

Attachment E

**Second Quarter 2021/22
Community Recovery Plan Report**

Community Recovery Plan

Quarterly Report #6



Christmas lights outside businesses in Darling Square. The City of Sydney and local businesses made the most of another challenging period of the pandemic, focussing on “passive” activations such as Christmas trees, lights decorations and roving entertainment that provided Covid-safe ways for people to enjoy the season.

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Where are we now?

Recommendation to extend the Community Recovery Plan

The Community Recovery Plan was adopted by Council in June 2020 to be implemented over an 18-month period to December 2021. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic means that the City's work to support the economic and social recovery of the communities who live and work in the local area continues.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Community Recovery Plan be extended until June 2022.

State of the city update

Note regarding this data

Currently only limited up-to-date data is available at the City of Sydney level on the impact of Covid-19. Much of this data is collected or reported at different points in time, given different publication lags. This is particularly true for the October-December Quarter, with many collecting agencies deferring data release until later in January. The current situation continues to evolve rapidly, making much of the available data quickly out of date. Every attempt has been made to present the most recent data.

Whilst the September quarter was dominated by economic reversals arising from lockdowns and restrictions to limit the spread of the Delta variant, the December quarter saw a sharp recovery as the economy rebounded with relaxed restrictions from October. The NSW Government put in place a program of easing restrictions linked to full (double-dose) vaccinations of the eligible 16+ population. Retail sales increased sharply and by the end of November, the city regained much of what had been lost by Delta lockdowns.

However, by December the Omicron variant had taken hold and whilst it is milder in terms of individual morbidity and mortality, it was so readily transmissible that cases numbers surged over December. This heavily impacted on the latter part of the quarter by creating a 'perfect storm' as government restrictions were largely removed on 15 December.

For the period October – December 2021:

- **City output (GDP):** Coming out of the Delta-impacted September quarter, output picked up and grew particularly strongly in October and November. As vaccinations (double-dose) in NSW rose from 60% in September to 80% by mid-November and over 90-95% in December, restrictions were progressively removed, and output increased dramatically.

City modelling indicates that output regained what had been lost over the September quarter. Whilst this was still below pre-Covid levels, it represented growth of over 6% over the quarter – albeit from low figures.

This modelling estimates the cumulative cost to the city economy over the almost two-year period of the pandemic at around \$15 billion.

The newly-released ABS Monthly Business Turnover (derived from monthly Business Activity Statements) shows that many of the industries concentrated in the local area had the largest growth. For the October to November period, Australia-wide Accommodation and Food Services experienced the largest increase in turnover (33.6%) after a 10.7% fall in August. Big rises were recorded in Arts and Recreation Services (20.7%), Administrative and Support

Services (11.3%) and Other Services (8.0%). All of these industries had the largest decline in the September quarter. The November ABS Retail Sales data confirmed this surge.

Unfortunately, many businesses encountered global and local supply-chain issues as Omicron spread. Many businesses had staffing issues with employees having to isolate due to contracting the virus or being a close household contact. Many were forced to restrict opening hours/days or staffing levels. Additionally, consumers became particularly wary and voluntarily restricted their movements, especially in the city centre. This would have impacted on the rate of growth of GDP from what it might have been.

- **Employment:** With increased activity over most of the quarter, employment levels regained almost all their losses from the September quarter. The ABS Payroll Tax Jobs Index for the week ended 18 December showed an 8.0% increase compared to the end of September – having peaked at 9.5% on 27 November.

This meant that compared to the September quarter which saw job losses of around 40,000 in the City of Sydney, 35,000 (87%) of those jobs returned by the beginning of December.

The ABS Labour Market (Detailed) publication shows that the Greater Sydney region regained over 80% of the losses from June to December. Unfortunately, this publication does not publish below this geographic level.

With the absence of a scheme like JobKeeper where links between businesses and their employees were maintained, businesses had to advertise for labour. In the May-August period, Job Vacancies in NSW fell 15.6%. In the September-November period they had increased by 27.0%. This gave rise to issues for some businesses in acquiring appropriate labour, given the decline in the participation rate as people had withdrawn from the labour market. In consequence, many businesses faced skill shortages and difficulty in obtaining necessary labour to meet anticipated demand. Figures from employment platform SEEK showed job advertisements declined 3.2% in December but were still 39% higher than a year earlier.

- **Visitation:** City of Sydney pedestrian count figures show that footfall numbers increased from 12% of pre-Covid levels at the beginning of October to 53% by mid-December, then dropped off to 27% at the end of December, as the holiday period commenced and the impact of Omicron took hold. Over the entire December quarter, pedestrian numbers were 33% of pre-Covid levels, down from 43% for the same period in 2020.

Opal Card Train usage data for city centre stations showed a similar increase from 8% of pre-Covid levels in September to 40% in December. Property Council published estimates of office occupancy levels returned from a low of 4% of pre-Covid levels in September to reach 23% in November. Office occupancy data for December has not been published.

- **Spend:** Confidential spend data sighted by Council indicates the direct impact of the restrictions. For the December quarter (compared to the September quarter where spending fell across all areas due to the Delta lockdown):

- Total retail spending increased by 153%
- Total retail spending by international visitors increased by 266%
- Total retail spending by domestic consumers increased by 151%
- Spending at eating places increased by 282%
- Spending on accommodation increased by 281%
- Spending at clothing stores increased by 68%

This shows the strength of the recovery in the final three months of 2021.

However, it is important to compare current spending with pre-Covid levels to understand the cumulative impact on cash flow of city businesses and their economic viability following lockdowns, the end of JobKeeper and other support arrangements. It also explains why businesses have been increasingly concerned. Compared to the equivalent quarter in 2019 (ie pre-Covid), spending in the quarter was as follows:

- Total retail spending decreased by 20%
- Total retail spending by international visitors decreased by 82%
- Total retail spending by domestic consumers decreased by 8%
- Spending at eating places fell by 25%
- Spending on accommodation fell by 50%
- Spending at clothing stores rose by 12%

- **International travel and students:** The City of Sydney economy is heavily reliant upon international and interstate visitors. The imposition of international visitor caps and border restrictions during the pandemic has impacted significantly on many businesses. Some restrictions were relaxed in the quarter although others remain.

The City's Hotel Occupancy rate for the quarter increased from its 2021 nadir of 17% in September to average 42% in December (reaching a peak of 48% in the second week in December). This compares to an average 85% pre-Covid and 50% prior to June 2021. The lack of international visitors particularly impacts the Restaurant, Hospitality and Arts sectors.

The ABS Overseas Arrivals data shows that provisionally 165,210 overseas arrivals entered in NSW in the December quarter. This is over five times greater than the number in the September quarter but still represents a decrease of 95% compared to the corresponding quarter in 2019 pre-Covid.

International students are economically important for the City with an average local spend of \$25,000 per trip – six times the average international traveller. The latest NSW arrivals data indicated that, compared to the February 2020 figure of 40,000 international student arrivals, there were just 540 in December (up slightly from 200 in September). Over the period from March 2020 to December 2021, on-site enrolments in Higher Education and ELICOS courses in NSW (substantially located in the City of Sydney LGA and adjacent localities) declined by over 52,000 (48%). This was only partially offset by an increase of less than 13,000 on-line enrolments, yielding a net decrease of 28%. Significantly, this has particularly impacted local businesses and shops servicing the resident student community. More particularly these 'missing' students may slow the rate of recovery of the hospitality sector as it seeks to expand. Given their significance as a source of labour, job vacancies may be difficult to fill.

Confidence

- **Business confidence:** The September quarter saw business confidence fall significantly by over 20% between May and August, as uncertainty about the ending of restrictions imposed by the Delta variant took hold. However, as greater clarity about the roadmap out of lockdown was announced and restrictions were eased, it increased steadily to December. However according to Business NSW confidence fell significantly with the onset of Omicron.
- **Consumer confidence:** Nationally consumer confidence has risen only marginally in the December quarter after a decline in the September quarter. Sydneysiders remained reasonably sanguine during the extended lockdown and the Consumer Index was virtually unchanged, albeit at levels that were above the 2021 average. As vaccination rates rose, cases began to fall and a roadmap out of lockdown was announced, consumer confidence in Sydney began to rise and continued marginally into November as restrictions eased.

It would seem that the spending boost observable in the December quarter was not driven by aggregate measures of consumer sentiment. This could reflect either on the reliability of such indices and/or the distributional implications of Covid impact which will not be equally felt across the entire country.

- **Recent trends - every silver lining has a cloud... and another variant storm to deal with:** Objectively, the December quarter was one of significant and sharp economic recovery from the Delta variant that brought about lockdowns in the September quarter. Possibly the spending surge, particularly in the hospitality, arts and recreation sectors and the services sector was a response to 'lockdown fatigue' and a desire to re-connect with others, particularly friends and family.

Irrespective, the momentum was halted in December with the emergence of the Omicron variant and the surge in cases, hospitalisations, and deaths.

There seems little doubt that Omicron (and how the economy and governments grapple with this it) will dominate in the March 2022 quarter.

Unlike previous Covid waves, the economic impact caused by Omicron will be largely determined by consumer hesitancy and labour supply issues rather than government restrictions. The NSW Government appears to be resisting substantial re-vamping of trading and travel restrictions, as well as lockdowns.

Already, ANZ-Roy Morgan data has found that for January consumer confidence has plunged to its lowest January result for decades (1993), having fallen 7.6 % since 1 January.

The Omicron wave has generated domestic supply chain disruptions that had largely been absent since the initial stages of the pandemic. Staff shortages are the main reason for the disruption and have led to a redefinition of 'close contact' rules for workers in some sectors to help ameliorate the situation. Nevertheless, businesses may continue to face labour-supply shortages through February.

According to news reports, NSW Treasury modelling has estimated that the Omicron surge will cost the NSW economy at least \$3.5 billion, with a weekly cost of \$500-600 million. This figure taken on a pro-rata basis would suggest a cost to the City of Sydney economy of about \$800 million. However, this is likely to be an under-estimate. This figure could increase if supply chains and distribution networks are further impaired.

On a more optimistic note, late January case and hospitalisation data suggest that Omicron transmission is stabilising and near a peak with downward trend. It should be recalled that the first Covid wave in 2020 lasted 3 months but took 12 months for the economy to recover to the pre-Covid level. The second wave, the Delta variant, lasted for 3 months also, but recovery occurred within 3 months in the December quarter. Following this pattern, it is possible the Omicron variant may be sharper (very much sharper) but recovery could take less time - short and very abrupt. There is economic hope.

Summary of the plan

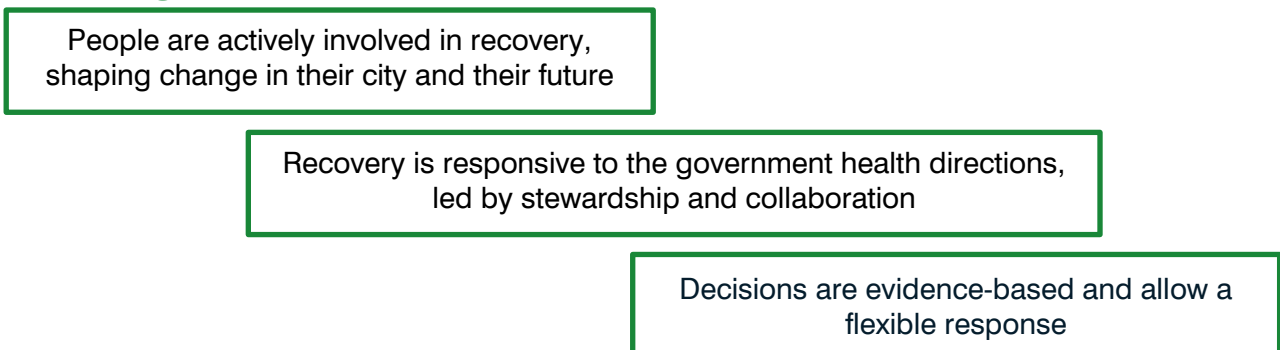
Recovery goals

- Recovery is inclusive and equitable
 - Recovery supports a resilient economy and community wealth building
 - Recovery is a catalyst for a green and sustainable future
 - Recovery is strengthened by a robust and diverse cultural sector
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Action Areas



Guiding principles



What we have done

This section provides an overview of activity under each of the recovery plan actions for the period 1 October – 31 December 2021:

	Total Actions	Actions Underway	Activity this Quarter
Business as usual/transformed actions:	39	39	37
New actions:	18	18	13
Recovery plan total actions:	57	57	50

Action Area 1

Safely manage public places and streets to support community life and business

People can move in and around the city safely because space is re-allocated and businesses can successfully reopen.

What we are doing to support recovery

1.1 Prioritise our business concierge service to support businesses to open and operate safely

- There were 99 contacts to the business concierge service in quarter 2 21/22 and 1,639 since commencement as follows:

	Q2 21/22	Since Commencement
Calls:	19	674
Emails:	80	965

- The majority of enquiries are about the City’s grants program.
- In December the Concierge team supported planning for the upcoming *Sydney Summer Streets* program. The team visited small businesses located in Glebe, Pyrmont, Surry Hills, Redfern and Potts Point to inform them of the planned events, opportunities for participation and merchandising.

1.2 Continue the acceleration of the capital works program to upgrade city streets, parks and playgrounds

- Accelerated landscaping program is now complete.
- The new outdoor gym at James Hilder Reserve is now complete and open.
- Projects underway to enhance and maximise the communities’ access to outdoor sport and recreation space and facilities include planning for new synthetic sports fields at Perry Park, The Crescent and Alexandria Park Community School.

What we are doing to support recovery

- 1.3 Clean public places and streets to a high standard
- Garden organics and bulky waste tonnages recorded slight increase in Q2 in comparison to Q1. Domestic waste and commingled recycling had a decrease in waste tonnages due to people returning to their workplaces.
 - City contractors continued to experience significant strains on staff resources due to Covid-related absences. To accommodate the changing requirements of public health orders and cases where workers had to isolate, there were delays to some collection services, including green organics, booked bulky household collections, and reported illegal dumps.

General red bin waste and yellow bin recycling collections were prioritised. These collections continued as per regular schedules with minimal missed collections despite more waste being generated and limitations on available staff resources.
 - The Home Recycling Trial continued which allows residents to have items collected from their front door with a contactless pick up and recycled via RecycleSmart.
 - The City’s cleansing operations team continued to provide additional cleansing and support where required. This included removing any urgent illegal dumps, steam cleansing footpaths and street furniture and emptying and cleaning street litter bins.
 - Additional mobile street litter bins around hospitals and testing venues have been deployed as required.
 - Areas with high pedestrian activity, especially on weekends, have continued to be prioritised for servicing, including providing more litter bins and more frequent cleansing and waste collections.
- 1.4 Promote safe alternatives to single-use items to address emerging waste issues
- Pop-up stalls on safe reuse restarted from mid-November to December. City staff delivered 7 community pop-up stalls at Gunyama Park in Rosebery and Shannon Reserve in Surry Hills and engaged with 184 residents to promote safe alternatives to single use items and raise awareness about options for and safety of using reusable coffee cups.

What we are doing to support recovery

- In December, City staff delivered an online reuse session called ‘DIY Christmas for People & Pets’ as part of the Zero Waste Christmas program. They shared ideas with participants on how to upcycle unwanted clothes into decorations, create fabric gift wrapping and special guests shared tips for creating pet toys from old clothes and rags.
- From October to December, 253 students and their teachers from across 15 schools utilised remote learning resources where student-led groups tackled the issue of single use plastics at home and in their schools. They learnt about waste avoidance methods and how to recycle right.

In December, the program finished for the 2021 school year with a virtual end of year celebration including a special thank you message from the Lord Mayor and an awareness raising talk by a marine scientist on the extent of plastic pollution in the oceans and the negative effects on marine life with participation certificates delivered to students.

- Through the City’s online ‘Ask A Waste Expert’ service, outreach officers responded to 169 questions from 91 residents on a range of topics and items. Common questions were about how to recycle different kinds of plastics, safely reuse items and what to do with food waste and clothing.

1.5 Communicate that Sydney is safe, clean and open for business

- Sydney received a brief reprieve in the quarter with progressive relaxing of restrictions until late December which allowed the communications to focus on safe activation and city revitalisation.

A marketing strategy has been developed with 3 primary objectives:

1. Get Sydneysiders (residents, workers and tertiary students) back into the city and reframe it as a place of discovery: eat, drink shop, dwell, see both day and night
2. Encourage CBD business to take advantage of grants, relaxed outdoor dining rules, understand current PHOs and Covid safety regulations
3. Build consumer confidence – the city is safe and open

The campaign comprises 3 key messages:

1. Overarching message - the CBD is a dynamic, safe and fun place to be – there are lots of things happening, the city is Covid safe

What we are doing to support recovery

2. Programming specific message - you should go to the CBD for...
3. For businesses message – the City and NSW Government are actively working to facilitate recovery for your business and you should take advantage of these opportunities and understand relevant Covid safety measures.

The campaign was launched in early December under the strapline *Your city is waiting for you*.

The primary landing destination is whatson.sydney

The campaign was designed to be flexible so that it can be “switched on and off” depending on the current Covid situation. With the emergence of Omicron in late December, the campaign has been partially wound back, ready to ramp up as soon as the Covid environment allows.

- Previously, much of the City’s localised Covid information about venues, cases and Covid in the local area relied on a regular RSS feed from NSW Health which was discontinued during the quarter.
- Covid related content articles on City of Sydney News promoted via City’s social channels and to 16,000 weekly email digest subscribers:

Page Views:	Q2	Total
• Public health alerts as required (now discontinued):	89	68,599
• Covid-19 page on CoS website:	1,273	26,817
• Face masks required in City venues:	953	6,505
• Get your Covid vaccination:	4,490	15,321
• Green Sq Library pop-up vax clinic:	1,446	4,914
• Covid testing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community:	1,389	2,330
• Ultimo pop-up vax clinic:	1,577	3,518
• New Covid check-in card:	272	1,334
• Support for business:	104	1,101
• Financial help for residents:	77	2,103
• City community hotline promotion:	156	1,254
• Re-opening–what you need to know:	1,246	1,246
• Welcoming customers back:	359	359
• Wellbeing support for cultural workers:	318	318

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| 1.6 | Work with NSW Government on city management initiatives such as mobility and transport, temporary footpath widening, cycleways, change signal timing, lower speed limits, | – The City opened online applications for outdoor dining in new spaces, including reallocated road space on 30 November 2020. Since the commencement of the program until 31 December, 393 have been approved, of which 116 relate to reallocated road space and 277 relate to reallocated footway space. |
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What we are doing to support recovery

travel demand planning and reprioritisation of roads

In total \$4,015,339 in footway dining fees have been waived since the commencement of the pandemic.

- City staff are working with the new pedestrian manager at Transport for NSW on reduced waiting times and improved quality of the public domain for people walking.

Other actions we will take

1.7 Review and determine if current fee waivers should be extended to continue to support activation of space for community life, cultural participation and commercial use while maintaining accessibility

- Waived footway dining fees have been extended to June 2022:

Fees waived	Since commencement \$4,015,339
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- Continued rent relief on commercial properties (excluding QVB):

Total rent relief forecast	Since commencement \$10,736,334
Total rent deferral estimate	\$ 4,432,401

1.8 Invest in the pedestrianisation and activation of south George Street

- Construction to permanently convert the southern end of George Street to a pedestrian boulevard, as part of creating 9,000m² of additional pedestrianised space began in March 2021 and is almost complete up to Rawson Place.
- The new pedestrian boulevard is open from Bathurst Street to Hay Street and people can move freely across the light rail tracks. The eastern side of George Street between Hay Street and Rawson Place and the western side to just south Hay Street is also open to the public.
- Additional public domain improvements on George Street, between Rawson Place and Pitt Street, and in Hay Street and Ultimo Road will begin early to mid-2022. This will provide wider footpaths, new trees, and street furniture.
- The project’s Community Liaison Officer will continue to work with local residents and businesses to ensure they are well informed ahead of works in the area. Regular updates will continue to be provided to the community as construction continues.
- The initiative is viewed as a positive step in the recovery by providing space for physical distancing, creating new outdoor space for businesses to utilise, and improving the look and feel of the street for people. It will also help to the reinvigorate the southern CBD.

Action Area 2

Provide equitable access to the essentials for safe and comfortable daily life for all residents

Address rising inequality within our community by advocating for and supporting access to essential services for all. This includes housing, food, community services, digital resources and skills development.

What we are doing to support recovery

- 2.1 Direct existing grant support towards addressing emerging community issues and funding those most in need
- In response to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, the City again offered community emergency quick response grants to provide urgent support for vulnerable groups in the city.
 - In this quarter 12 organisations were supported with \$110,740 across 13 grants. Ten were for food security projects, one for a community cohesion project and two were for digital inclusion projects.
- 2.2 Continue to provide online and face-to-face programming with a focus on supporting health and wellbeing, digital literacy, social inclusion, reskilling and employment
- Cultural and community programming continued to be delivered in a predominantly online format:
 - 19 programs were delivered to 575 participants and online Auslan and English Storytime attracted almost 6,000 views
 - Face to face creative programs were re-introduced into the Makerspace, providing low-cost, introductory workshops in Laser Cutting and free Maker and Creator classes for children
 - 9 Lunchtime talks were accessible online and Auslan interpreted
 - 4 online Auslan and English Storytime videos, featuring Deaf presenters as literacy role models were produced and 27 videos were hosted on the City's website
 - 4 face-to-face sessions were delivered in the Darling Square Library Makerspace
 - Two sessions in the Lunchtime Conversation series focused on mental health and resilience (presented by Dr Jonathon Lineen and James Dunk)
 - 1 x Australian Life Photography panel discussion was delivered online and Auslan interpreted.
 - Libraries programming continued as follows:
 - 10 one to one *Be Connected* sessions were held during the period, providing tech support to community members on their own devices
 - 3 online book club meetings were held

What we are doing to support recovery

- The online library team responded to 3,429 calls and 3,991 emails, including 130 caring calls in the first two weeks of October, after which time libraries commenced a staged reopening. The caring calls program was developed to assist library members to access library resources from home, reduce social isolation and maintain their connection to the library and provide access to local community information that might be of interest.
- 2.3 Manage community spaces, services and facilities to ensure safe, equitable and affordable access and participation
- With easing of restrictions, the City began to reopen community centres from 11 October with a hybrid approach to programming. There was a decrease in attendance of 27% compared to the same year to date figure for 2020 (7,205 compared to 9,871).
 - All online events were free to attend.
 - Free and low-cost face-to-face programming was re-introduced into the Darling Square Library Makerspace
 - *2021 Australian Life* Photography Exhibition was displayed in Surry Hills and Glebe Libraries
 - Accessibility and inclusion were supported through the provision of Auslan interpretation and live captioning at online events and alternative programming such as online Auslan and English Storytime, digital workshops and online webinars.
 - All library branches were reopened to the community by December 2021.
 - A mobile library outreach service was piloted across six locations in November, providing access to library materials and expertise for community members who are unable to come to the library.
- 2.4 Increase utilisation of internet and digital access and participation through City libraries and community facilities and explore opportunities to support digital training and advocate for subsidised internet access beyond our own facilities
- Digital newspaper rollout began, with 9 new touch screen devices installed, providing a new way to access thousands of local and international magazines and newspapers across the world.
 - All after hours book chutes reconfigured to return items off customers cards, providing a more efficient service.
 - 24/7 Wi-Fi activated allowing public to access services outside library operating hours. Download limits were increased from 500MB to 2GB per person per day and unlimited download trial commenced.
 - LinkedIn Learning platform launched on 15 December offering free on demand courses for library members in software, technology, creative and business skills, available in 7 languages.

What we are doing to support recovery

- 2.5 Work with other government agencies and organisations working in the homelessness sector to support those at risk of or experiencing homelessness
- Seven-day coverage provided by the City’s homelessness unit and public space liaison officers who continue to engage with people experiencing homelessness. Staff continue to provide rough sleepers with the most up to date information from NSW Health, along with information about service provision and accommodation available.
 - 34 people were supported from October - December to access long-term housing.
 - The City continues to work with our partners support individuals experiencing homelessness. Highlights include:
 - Supported NSW Health and partners to provide vaccinations to people living in boarding houses and community members experiencing homelessness.
 - 92 outcomes were recorded for the Woolloomooloo Integrated Support Hub (WISH), which recommenced in November and provided information and support to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
 - Provided information to mobile voluntary services to improve service delivery regarding Covid-19 safety and PPE, waste management and food safety.
 - Provided referrals, PPE and health information to people sleeping rough.
- 2.6 Continue to leverage the City’s existing Supported Accommodation, Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund to create more affordable housing
- In the quarter October – December, two grants were awarded for a total of \$214,885 cash:
 - St George Community Housing – Improving access to affordable housing opportunities, \$96,345 (year 1 2021/22)
 - Women’s Community Shelters for a project utilising student accommodation as a transitional housing option for women experiencing or at risk homelessness, \$118,540.
- 2.7 Advocate to federal and state governments for increased investment in social and affordable housing as well as no forced evictions and tenants' rights
- The City continues to advocate to the NSW Government and housing providers for the retention and increased supply of social and affordable housing on the following projects: Waterloo (South) redevelopment, the Pyrmont Place Strategy and Blackwattle Bay State Significant Precinct, 600 Elizabeth Street, Redfern and Redfern North Eveleigh Precinct Renewal site.
 - The City continues to communicate and support the Waterloo community and seek the State Government to conduct a robust and inclusive public exhibition process for the planning proposal.

What we are doing to support recovery

- 2.8 Prioritise the provision of food security services for our vulnerable communities through partnerships, networks, grants and existing services
- Delivered 12,335 Meals on Wheels meals to 236 residents and continued service uninterrupted. This service also provided 195 Christmas hampers to support clients through the holiday period.
 - In this quarter 12 organisations were supported with \$110,740 across 13 grants, 10 of which were for food security projects.
 - The City continues to work with the three main food suppliers in the LGA and coordinate the Sydney Food Operations Group, made up of 34 core agencies. This work responds to ongoing demand during the pandemic.

In the period 17,484 food hampers, 21,078 meals, and 16,525kgs of individually requested items have been distributed.
 - On 25 November, the City hosted the online event *A city for everyone who eats: Inclusion, Diversity and FoodLab Sydney*. The event included a panel discussion with Prof David Scholsberg, Director Sydney Environment Institute, Omar Alkharouf, PhD research fellow and Julie Giuffre, Manager Grants, city of Sydney. The City's 3-year support of University of Sydney's FoodLab project has now finished and this event provided an overview of the findings and success of the program. The presentation covered:
 - The diversity of participants and the focus of the program on participants' strengths.
 - Challenges associated in moving delivery of the program online.
 - The large network and community that the program created through vertical and horizontal networking, mentoring and connections.
 - Food as a solution – positive outcome for the alumni related to employment, testing products, launching food related businesses or planning to launch a businesses, along with increased skills and confidence.

Other actions we will take

- 2.9 Work with charities to support their fund-raising to provide ongoing services to people in the local area
- In November 2021, Council resolved to donate \$100,000 each to OzHarvest Limited and Foodbank NSW & ACT Limited, along with \$50,000 to SecondBite to support these organisations to assist vulnerable communities to access food relief over the Christmas period and into the new year.

Other actions we will take

- 2.10 Advocate to the federal government for the continuation of financial and other support packages and broadening access to assistance
- The Lord Mayor hosted a Social Services Roundtable on 9 September to hear from more than 25 local community organisations, around their experiences and needs going forward, including social and affordable housing, vaccinations, emergency food relief and financial support Note – this activity occurred in September whoever was not included in the July-September 2021 quarterly report and as such is being reported here.
- This resulted in a Lord Mayor Minute on Monday 20 September committing to further advocacy on raising the rate of income support, including a letter to the Prime Minister to raise the rate of JobSeeker payment.
- 2.11 Connect impacted international students to accommodation and mental health support services
- The City's International Student Ambassadors (ISLA) participated as panellists in a StudyNSW virtual webinar 'Support for NSW International Students during Covid-19' .
 - A total of 201 international students participated in three events delivered by the City's ISLA team with 93% reporting increased skills and knowledge, 98% reporting increased connectedness and 92% reporting increased social wellbeing The events were an Employment Panel, Cultural Fest event, and Aussie Culture 101. These events help to build students' capacity to participate in the local community, increase their employability skills and cultural intelligence.
 - The City's ISLA team continued to promote relevant international student services, support and volunteering opportunities to their relevant network such as Study NSW's Virtual Study Program, Surf Lifesaving Bilingual Water Safety Volunteer Program, My Legal Mate and Covid-19 information and welfare support.
 - The City's ISLA team participated in the NSW Surf Lifesaving Information Hub consultation
 - The City's ISLA team participated in the Centre for Volunteering CALD Volunteer consultation to inform resource and policy development and implementation.

Other actions we will take

2.12 Advocate to the NSW Government to direct energy efficiency support to low-income residents and strata communities in the local area

- The City is collaborating with NSW Government to ensure energy efficiency stimulus, incentives and support include strata communities and low-income communities.
- The City continues to work with DPIE to promote changes to the NABERS Energy rating as a mechanism to reduce costs.
- The City promotes solar sharing case studies to community housing providers as a pathway to reducing power bills for residents.

Action Area 3

Strengthen community cohesion to build the resilience of local communities

Communities are connected, engaged and empowered to manage their own recovery and ready to respond to shocks and emergencies.

What we are doing to support recovery

- | | | | | | |
|---|--|---------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| <p>3.1 Provide grants that facilitate community engagement in City owned spaces and public places</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Due to the second lockdown, the City continued to provide rent relief for childcare centre providers for an approximate value of: <table border="0" style="margin-left: 40px;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">Fin YTD</td> <td>Since Commencement</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$ 632,189</td> <td>\$2,298,377</td> </tr> </table> | Fin YTD | Since Commencement | \$ 632,189 | \$2,298,377 |
| Fin YTD | Since Commencement | | | | |
| \$ 632,189 | \$2,298,377 | | | | |
| <p>3.2 Provide residents with links to support services and practical assistance</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provided information and referral pathways to residents in a range of formats online and in print with links to relevant health, safety and support contacts. – The City provided 105 referrals to multilingual vaccination resource kits and 19,804 referrals to vaccination bookings since the referral service commenced on 25 August 2021. – Continued the community hotline which received 57 calls for requests to information or support. – 3,500 hardcopy flyers, <i>Your guide for support during the Covid-19 pandemic</i>, were distributed via Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. – City staff conducted 189 check-in calls to residents during October – December, to provide support and assistance. | | | | |
| <p>3.3 Support the provision of health and safety information to residential strata owners</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The City continued to provide health, safety and resilience information through to strata communities through Smart Green Apartments and Residential Strata Sustainability Group and staff networks. | | | | |
| <p>3.4 Advocate to ensure environmental sustainability is of high importance in fast-tracked urban renewal programs</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Advocacy has continued to NSW Government for environmental outcomes aligned to City targets in the following renewal projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterloo Estate • Redfern North Eveleigh • Central Station • Tech Central innovation precinct generally | | | | |

What we are doing to support recovery

3.5 Coordinate local emergency response through Local Emergency Management Committee

– The City continues to coordinate the activities of the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC), including the response and recovery to Covid-19. This includes regular reporting on response and recovery activities and emerging issues. Progress update includes:

- Fortnightly LEMC meetings.
- Ongoing support to the NSW Health public health response through the use of City facilities as vaccination and testing clinics.
- Coordinated support to vulnerable communities through emergency food distribution (hampers and kitchens), dedicated community hotline, targeted communications, personal protective equipment, and community quick response grants.
- City of Sydney Crisis Management and Incident Response and Recovery Teams continue to meet to address strategic, operational and business continuity requirements of the organisation and community.

– The City continued to waive parking fees for essential workers at the Goulburn St and Kings Cross car parks as follows:

- Free Goulburn St car park parking

	Q2 21/22	Since Commencement
Police:	\$ 36,346	\$850,920
Health:	\$ 1,241	\$ 22,423
Charity:	\$ 0	\$ 1,887

- Free Kings Cross car park parking

	Q2 21/22	Since Commencement
Police:	\$ 10,890	\$131,540
Health:	\$ 11,135	\$143,395
Charity:	\$ 2,397	\$ 93,092

– Fee waivers for all parking expired in December 2021. This action is now complete.

3.6 Work with the Resilient Sydney network to share best practice and establish cross boundary recovery initiatives

– The Resilient Sydney program continued to support councils with information and advice through the ongoing adaptations required during the continuing pandemic.

– The Resilient Sydney program is building a firm relationship with the NSW state agency Resilience NSW. In December the program hosted a "meet and greet" event for all Sydney based Resilience NSW staff to present and meet with Resilience Ambassadors of the 33 councils of Sydney. A program of collaborative work is being prepared for 2022-23.

What we are doing to support recovery

- On 1 December, Resilient Sydney with partners Greater Sydney Commission and the NSW Department of Planning and Environment launched the "Greater Sydney Race2Zero" initiative. This program over 2 years aims to provide every council in Sydney with the data and scenario planning tools to set emissions targets and implementation plans, using the Resilient Sydney Platform.
- In November, the Resilient Sydney Office released canopy cover data for metropolitan Sydney and urban forest planning guidance to all councils using data provided by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment. A final workshop hosted by the program concluded the series of three during 2021 under the initial collaboration to improve canopy cover and heat mitigation in Sydney.
- The City continues as an active member of Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) supporting several recent forums on affordable housing, waste and recycling metrics and the circular economy.

Other actions we will take

- 3.7 Empower communities to manage their own recovery by strengthening local connections through networks, events and forums, for example supporting community celebrations at the end of the pandemic
- The City hosted an online *Get Prepared: Summer Weather* information session in partnership with the Red Cross and NSW State Emergency Services. 20 social housing community leaders, residents and frontline workers attended the information session on 4 December.
 - The City partnered with Women and Girls Emergency Centre delivering domestic violence prevention and ally workshops online over four weeks in November. A total of 19 community members participated to learn how to have supportive conversations and safely respond.
 - The City engaged Full Stop Australia to deliver 'responding with compassion' training to respond to disclosures of domestic and family violence or sexual assault. A total of 34 participants engaged in this training in December including residents, schools, childcare centres, and community services.
 - The City has built the capacity of trusted frontline organisations to deliver food and support to vulnerable communities during the 2021 lockdown.

Other actions we will take

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| <p>3.8 Facilitate capacity building workshops with the community sector and community led organisations to support their planning for the reopening of their services</p> | <p>– Due to the extended lockdown and emergence of Omicron late in the quarter, no activity against this action was scheduled this quarter.</p> |
| <p>3.9 Explore with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community the idea to facilitate a culturally sensitive commemorative event due to the impacts on participating in <i>Sorry Business</i> during the pandemic, and to provide an opportunity for support, collective reflection and acknowledgement for community members who have passed away.</p> | <p>– Due to the lockdown and ongoing impacts of the pandemic, no activity against this action was scheduled this quarter.</p> <p>The focus of the City’s work with the community during and immediately after the lockdown was to support access to services such as on testing, food relief and vaccinations.</p> |
| <p>3.10 Celebrate the work of the community groups and volunteers including at the annual Lord Mayor volunteer thank you event</p> | <p>– This quarter the City’s Meals on Wheels volunteers received hampers to thank them for their hard work through the year as the usual end of year thank you dinner and celebration could not proceed due to Covid restrictions and concerns.</p> |

Action Area 4

Protect and empower the cultural sector by prioritising the role of local creativity, cultural spaces, talent and knowledge

The resilience of our cultural sector is strengthened through involvement in recovery efforts, sustaining diverse cultural practice, protecting creative spaces and thriving community participation.

What we are doing to support recovery

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| <p>4.1 Direct existing grant support to sustain cultural organisations and stimulate development opportunities for local creatives</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Round 2 of the City’s annual grants and sponsorship was assessed during the quarter. \$5,876,668 in cash and in-kind grant support was awarded to support the creative sector through 44 grants across the following programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business support – live music & performance • Festivals & events – artform • Festivals & events – artform major • Festivals & events – village & community |
| <p>4.2 Advocate to federal and state governments for targeted support for culture and no net loss of cultural space</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No activity scheduled this quarter. |
| <p>4.3 Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices and knowledge sharing</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The City is working to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander grant applications through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion • Training • Application • Assessment – Two successful community emergency quick response grant applications were from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned organisations, one of which was a verbal application. They were awarded \$30,000 in quick response grants. – Five successful Round 2 grant applications were from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, They were awarded \$105,000 across knowledge exchange sponsorships, festival and events sponsorships and matching grants. – As busking started to return to the city streets in line with public health orders, the City was once again able to support of cultural practice in the public domain by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers. |

What we are doing to support recovery

4.4 Continue work to maximise opportunities for cultural sector in City owned spaces and community venues

- The City is providing rent relief for creative spaces, short-term empty property, creative accommodation grant and live/work Waterloo and William St tenants for an approximate value of:

	Fin YTD	Since Commencement
• Creative spaces:	\$28,225	\$201,000
• Other cultural:	\$83,883	\$381,483
• Other social:	\$44,292	\$181,991

- In total, the City has provided rent relief for Accommodation Grant Program recipients and creative tenants to the value of:

	Fin YTD	Since commencement
Rent relief	\$788,589	\$3,062,851

- All cultural tenants continue to be provided proactive contract management support through a challenging period for the creative industries. On 26 July 2021, Council resolved to provide “Support for Our Community - 2021 Lockdown Response”. 100% rent relief was applied to Creative Live Work and Accommodation Grant Program tenant rent relief from 26 June (when lockdown commenced) to 11 October 2021 when stay-at-home orders affecting the City of Sydney local government area were lifted.
- With ongoing venue closures, cultural programming continued to be delivered mostly online. This provided the opportunity to engage artists and creatives such as Victor Steffenson, Diego Bonetto and James Dunk as subject experts in the lunchtime conversation series.
- Additional online programming options were developed to support social connection.
- 19 cultural programs were presented online engaging 575 community members. Programming included talks, interactive webinars, workshops panel discussions and Auslan and English Storytime.
- Online videos such as the Art and Maker series and Auslan and English Storytime have attracted over 20,000 views to date.
- Program highlights include the 2021 *Australian Life* Photography Exhibition in Surry Hills and Glebe Libraries, the Lunchtime Conversation Series, introductory laser cutting workshops and Maker and Creator for children.
- With restrictions eased in October, online programming continued to feature alongside face-to-face and hybrid events to broaden the reach of programs and provide accessible options for the community.

What we are doing to support recovery

- 4.5 Enable diverse local cultural infrastructure and activation through the City’s Open and Creative planning reforms
- The Open and Creative planning reforms, a set of measures to make it easier for small businesses to trade later, or host performances and shows are still with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for finalisation. Once drafting by Parliamentary Counsel is complete, the reforms will be published and able to be implemented. The City is working with the NSW Government on Special Entertainment Precincts to support performance venues and activation.

Other actions we will take

- 4.6 Facilitate opportunities for collaboration and capacity building to ensure cultural sector resilience and sustainability
- The Making Space for Culture Incubation Program ran from August to December 2021. This program was funded through the Knowledge Exchange grant program and was undertaken by Left Bank Company. The program was designed to bring together the cultural sector and the property sector to learn from best practice models for developing and delivering creative space. The program focussed on building the capacity of Sydney’s cultural organisations to own and manage affordable creative space, while concurrently helping the property sector to effectively tap into the value created by creative and cultural uses. A full report on the program and key insights from participants is currently being prepared.
 - Supported by the City, Remix Sydney launched a new 6-month accelerator program to support the heavily impacted arts and cultural sector. The inaugural accelerator program will provide 10 local arts and cultural organisations with webinars, mentorship, and tools to help develop innovative ideas to build new revenue streams and attract new audiences. The 2021 incubator participants include: Brand X Productions Inc., ArtsPay, Art Gallery of NSW, Heaps Gay, Grumpy Sailor, FOLK Magazine, Secret Squirrel Productions, Time Out, and 107 Projects. The program will run from December 2021 to June 2022.
- 4.7 Continue to explore opportunities for making space for culture in partnership with public and private sectors
- The City has contracted Arup Australia to develop guidance materials for the design and delivery of cultural infrastructure projects. Titled “Creative Spaces Design Guides”, the documents outline the spatial, operational and structural requirements for best-practice, fit-for-purpose creative spaces like rehearsal rooms, recording studios, small theatres and light industrial workshops. The guides will be made

Other actions we will take

available to the cultural and property sectors as a free resource to help guide planning and decision making on new creative space projects.

- 4.8 Set up a working group comprising representatives of the cultural sector to agree sites for pop-up or future cultural activity and prepare a report to Council to approve these sites as Covid-19 recovery activity sites – Action complete

Action Area 5

Rebuild the visitor economy through promotion of our vibrant and safe city with activated main streets and nightlife

People in the city are supported to safely return to a 24-hour Sydney through a phased and integrated approach, with government and industry working together.

What we are doing to support recovery

- 5.1 Use our communications channels to promote shop local and visit local to residents, workers and visitors
- Continued option for online events to be promoted on What’s On, however with the easing of restrictions and the opportunity to submit face-to-face events again, the submission of events increased by 231% on the previous quarter.
 - Usage of What’s On increased 190% in the quarter reflecting the community’s enthusiasm to get back out and about as soon as was possible.
 - Leveraged What’s On as the primary event platform:
 - Events submitted: 3,318
 - Page views per month: 73,214
 - Sessions per month: 131,678
 - Email subscribers: 31,295
 - The marketing campaign *Your city is waiting for you* was launched in early December. Refer to action 1.5 for a full report.
- 5.2 Continue to invest in local festivals and major events that demonstrate Sydney’s vibrancy and encourage local Sydneysiders and others from around the state and country to visit
- A program of roving entertainment in the CBD commenced in late October to enliven city streets and encourage people back into Sydney. The program expanded to the villages in December and will continue until the end of January 2022.
 - The full suite of Christmas trees and decorations were introduced throughout the CBD and village high streets from late November. They were accompanied by a program of choir performances at the Martin Place Tree and in George Street, and roving character costume characters in the CBD.
 - The City has been in planning for a series of high street events, Sydney Summer Streets, in 6 village locations throughout January and February 2022. A series of consultation meetings was held in December 2021 with business and community members from each location to ensure the closures are best able to contribute to local community recovery.

What we are doing to support recovery

- The large-scale mural *As One Door Closes, Another Opens* by Will Cooke was installed on 28 June at Top of the Town building in Darlinghurst. The exhibition period has been extended and the work will remain in place until early 2022.
 - On 31 December, the City produced Sydney New Year's Eve. Ticketing was introduced for all vantage points to manage pandemic requirements and specific messaging was developed encouraging patrons to visit local hospitality businesses on their way to see the fireworks to assist with business recovery. Final numbers at the event were significantly reduced due to the rapid increase in Covid-19 infections in the lead up to the event.
- 5.3 Continue to partner with Business Events Sydney (BE Sydney) to build the pipeline of business meetings for Sydney
- Lockdown and the extended closure of both domestic and international borders has delayed the materialisation of business events that were planned to take place in 2020 and 2021. BESydney has nevertheless been recently allocated City of Sydney funding towards some key national corporate meeting opportunities.
 - In line with the NSW Government's commitment to cement Sydney's position as an APAC innovation capital, BESydney has secured the national division of the world's largest robotics competition, VEX Robotics Australia National Championships 2022. The Championship will welcome approximately 1,600 visitors over a two-day program in December 2022.
 - BESydney released its Annual Financial Report in November, which shows that in financial year 2020/21, the company secured 18 meetings worth an estimated A\$70M in direct expenditure to the New South Wales economy.
 - Throughout the pandemic, BESydney has continued to secure new global and national meetings that will attract significant talent and direct expenditure to the State's economy and rescheduled 62% of meetings affected by COVID-19 into future years. They now have a pipeline of events for Sydney for 2022-2029 that includes 95 events, due to attract 127,000 delegates, staying 540,000 delegate days, worth an estimated \$503M in direct expenditure.
 - The latest wins take BESydney's bid win tally to 18 year-to-date, and 95 events in total secured through to 2029 with a combined estimated direct expenditure of \$503M.

What we are doing to support recovery

- In October, a new \$6M funding program was announced to support the recovery of business events in 2022. BESydney will administer the program in conjunction with Destination NSW.

5.4 Continue to engage with the accommodation and entertainment sector to ensure sustainability is promoted and prioritised

- While the accommodation and entertainment sectors continue to be heavily impacted by the pandemic, the City continues to focus on 3 primary goals:
 - **Activate Upgrades:**
The City has continued to promote and offer subsidised building ratings to the sector through the provision of grants.
 - **Build Capacity and Foster Leadership:**
The Sustainable Destination Partnership is the key platform through which the city builds the sector capacity and demonstrates leadership. The Partnership commenced annual reporting in the period and preliminary results indicate an annual emissions reduction of 26,392 tonnes of CO₂.
 - **Promote and Recognise:**
Results from Sydney's participation on the Global Sustainable Destination Index were received and Sydney dropped rank to number 15. The drop in ranking is largely attributed to an increase in the number of destinations participating, making it more competitive. The ability to progress actions in the Making Sydney a Sustainable Destination Plan was also limited in a sector that has been significantly impacted by Covid-19.

5.5 In line with health advice, welcome people back to Sydney through roaming ambassadors, maps and digital services

- It has not been feasible to recommence the visitor ambassador program while interstate and international visitation is still relatively low.
- The NSW Government extended its digital Dine & Discover program with an additional two \$25 vouchers per person.

5.6 Advocate to state and federal governments for ongoing support for international students while they continue to be impacted by the pandemic

- No activity scheduled this quarter.

Other actions we will take

- 5.7 Engage local creatives in the City’s programs and work with others to do the same to activate precincts to support local businesses, sustain local culture and drive footfall on main streets
- As part of the \$20M AI Fresco City Project partnership with NSW Government, the City continued to work closely with grant recipients of the \$3M CBD Activations Grant Program.
Of the 96 funded initiatives, 61 have now been completed and 35 will be delivered in 2022. With the relaxing of restrictions in October, funded activations were able to re-commence by mid-November.
Happy Hours, a retail and hospitality umbrella event delivered by Darlinghurst Business Partnership, was one of the first to launch in late November with over 60 businesses participating. The event generated \$38,000 in ticket sales for 1,510 attendees. A further 552 people attended free events.
Other activations throughout December included *Unseen* – a multimedia project that gives voice to women experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity; *Merivale's Live Music sessions* - 20 performances showcasing local jazz and folk artists to help revitalise local laneways and welcome people back to the CBD; and *Sugar Republic* – a Willy Wonka factory-like experience for families.
- 5.8 Partner with Destination NSW to develop a local and domestic visitor marketing campaign for Sydney, with focus on the cultural offering over the 2020–2021 summer
- Destination NSW and the City have worked together to develop complementary marketing activities that support rather than duplicate each other. The Destination NSW marketing campaign is being targeted at a wide audience under the tagline *It's time to feel new*, while the City’s campaign is focussed on reaching Sydneysiders under the tagline *Your city is waiting for you*. Refer to action 1.5 for a full report on the City’s revitalisation campaign.
- 5.9 Encourage and facilitate the return of international students back to Sydney in partnership with education sector
- This City’s ISLA team participated as panellists at the ISANA International Education Association National Conference, 'Student partnerships – the future of international education through a student-led consultative approach'.
 - In the Welcoming Cities resource, 'Putting out the Welcome Mat', the City's ISLA program was showcased as a case study to illustrate the benefits of engaging in learning and development to create pathways to further learning, employment, civic participation and self-empowerment. 'Putting out the Welcome Mat' is designed to assist local councils to develop successful plans, initiatives, policy documents and partnerships to ensure their local areas and communities are welcoming of international students.

Action Area 6

Support businesses and organisations to innovate and adapt, so that industries can evolve and grow

Connecting people to new ways of thinking and working, harnessing their creative capacity to solve problems, pivot and transform through skills development, new models and partnerships so more businesses can share in the benefits.

What we are doing to support recovery

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| <p>6.1 Facilitate dialogue with heavily impacted sectors to support their recovery</p> | <p>– As part of the City's ongoing work with local sectors and businesses to support recovery, 4 consultation sessions were held in November & December with chambers of commerce, industry organisations and local businesses to help shape the <i>Sydney Summer Streets</i> program - a series of road closures across 6 high streets within Sydney's LGA.</p> <p>The program aims to make more outdoor space available to the community with a series of special street closures that will allow residents to enjoy the outdoors and support business. Spread across a number of weekends in January and February, <i>Sydney Summer Streets</i> will see main streets in some of the city's villages closed to traffic from 11am to late in the evening to encourage people to safely re-engage with the businesses and community in their local area.</p> <p>The City will work with the NSW Government to ensure the events are managed in line with public health orders.</p> |
| <p>6.2 Direct existing grant support for organisations, businesses and industry, including those dominated by women, to assist them to innovate, adapt and grow</p> | <p>– Round 2 of the City's annual grants and sponsorship was assessed during the quarter. \$1,191,634 in cash and in-kind grant support was awarded to support businesses and organisations through 55 grants across the following programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business support – night-time diversification • Environmental – innovation and ratings and assessment • Knowledge exchange sponsorships |
| <p>6.3 Continue to support collaboration across the innovation precincts within the Camperdown Ultimo collaboration area</p> | <p>– The precinct was officially launched as Tech Central – Australia's Innovation Engine on 29 November. The City continues to work collaboratively with precinct partners and the Greater Sydney Commission on a wide range of projects. A report is being prepared for Council in early 2022 to provide a detailed progress update on the precinct.</p> |

What we are doing to support recovery

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| <p>6.4 Implement the Central Sydney planning strategy to support a pipeline of development and investment certainty</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Central Sydney planning framework including new planning controls and a new contributions plan was finalised in November 2021. The City is continuing to progress site specific planning proposals in line with the adopted strategy. |
| <p>6.5 Continue to use City procurement to support local businesses and a shift to a circular economy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A ‘Local Buy Database’ has been developed and made available to City employees to assist them in identifying suitable suppliers. The database provides details of suppliers, including those located within the City and surrounding LGAs. It includes small to medium and start-up businesses, Indigenous businesses and social enterprises. This supports community recovery, buying locally as well as our Sustainable Procurement Policy. The effectiveness of specific guidelines, the Supplier Code of Conduct and the inclusion of sustainability considerations in selected tender returnable schedules is continuously monitored. |
| <p>6.6 Continue to support communities and businesses to accelerate their uptake of renewable energy to stimulate the green economy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Action to support businesses is largely delivered through the flagship programs of the Better Buildings Partnership (BBP) and CitySwitch Green Office. In Q2 activity continued to focus on annual reporting. Preliminary results indicate a combined carbon emissions saving of 366,496 tonnes of CO₂.

Engagement has commenced on how these programs can be leveraged to drive sustainable outcomes at a precinct level at Tech Central and Greenhouse clean-tech hub. – There is 19 MW of rooftop solar installed in LGA, an increase of 700kW from last quarter. The City has continued to encourage renewables uptake through innovation grants. – The Solar Villages project support residents to switch to renewables through a Knowledge Exchange Grant commenced in October. The first session was attended by 26 residents, with at least two attendees proceeding to the solar installation phase. – The Ultimo Solar Roadmap was delivered in October through the innovation grants program, as a partnership between Pingala and Sustainable Ultimo. The roadmap identified a range of solar solutions to fit Ultimo's diverse community and provides multiple entry points to suit different needs. |

What we are doing to support recovery

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| <p>6.7 Continue to assist businesses and apartment buildings owners' corporations to implement retrofits for increased efficiency</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Smart Green Apartments program has reduced emissions by 27,030 tonnes CO2e per year and saved owners' corporations \$3.91M. – The Strata Sustainability Reference Group was held in November and focused on sustainability, resilience and Covid-19 support for high density communities. – To date, the City has supported 119 apartment buildings to get a NABERS rating (three this quarter) with a total of six procuring GreenPower. – One e-news was sent to 3,111 subscribers. – The City continued to advocate for improved environmental standards for apartment buildings. |
| <p>6.8 Prioritise investment in City projects that provide significant local green economy benefits</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The City continues to work with Investible to establish the new Greenhouse climate technology startup innovation hub at Circular Quay, due to open 2023. |

Other actions we will take

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| <p>6.9 Produce skills development programs to enhance innovation, collaboration, digitisation and e-commerce</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The City worked collaboratively with Investment NSW to organise the NSW-Guangdong Joint Economic Meeting (JEM) held 1-2 December. The biennial event aims to unlock bilateral trade and investment outcomes and facilitate knowledge exchange for priority sectors in Australia and China. – Supported by City of Sydney, The Australian Fashion Council launched FashTech Lab in December, a program to connect fashion tech startups with fashion brands to trial technology solutions that can help reduce waste, costs, and reduce carbon footprint in the early stages of the fashion design process. The 6-month incubator program will match 12 local Australian fashion brands with innovative tech companies to transform their value chain by making them more resilient, profitable, sustainable and customer oriented. The program includes a series of webinars and workshops focussing on digitising the design process, streamlining workflows, using artificial intelligence or augmented reality to enhance ecommerce and reducing textile waste. – See report for action 4.6 relating to the City's support of Remix Sydney's accelerator to provide 10 local arts and cultural organisations with webinars, mentorship, and tools to help develop innovative ideas to build new revenue streams and attract new audiences. |
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Other actions we will take

6.10 Advocate to federal and state governments to invest in green economy as major generator of jobs – No activity scheduled this quarter

