

**Submission
No 455**

SYDNEY'S NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

Organisation: Willoughby City Council

Date Received: 2 July 2019

2 July 2019

The Hon Natalie Ward MLC
Committee Chair, Joint Select Committee on Sydney's Night Time Economy
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear The Hon Natalie Ward,

Re: Inquiry into Sydney's Night Time Economy - Submission

Council appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry currently being undertaken by the NSW Joint Select Committee on Sydney's Night Time Economy.

Council is keen to further stimulate the night-time economy in the Willoughby LGA, particularly in the Chatswood CBD as well as in other commercial centres.

Council has made a major investment in the Chatswood CBD, in particular The Chatswood Concourse performing arts space and related infrastructure including a public plaza and the Chatswood Library. Council's commitment is demonstrated in its Strategic and Planning documents. These include:

- **Community Strategic Plan (CSP) *Our Future Willoughby 2028***
- ***Chatswood CBD Planning and Urban Design Strategy to 2036***
- ***Draft Willoughby Local Centres Strategy to 2036***

Further information on The Concourse and Council's overall strategic framework in relation to the night time economy is set out in Council's **Community Strategic Plan** (see extract below).

Strategic Planning Framework - Community Strategic Plan (CSP) *Our Future Willoughby 2028*

Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) *Our Future Willoughby 2028* includes the following community priority:

3.6 Activate local spaces in creative ways.

The Concourse is a major performing space owned by Council and operates as a regional facility serving the cultural needs of the northern suburbs of Sydney. The Strategic Plan also notes that The Concourse had 356 events with 197,800 visitors in 2016/17. In addition 4 annual events were held with a total attendance of 250,000 people. Council has been active in facilitating a number of restaurants and bars as part of The Concourse.

Centres such as Chatswood therefore attract a large number of visitors to the CBD for day and night-time events. Council is committed to achieve an enhanced night-time economy in Chatswood, St Leonards and its local centres. The CSP Outcome 4 is "A City that is prosperous and vibrant" and the relevant community priorities are outlined below:

4.1 Facilitate the development of all businesses.

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- 4.2 Build and support a night-time economy.
- 4.3 Create memorable food destinations.
- 4.4 Attract visitors and promote local, destination-based tourism.
- 4.5 Diversify our economy including creative and innovative industries.
- 4.6 Facilitate the viability and vibrancy of our village centres.

Council is therefore committed to the enhanced viability and vibrancy of its strategic and local centres and an active and flourishing night-time economy is seen to be a critical component of this. For example, the CSP quotes from a community member that "Shops and services close way too early for young professionals." (P.17) The CSP also notes the following considerations (P.17):

"To capitalise on the opportunities offered by the proposed new metro station at Crows Nest, the Department of Planning has identified St Leonards and Crows Nest as a Priority Precinct.

Willoughby City is located in a strategic position in the North District of the Sydney metropolitan area, falling within the Eastern Economic Corridor and containing two significant strategic centres - Chatswood and St Leonards (part).

High land values challenge housing affordability and the capacity to live and work in Willoughby City. Vibrancy of our villages is reliant on the amenity, services provided and patronage. In 2018, 70% of people identified Chatswood as their main local shopping area. This high reliance on the larger shopping areas is a challenge for our villages and traffic flows.

It is estimated that there is potential for 19,100 jobs by 2026. Chatswood is expected to accommodate an additional 95,000 square metres of commercial floorspace and 40,000 square metres of retail floorspace. This increase will have flow-on impacts for vibrancy and our economy as well as traffic and changing needs of the population."

It is noted that the **Chatswood CBD Planning and Urban Design Strategy** (see below) states that the Chatswood office market is Sydney's sixth-largest and, at 14,000 jobs, accommodates well over half of Chatswood's current total employment figure of around 24,000.

Chatswood CBD Planning and Urban Design Strategy to 2036.

In 2018 Council adopted the *Chatswood CBD Planning and Urban Design Strategy to 2036*. The aim and objectives of the *Strategy* are outlined below:

Chatswood CBD Planning and Urban Design Strategy to 2036	The Chatswood CBD Strategy aims to establish a strong framework to guide future private and public development as the CBD grows over the next 20 years. It aims to provide capacity for future growth, achieve exceptional design and a	The strategy provides the following objectives: A reinvigorated commercial core area and economically buoyant CBD. A sustainable balance between commercial, retail, residential, educational, cultural and other uses to ensure ongoing vibrancy. A compact, walkable and healthy CBD. A city form and scale to accommodate future growth. A CBD of exceptional urban design,
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	distinctive, resilient and vibrant CBD.	easy pedestrian linkages and good public domain, where character and heritage are embraced, and the greening of the centre is achieved. Simplified controls for the LEP and DCP in relation to the CBD.
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The *Chatswood CBD Planning and Urban Design Strategy to 2036* has been adopted by Council as the blue-print for the future development of the Chatswood CBD and is awaiting endorsement by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE). In the Strategy, commercial floor space is proposed in both the Commercial Core and surrounding Mixed Use zone, providing a variety of floor space options for uses typical of the night time economy. It is anticipated that such night time uses would have regard to the surrounding context. Council is committed to implementation of the Strategy and is currently pursuing a number of actions in relation to the Strategy.

Guide for Establishing and Managing Night Time Economy Uses (Dec 2018) - Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)

It is noted that the State Government has recently released a *Guide for Establishing and Managing Night Time Economy Uses*. Council acknowledges that approval processes for such developments can be complex and views the publication of this Guide as a positive step which will be of assistance for applicants who are seeking to gain approvals and establish night time economy uses.

Overall Comments

Council is keen to further explore ways to stimulate the night time economy in the Willoughby LGA. Council wishes to ensure that further night- time activity should be family friendly and safe for workers, residents and visitors to the CBD.

Council is of the view that a key objective for achieving a vibrant night-time economy in Chatswood and other centres is the encouragement of a diversity of after-hours uses. These more diverse uses can include galleries and cultural spaces, yoga/pilates studios, gyms, retail venues, restaurants, cafes and small bars, theatres and music venues, markets, food trucks and mobile vendors. A number of these activities already exist in the Chatswood CBD and to some extent in other centres, however it is recognised that more could be achieved in this area to encourage night time diversity and activity.

Council is keen to encourage small bars in the Chatswood CBD and wishes to further explore ways to do this. It is considered that small bars will create more opportunities for workers, local residents and visitors to stay longer in the CBD after standard working hours have finished. Council would welcome further initiatives at a State level that would encourage the establishment of such uses.

Council is of the view that creating greater diversity of uses will stimulate further general activity in the CBD and other centres. Council is also aware that areas such as the Chatswood CBD are considered by some as less safe in the evenings and would be keen to further activate its centres and cultural spaces with suitable after-hours activities. Council is also currently investigating and implementing upgrades of the public domain in its centres, including plazas and laneways, in order to assist in the activation of its town centres.

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In relation to further stimulation of night time activities in other centres, Council has recently completed and exhibited its ***Draft Willoughby Local Centres Strategy to 2036***. One of the key objectives of the Strategy is to stimulate further employment and housing in local centres such as Northbridge and Artarmon, whilst also reinvigorating these centres as meeting places and to encourage additional local shopping, recreation and community/cultural uses in these centres.

As part of the finalisation and implementation of both the Chatswood CBD and Local Centres Strategy, Council is currently exploring measures to further activate these centres including public domain improvements and support for suitable night time economy uses. These measures include future activation of local laneways and preparation of a Public Domain Plan and Technical Manual for the Chatswood CBD.

Improvement of the public domain is a key component in the encouragement of suitable night time economy activities. Council would welcome future State Government initiatives that provide additional funding for lighting and other infrastructure to activate and increase amenity, safety and security in the public domain of both strategic and local centres.

Council considers that public transport also needs to be expanded in order to improve connections between Chatswood CBD and other centres and suburbs both within and beyond the LGA. This will support additional uses and better cater for the needs of patrons of such after-hours activities.

Council is currently preparing a new Integrated Transport Strategy for the LGA which will detail ways of improving public transport access and provision in the LGA. Council recognises that the State Government is primarily responsible for public transport provision and it will further engage with State agencies on ways of improving public transport in the Willoughby LGA. Council also recognises that other transport options such as community buses, taxis and Uber may need to be considered in order to discourage additional travel by private vehicles.

Council also proposes to prepare an updated Cultural Plan and will further engage with relevant State agencies such as Create NSW which has recently released the *NSW Cultural Infrastructure Plan 2025+*. In summary, Council is interested to engage further with the State Government as well as the private sector in relation to fostering more opportunities to stimulate a more vibrant late night economy in the Willoughby LGA.

If you have any further enquiries in relation to this submission please contact Ian Shillington, Strategic Planner on [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully



GREG MCDONALD
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE DIRECTOR

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