 2015	Endorsed by the Executive. Approved by CEO.	2014/462654-01
Review	14 Sept 2018	Endorsed by the Executive. Approved by CEO.	2018/014725-01
Child Safety Policy	21 Sept 2020	Approved by Council.	2020/422489
Review	19 Sept 2022	Policy reviewed to align with the NSW Child Safe Standards, include statement of commitment to child	2020/428916



Stage	Date	Comment	TRIM Reference
		safety and wellbeing, and align Child safety policy and procedure review dates.	
Commence review date	19 Dec 2023		
Approval Due Date	19 Sept 2024		

**Ownership and approval**

Responsibility	Role
Author	Manager Social Policy
Owner	Manager Social City
Endorser	City of Sydney Executive
Approver	City of Sydney Council