

**Submission
No 430**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

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Summary

My submission argues for the return of freely accessible public spaces on Sydney New Year's Eve around Farm Cove to alleviate consequent overcrowding & paid ticketing of Circular Quay, North Sydney and other vantage points. This is because this is the sole cause of overcrowding on the Sydney Harbour foreshore on NYE. During my arguments, I point out the massive contradiction in regards to ticketing & public safety at Sydney NYE & Vivid Sydney, the history of these 2 events as well as their possibly bleak future as well as some other miscellaneous matters. These 2 events are now essentially Sydney's 'night time economy'. If their future is bleak, there is no night time economy at all to show for and the Sydney Harbour Bridge would just be a bridge at midnight at the turn of a new year. Sydney will no longer be Vivid but livid.

Sydney's Night Time Economy

Sydney's Night Time Economy mainly affects local residents but a critical high profile feature of this economy is events, which affects Sydney internationally. Sydney is home to 2 of Australia's largest events, Sydney New Year's Eve (Sydney NYE) and Vivid Sydney. These could also be considered some of the world's largest events. This is their history.

For the purposes of Sydney NYE, years mentioned refer to the year prior to Midnight.

Early History

Fireworks displays on Sydney Harbour were first held as early as 1884 and were acclaimed as the best in the world even back then. The first fireworks display on Sydney Harbour on record as far as I am aware was held as part of a private birthday party for the wife of a member of the NSW Parliament. Inspired by this display, the first major Sydney Harbour fireworks display was held in 1887 for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. The latter was accompanied by 'illuminations' on city buildings. Over the decades until 1976, usually about 1 a decade, major Sydney Harbour fireworks displays & illuminations were held for many reasons, the latter disappearing in the late 20th Century.

Sydney New Year's Eve

Sydney New Year's Eve was first held in 1976 and run by the former Committee Of Sydney, who ran the Festival Of Sydney (now called the Sydney Festival). It was initially held as part of the Festival Of Sydney, which itself was created at the same time to replace the failing Waratah Festival. Early editions of Sydney NYE consisted of a televised concert on the Sydney Opera House's Southern Forecourt, culminating in the Midnight Fireworks over Farm Cove.

However, crowds back then were not as well managed and they were in the hundreds of thousands at the Sydney Opera House alone. It was a free concert. Over the years, crowd behaviour deteriorated. Efforts were made to improve crowd behaviour such as by paid ticketing the concert

and holding the concert over 4 different locations to even getting rid of the concert and adding laser/light shows. All these efforts failed.

In 1986, a naval review was held for the 75th anniversary of the Royal Australian Navy. This featured the 1st usage of the Sydney Harbour Bridge for fireworks. It featured 2 effects – a set piece (This is a firework structure that creates a sign or image), which read ‘New South Wales Salutes The Royal Australian Navy’ and the iconic golden waterfall effect. Both utilised the catwalk of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Due to computer technology advancement, a synchronised fireworks soundtrack was introduced for this event and has featured as part of every major public Sydney Harbour fireworks display since.

Between 1976 & 1986, the Midnight Fireworks were never altered, despite the crowd behaviour, apart from the introduction of the fireworks soundtrack & 2 firing locations in 1986, the latter was due to construction in Circular Quay. 1986, however, brought tragedy. A mass murder occurred in The Rocks. Sydney NYE was cancelled for 2 years as a result.

In those 2 years, the Committee Of Sydney decided to hold the fireworks on Australia Day 1988 instead, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the 1st Fleet. That is, a display featuring 2 years worth of fireworks. This saw the 1st usage of the pylons and the upper arch of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Sydney Harbour’s fireworks were no longer just well known in Sydney but now nationally.

1989 saw the return of Sydney NYE, still part of the Festival Of Sydney but was no longer a concert-based event but a radio station skyshow event instead. That is, people bring radios with them to listen to the fireworks soundtrack as part of the fireworks display/light show. The tragic 1986 edition had this feature & post-1989 editions of Sydney NYE did too and it is the critical feature of the event even if not many people bring radios with them nowadays. The fireworks soundtrack is mostly now heard via the television broadcast. 1989 saw the introduction of the 9pm Family Fireworks. A year later, the event saw the introduction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge as part of Sydney NYE for the 1st time. From 1989 until 1996, there were no official Midnight Fireworks even though in the latter years the pyrotechnicians made arrangements with other businesses for a Midnight Fireworks of some sort, mostly a short display off Sydney Tower.

1993 saw Sydney win the right to host The Games Of The XXVIIth Olympiad: 2000 (‘the Olympics’). This provided the impetus to create Sydney NYE into not just a well-known local event but into an international icon particularly as the Year 2000 provided Sydney with 2 opportunities to show off their events. The other being the Millennium. There is every possibility Sydney NYE would not exist today, at least on a grand scale, had it not been for the Olympics being held in Sydney in the Year 2000.

The mid-1990’s saw transfer of the event’s management from the Committee Of Sydney, whose sponsor of the event was deciding to pull out, to the City Of Sydney. The NSW Government has partially funded the event too since then for the majority of the time. Sydney NYE was held as a test event for the Olympics but also for the Millennium. The Midnight Fireworks from 1996 to 1998 were not the major display. The 9pm Family Fireworks were the major display during those years. This was reversed for the 1999 event for obvious reasons. It was the Millennium. International attention was on Sydney, not just for the upcoming Olympics but as part of this worldwide celebration, the Millennium. From 1999 onwards, the rest is history. Sydney NYE was now an international icon.

Vivid Sydney

Vivid Sydney was introduced in 2009 as the winter event period of the NSW Government’s new ‘Master Events Calendar’. The Calendar featured 2 other event periods in summer & spring respectively – Vivacity, whose centrepiece was Sydney NYE and Crave Sydney, whose centrepiece

was Breakfast On The Bridge, a breakfast held on artificial lawn laid across the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Vivacity failed pretty much instantly as an 'event period' due to NYE, Sydney Festival & Australia Day being well known community events in their own right. Crave Sydney lasted until 2012 but still has a legacy as Good Food Month Sydney. Ownership of the event was transferred from the NSW Government to Fairfax Events in 2011, when it became solely a food festival. The Breakfast On The Bridge lasted a few years before shifting to Bondi Beach in 2012 before disappearing completely. Vivid Sydney though still survives, over a decade later.

Vivid Sydney's centrepiece was Luminous (a music concert series + light/projection mapping installations now called Vivid LIVE At The Sydney Opera House), whose own centrepiece was projection mapping on the Sydney Opera House (now called The Lighting Of The Sails). Accompanying events include Creative Sydney (now called Vivid Ideas), a discussion/conference program & Smart Light Sydney (now called Vivid Light), a foreshore walk of light and projection mapping installations. The Lighting Of The Sails can be thought of as both a Vivid Light & Vivid LIVE AT The Sydney Opera House (which is now part of Vivid Music) event but public opinion mostly associates it as a Vivid Light event. Over the next couple of years, the walk was renamed & relocated to different areas before settling in 2011 as a foreshore walk focused around Circular Quay known as the Vivid Light Walk.

Vivid Sydney, since 2010, started to consist of 3 Vivid-branded events – Light, Music & Ideas – though the event has always been associated with the 3 terms. Light being the lighting/projection mapping installations, Music being concerts & gigs, while Ideas being talks & presentations. The latter two, outside of public transport income, are the sole income stream for the event from visitors and also are held during the day as well as night. However, they make up about 14% of the event's visitation. It should be noted most Vivid Music & Ideas events are not under the control of the NSW Government – they are just 'badged' with the event's branding. Essentially, they are both existing & new third-party events 'badged' with the Vivid branding to make the event look bigger than it really is. Currently, Vivid LIVE At The Sydney Opera House is the only true Vivid Music event while the Vivid Ideas Exchange is an example of a true Vivid Ideas event. There may be more true Vivid Ideas events but most are just 3rd party events with the Vivid Sydney branding applied to them.

Vivid Light is what the public think of when they hear 'Vivid Sydney'. In 2013, the Sydney Harbour Bridge was introduced to Vivid Light and this is when Vivid Sydney's popularity skyrocketed.

[The Price Of Safety – The Contradiction Between Sydney's 2 Biggest Events](#)

Having absorbed the history, what I am going to present now is a glaring contradiction in the treatment of Sydney's 2 biggest events by the NSW Government. Both are of equal popularity but their treatment of safety & paid ticketing are completely different.

I take you back to the 24th June 2019. North Sydney Council on that date decided (60% in favour) to implement paid ticketing at pretty much all its vantage points. It costs \$10 (plus booking fee) for a ticket and pass-out band. Local residents get a special pre-sale period.

How did they get to this decision? To be fair, North Sydney Council are put in a difficult situation. They do not seem to want paid ticketing but have to due to the consequences if they don't. It's even more difficult when you realise it's not a situation of their own making.

NSW Police are rightly arguing that overcrowding is why they need some form of ticketing. In my opinion, paid ticketing isn't needed but at least some form of ticketing is needed to avoid otherwise inevitable spill-over of crowds into inner city/suburban streets who have no time to find another vantage point. After all, crowds don't turn back because of a fee unless it's not value for money or they cannot afford it. If it's says sold out, it's sold out regardless of price. Crowds do seem deterred to head to a location when they realise that their desired vantage point is full or sold out so a

ticketing strategy will work but it may have unintended consequences. Remember, the reason that North Sydney is overcrowding is not of their own making.

Back when this situation first arose after the 2017 event, North Sydney said the reason it is overcrowded & proposed to become ticketed is because “Many sites are increasingly being ticketed and this is having a flow-on effect to North Sydney” and the NSW Police consequently recommended making North Sydney ticketed.

Saying North Sydney is ‘overcrowded’ makes it sound like Sydney NYE is having higher attendance but it is not. The 1 million people in attendance is half of what it was about 5 years ago. If anything, attendance is going down. It’s just more people are heading to North Sydney due to over-ticketing around Circular Quay & Farm Cove by the NSW Government.

With North Sydney this year being paid ticketed, I believe Dawes Point & the East Balmain areas (both still free vantage points) will now become overcrowded as they have the next best view of the fireworks. This decision will only make it more dangerous. Dawes Point is managed access but with a very far trip from there if they reach capacity, which they would just before Midnight, people will be left stuck there. The Rocks usually reaches capacity shortly after Dawes Point. Anti-social behaviour could rise in The Rocks around Midnight if people are forced to have a bad or no view particularly if they travelled far for this event.

Last year, Property NSW made East Circular Quay & Campbell’s Cove free ticketed. This was fine but they did not promote it much even though they sold out quickly. The lack of promotion left a lot of the public unaware including local businesses. Gates for this vantage point didn’t open until 12pm but with a guaranteed seat, why would the ticketholders need to show up when the event does not begin until 6pm? Consequently, at least at East Circular Quay, no one showed up until the late afternoon, killing the atmosphere of NYE in the surrounding precinct and reducing the amount of trade the surrounding businesses get on what is probably the busiest day for them in the year. This is also partially because the vantage point blocked most of a vital walkway.

If vantage points are left empty all day despite crowds having nowhere else to go due to time/distance, anti-social behaviour could rise particularly in The Rocks/Alfred Street. North Sydney could suffer the same if tickets sell out prior to the event. However, this could be avoided if tickets are promoted well. Property NSW made pretty much no effort to promote the free ticketing of Campbell’s Cove & East Circular Quay & their subsequent selling out to the general public.

Advertising it on the official Sydney NYE website is not enough as tourists most likely will visit there. Sydneysiders, who know the event & it’s free vantage points well, are more likely to be caught off guard by sudden ticketed areas. Sydneysiders need to be told of free/paid ticketed & sold out vantage points more than tourists.

East Balmain is more dangerous. Whilst providing good views of everything but the Sydney Opera House, people may flock there for their views, which are the next best location to go to in terms of view, transport & cost. However, their 4 vantage points **collectively** can hold only up to 5000 people. Their 4 vantage points hold 300, 1000 (x2) & 2,850 people respectively. These can fill up quickly due to their low capacity but they are not managed access probably due to how difficult it is to access these vantage points.

Inner West Council needs to seriously reconsider their NYE management just in case spectators flock there due to overticketing in Circular Quay, Farm Cove & North Sydney. Spectators may decide not to flock there due to the distance required to travel. However, ferry is the best option so Sydney Ferries would need to expect higher customer levels on their routes to East Balmain ferry wharves. If Inner West Council decides to paid ticket their vantage points, this will be the final straw. All other remaining free vantage points have poor or far away views.

The exception is the Sydney Opera House. However, most of the Sydney Opera House is already ticketed. Most of the ticketing is alright because it utilizes existing services such as performances in the performance spaces (most notably most of the Northern Forecourt for the official Sydney NYE television/Internet broadcast) and restaurants/bars.

However, closure of the Western Broadwalk for a paid ticketed NYE event probably should not happen. The closure is justified by utilising a nearby restaurant inside the building called Portside. However, given the popularity of the Sydney Opera House, the fact this paid ticketed event restricts access between 2 free areas (the Southern Forecourt & the western side of the Northern Forecourt) & the imminent lack of free vantage points of an internationally iconic event, the Western Broadwalk should become free again. Portside can remain charging high prices for NYE but keep it simply to selling food/drink experiences, just like every other restaurant in Sydney. It should be noted other Sydney Opera House restaurants/bars are out of the way of vital public walkways.

NSW residents, who pay for the event (partially) & the management of the land, are thus paying not just for the event to be held but for entry into an event they are already paying for. They are essentially being charged twice. It is like being asked to pay to attend your own birthday party. This does not sound economically good. It deprives people of a lower economic bearing of publicly funded entertainment. Excluding them from a community event held by the community they are a part of – the state of New South Wales – due to their financial status sounds divisive. The Government's budget may look better but private industry (outside of the event/function industry that would benefit from ticketing) would suffer as a result.

Public space has been utilised for paid Sydney NYE events (excluding the paid ticketed 1980's concerts) from as early as the mid-1990's. However, crowd levels & the amount of public space still available made this not much of a problem. The islands of Sydney Harbour have to be paid ticketed in some form due to their low capacity, isolation & high popularity. The fact a ferry trip is a necessity for these vantage points is another reason why tickets are compulsory for these locations.

Given the rapid escalation of ticketed sites for NYE, there is a reasonable chance the Sydney Opera House will follow suit in the near future and I believe Sydney NYE will suffer greatly as a result. A repeat of 1986 is not needed and even if, hopefully, such a repeat does not happen, the overticketing would damage the event as it will no longer be seen as a public, free, community event. Television & Internet coverage will be the only access for excluded people.

The attendance of the event is currently 1 million people while about 4 million watch it on television in Australia and about just under a quarter of a million watch it globally via social media. The 1st time the crowd reach 1 million people was in 1999 for the Millennium however, it took about a half a decade to reach a million people again. Crowd levels in those 5 years were still on a scale seen in its early years but, outside of Rio De Janerio, they were now the world's largest NYE crowds. Paid Sydney NYE events started to take off though in the early 2000's when the event's new-founded sustainability & possible growth seemed as clear as day. Crowd management was probably not a reason for the paid events though. They were probably just using the opportunity to capitalise on the event in a small way while a lot of public space was still available. Crowds were, back then, already managed at public vantage points with bag checks & capacity limits.

The first areas of foreshore public space to be permanently sealed off unless you paid for entry were the western edges of Mrs Macquaries' Point in the early 2000's. They have been promoted as part of the Royal Botanic Gardens but in fact, they are a part of The Domain, which is meant to be a public space. This restricts about 93% of Mrs Macquaries' Point's iconic views to only the people who can afford it. Paid ticketed areas particularly the lavish ones like at Mrs Macquaries' Point also take up valuable public space with temporary kitchens, bars & seating areas. Mrs Macquaries' Point is still a free vantage point but it only includes the remaining 7% (the actual point on the western side) as well as the whole eastern side not facing the Bridge/Opera House. Most of the free views, consequently, are covered by trees or not of the Bridge/Opera House. This effectively makes it a rip-

off for people who queue for hours on the day in the hope of the famous iconic view. This does not help Sydney NYE unless, of course, they do not mind the obstructed/restricted view.

This restriction may have contributed to larger queues forming in the days leading up to the event for the 7% of good views though those early queuers have been there from before the early 2000's. It may have also resulted in crowds heading to other places such as Circular Quay & North Sydney because even though Mrs Macquaries Point has the best view, they know you are more likely to see branches instead of fireworks unless you queue 3 days in advance or in the early NYE morning for the remaining 7% of free iconic views. Tourists sometimes know about the need to get there early to get a good spot but not that the good spots are in fewer supply than they realise. The Domain's Tarpeian Precinct was made paid ticketed a few years ago but that is also promoted as part of the Royal Botanic Gardens, when it is not a part of it. Barangaroo Reserve, on the south-western side of the Bridge, is a new public space which opened in 2015 that was immediately made paid ticketed by the NSW Government and has been ever since.

Due to the popularity of Sydney NYE post-1999, commercialisation was inevitable. A similar case could be made for Vivid Sydney post-2013. While there is nothing wrong with commercialising these events (for example, cruises, restaurants, function rooms etc.), there is a problem with public space having a financial barrier for the residents of NSW. This only occurs for Sydney NYE but not for Vivid Sydney.

And this is the contradiction.

Vivid Light is a mostly free event. It has crowds larger than Sydney NYE at times in Circular Quay but yet there is no pressure put on the event to put up barriers, do bag checks, add ticketing and most notably, charge for ticketing.

This is despite total attendance currently being higher than what Sydney NYE ever received by about a quarter of a million. Unlike Sydney NYE, which took about 15 years to reach 2 million attendees, Vivid took half the time. It should be noted unlike Sydney NYE which is a 1 day event, Vivid Sydney is a 3 week event so while crowds are spread over the 3 weeks, they peak on weekends & public holidays and are focused around Circular Quay only. Sydney NYE, the crowds are spread all around the foreshore of Sydney Harbour & around the Harbour itself. Most Sydney NYE attendees are on boats. Foreshore NYE crowds at official vantage points are about 250,000 people.

Since 2013, Vivid Sydney's crowds have been a concern particularly given the rate of growth. In 2016, a heavily underreported severe near-crowd crush occurred at the Moore Steps at East Circular Quay on the Saturday of the Long Weekend. The severity of the crush resulted in people unable to move for up to an hour. It is nothing short of a miracle that no one was seriously injured or died from the crush or from falling into Sydney Harbour.

The next day, due to similar circumstances, the risk of a repeat was just as high. However, the response by Destination New South Wales, I believe, was inadequate. Unsurprisingly, it happened again though not on as large a scale. It was still significantly severe & in size.

This episode showed Vivid Sydney's crowd management was not entirely up to scratch. It seemed like a heavy reliance on just deploying police & security personnel, who were found to be uncoordinated, rather than focusing on where crowds would go and reacting to recent events such as the previous weekend being cancelled due to a severe East Coast Low. Promoting 4500 extra public transport services were found to be largely misleading with only 1 extra train service per day being added during the Long Weekend. This adds up to be no more than 18 extra train services during Vivid Sydney. Other transport modes may make up the other 4482 services but trains, the main way for people to access Vivid, was little different to an ordinary Sydney night. This should not be a surprise given the Sydney Trains network runs at capacity already. Overall though, it showed a reactive rather than a proactive response on the part of Vivid Sydney.

This was emphasised a few months later when the Coroner published [her findings on a tragic drowning at Darling Harbour during Vivid Sydney in 2014](#). The Coroner found there were “number of significant systems failures” regarding the event’s management (particularly risk management & emergency planning) around Darling Harbour. Some issues were resolved prior to the Coroner publishing her findings (which rendered some recommendations unnecessary) while some were not. The only recommendations issued were to Concept Entertainment Group (the external event management company in charge of the Darling Harbour precinct), the Minister responsible for Property NSW & the CEO of Place Management NSW. The Coroner was satisfied no recommendations were needed for anyone else including Destination NSW, the owner of Vivid Sydney. Other precincts in Vivid Sydney are managed by other third party event management contractors as well.

In 2018, Vivid Sydney introduced a one-way system to the Vivid Light Walk as part of their crowd management plans given the large crowds. This is a great way to reduce crowd congestion. It was previously implemented in Taronga Zoo & the Royal Botanic Gardens to great effect. However, the general Vivid Light Walk one for 2018 was poorly executed. They encouraged or more accurately, forced large crowds to enter narrow laneways. An extreme crowd crush risk that is plainly obvious to anyone who has been to Vivid on a crowded night. The 2016 crowd crushes even showed this. This, coupled with overly-dedicated, poorly informed or mismanaged security officials & poor promotion, resulted in massive complaints, which were thankfully this time reported in the media. Vivid Sydney swiftly made the one-way system non-compulsory, as it should have been and has been since.

Despite the outcomes of the Coroner’s findings in 2014, the bizarre 2018 decision to pretty much force large crowds down narrow laneways shows something is still missing in Vivid Sydney’s management. Vivid Sydney still relies on third party contractors so where the source of these failures can still be disputed. The 2016 crowd crushes happened before the Coroner published their findings so there is every chance the reasons for why certain recommendations were no longer needed were not made during the 2016 edition of Vivid Sydney and if that was the case, it was too late. Good thing no one was seriously injured.

[Current Predicted Future Of Vivid Sydney & Sydney NYE](#)

Vivid Sydney reached a peak in 2017 with 2.35 million visitors. So far, it has only declined by 100,000 visitors during the 2018 edition. However, it is only attendance decline for the event to date. Final 2019 attendance figures, at the time of writing, are yet to be released and I cannot be absolutely sure if an attendance decline is continuing or not, though I expect it would as it would be consistent with growth trends. I can confirm 1 million people attended the 2019 edition for probably all but the final 2 days but I expect the final attendance figure will be no higher than 1.5 million people, a dramatic plummet of over half a million people.

Interstate & International visitation for Vivid Sydney is still growing so this should indicate that, since 2017, Sydneysiders & New South Wales residents are losing interest in this event. This is probably due to the crowds combined with the event ‘looking the same’ to visitors each year. In the minds of NSW residents, Vivid is now too deeply linked to large crowds. In my opinion, Vivid Sydney’s mainstream future seems secure for the next 2 years at least whilst depending on the NSW electorate’s mood, after 2021, the event will either remain as is with low attendance or it will be ‘downsized’ to just the major installations that interstate/national visitors come to the event for. Vivid Sydney’s future does look bleak unless attendance plateaus between the 2017 & 2019 editions, of which I cannot confirm until the 2019 attendance figures are released.

Sydney NYE, on the other hand, reached a peak of 2 million people in 2014 and has since declined back to 1 million since then. Unlike Vivid Sydney, the attendance drop alone so far is not a cause for alarm in my opinion but the paid ticketing is. If attendance drops again suddenly, there would be cause for alarm particularly due to the cost & iconic nature of the event. The reason why the current

attendance drop is not a cause for alarm so far is because this may have been due to fears of terrorism. Peaceful and happier times can always rebound & the event's image is still good. The City Of Sydney does actively promote people to watch the fireworks through media channels to alleviate crowds so this may have been a deliberate strategy that has worked.

The previous edition of Sydney NYE was, as announced by the City Of Sydney's Lord Mayor, Clover Moore, expected to have had a 50-50 split in domestic-foreign attendance. This would indicate that at some point in recent history, Australians began to lose interest in Sydney NYE. This could be due to the crowds, terrorism fears or simply the sudden increase in ticketed areas putting them outside of their reach financially despite living in or near the city. Simply, the reason is hard to figure out but the City Of Sydney probably has a better idea.

Sydney NYE relies on government funding and sponsorship. Sponsorship would disappear if there is not a general community audience to target as it would become a niche audience. Government tourism promotions on the Sydney Harbour Bridge pylons seem to be a focus in recent years but they seem to be targeting tourists already in Sydney, which I would assume already made plans to travel around Australia while they are here, which would make the tourism campaigns pointless & a waste of money. International audiences via social media would barely notice the tourism campaigns on the pylons unless dedicated videos were screened during the live social media broadcast.

I should note that the Australian Government via the Australian Broadcasting Corporation is the major sponsor of Sydney NYE. However, the extent of their contribution and whether or not it just only extends to their television/internet broadcasts is unknown. For this reason, I have not included whether Australian taxpayers are being affected by paid ticketing or not in my submission.

The City Of Sydney & the NSW Government may, by public pressure particularly in poor economic conditions, reduce event costs since a perception would grow that it is only for people who can afford the \$1000 tickets. Privatisation of the event will be near impossible due to the exorbitant costs & lack of profitability. A successful privatisation is only possible if sponsorship is secured, which would have to be higher than it currently is, not just to make a profit but due to the lack of government funding in such a scenario. A commercial operator could not charge for \$5 or \$10 entry at vantage points because that was the reason for the government ditching the event in the 1st place in such a scenario. Sydney NYE is only possible on a governmental scale and for it to be possible, public space is needed for the Sydney and/or NSW public, regardless of economic status, to watch.

I ask: If one year at Midnight on NYE, the Sydney Harbour Bridge did not light up in fireworks, what would the reason be for it? It probably is not a good reason and not because Sydney was 'over' fireworks. They have been part of Sydney's culture for over 100 years. I expect, if Vivid Sydney & Sydney NYE disappeared, major Sydney Harbour events, like the International Fleet Review Spectacular in 2013, to occur about once a decade once again. And without these 2 events, what is left of Sydney's 'night-time economy' that the general public can associate with?

Conclusion

To conclude, it should be noted that Vivid Sydney has been littered with what seems to be (and in 1 case, is) poor event management practices whilst maintaining mostly free entry while Sydney NYE has been brilliantly managed since the mid-1990's but been forced unnecessarily to become a paid ticketed event due to overcrowding resulting from the NSW Government's paid ticketing of popular vantage points with iconic views on public space.

It gives Vivid Sydney the sense of being held just for economic/publicity gain with public safety measures being kept to a minimum while Sydney NYE, using public safety as a cover, to justify overticketing or commercialisation of public space by third parties, due to its long term sustainability as a universal, international icon.

This massive contradiction between Vivid Sydney & Sydney NYE asks the question – what is really the price of safety?

Recommended Measures

Therefore, I recommend the following measures along with some miscellaneous measures:

To maintain and enhance community safety:

- Until the overcrowding problem of Sydney NYE due to overticketing is resolved, managers of Sydney NYE vantage points to follow NSW Police advice. However, I believe the longer the overticketing occurs, the more detrimental it will be to Sydney NYE and the event's future.

To maintain & enhance community health outcomes:

- Responsible Service Of Alcohol (RSA) accredited vendors should feature at all Sydney NYE vantage points. This allows people to responsibly celebrate the new year with alcohol.
- Those without an RSA accredited vendor, bring your own (BYO) alcohol to only be allowed where anti-social behaviour is at a minimum but in all cases, NSW Police to be stationed to supervise alcohol consumption & general public safety. This gives people opportunity to celebrate the new year with alcohol whilst ensuring anti-social behaviour is kept to a minimum and the brand of Sydney NYE is not affected. Vantage points with high anti-social behaviour would either have a BYO ban (if alcohol is the cause) or closed altogether (if other cause).
- Hand out marketing promoting the health benefits of regular walking at Vivid Sydney particularly on the Vivid Light Walk.
- Hand out marketing promoting the health risks of alcohol at Sydney NYE vantage points.

To ensure existing regulatory arrangements remain appropriately balanced:

- If paid ticketing of Sydney NYE is wanted, keep the vantage point simple and not lavish & only charge non-NSW residents for entry – maybe combined with travel packages - but keep the price of vantage point entry reflective of just sitting in public space and simply watching the fireworks, which is about \$6 per person if most attendance is from out of the state (plus any extra costs to cover provision of portable toilets, fencing, managed access etc.) However, these costs if paid by a local government area, should be applied to people who do not live in that LGA as well. So it is like a ticketing system based on distance to residence from Sydney. If the nature of the vantage point is already lavish like the Royal Botanic Gardens and has extra built-in features like restaurants, 'extras' like an extra meal or drink could be charged to NSW residents as that may go past the cost already paid from them as an average NSW taxpayer, for example.
- Combine Mrs Macquarie's Point with The 'Royal Botanic Garden: The Point' & 'Royal Botanic Garden: Midnight At The Oasis' vantage points, with a new name of 'The Domain: Mrs Macquarie's Point', operating as 1 free managed access vantage point
- Expand the Sydney Opera House's vantage points' free access to include the full western broadwalk.
- Rename 'Royal Botanic Garden: Harbour Hoopla' to 'The Domain: Tarpeian Precinct', & operate it as a free managed access vantage point
- Implement free access (but with a strict capacity limit) to the following current Sydney NYE vantage points. In my opinion, this would reduce overcrowding & the risk of crowd crush in, North Sydney, The Rocks and other areas if the trend of paid ticketing continues:
 - Mrs Macquarie's Point
 - Royal Botanic Garden: The Point

- Royal Botanic Garden: Midnight At The Oasis
 - Royal Botanic Garden: Harbour Hoopla
 - Royal Botanic Garden: Lawn With The View
 - Royal Botanic Garden: NYE Garden Party At The Calyx
 - East Circular Quay
 - Campbell's Cove
 - Hickson Road Reserve
 - Mary Booth Lookout
 - Bradfield Park
 - Blues Point Reserve
 - Barangaroo Reserve
 - Sydney Opera House
- Some form of afternoon entertainment focused around Circular Quay should be reintroduced if complete free managed access returns. The last time this was done was in the late 2000's. Historically, this was in the form of an air show. Aerial displays are currently done at 6pm & 8pm though. An alternative is a few 'cruising concerts', which has been done before as part of Australia Day In Sydney. The concerts could alternate between Barangaroo and Circular Quay; Bradfield Park and Blues Point & Mrs Macquaries' Point and Garden Island (for Internet/TV viewers plus the family & friends of Navy personnel on Garden Island, who are invited there due to it being a Royal Australian Navy base. It is not an official Sydney NYE vantage point)
 - If free ticketed, begin online sales in September but do not release the actual tickets until mid-December to avoid ticket scalping. Sales until mid-December should be refundable. In all cases (free managed access to paid ticketing), implement a coordinated international marketing campaign from September each year on Sydney NYE vantage points & their ticketing options this year. The target audience should be both Sydney/NSW residents & future interstate/ international tourists. Ensure it is well-publicised before the sale commences globally (maybe accompanying an announcement on a unique aspect of Sydney NYE that year) and particularly to Sydneysiders, who do not think about NYE until sometime in December. Tourists think about Sydney NYE months or even years out. Announcements on tickets should be made before the sale (September), when they sell out (October/November), a reminder on any still for sale (early December) & a 'last minute plans' announcement just after Boxing Day.

To enhance Sydney's Night Time Economy:

- Add extra trains to the rail fleet to be used for special events or in emergencies only
- Add tourism commercials of Sydney and it's nightlife in the television, social media & Internet radio broadcasts of Sydney NYE.
- Add a NYE concert into the Southern Forecourt of the Sydney Opera House featuring local artists. If the line-up features a high-profile artist that would see a significant spike in demand, make it free ticketed with the ticketing process promoted well in advance as part of Sydney NYE media announcements.
- Ensure there is a strategy, if needed, to revive Vivid Sydney or to create a suitable replacement for Vivid Sydney to be implemented in the next 5 years.