

Local area acceleration toolkit for councils

Enhancing your 24-hour economy





Accelerating your local 24-hour economy

A message from the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner

They say it takes a village to raise a child. It takes more than a village to unlock the potential of a 24-hour economy. Whether it's bars and restaurants, live performance venues or shops open into the evening, there is huge potential to create vibrant and diverse areas after dark.

However, it simply can't be done without a plan, without alignment in vision and a stakeholder base behind it.

Making a real difference requires a new way of stakeholders working together across government, council and industry.

For years, the 'going out economy' had a monopoly on entertainment. If you wanted fun, you had to leave the house and hit your high street. However, the incursion against that monopoly began when dwelling sizes increased, pianos became affordable, and the printing press accelerated the proliferation of sheet music.

Since that time, at-home entertainment options have increased. From radio to TVs, and microwave popcorn to home delivery, a good night in is now only two thumbprints away, with the pandemic only serving to accelerate choice and convenience for consumers.

How do we win the customer back? For every trend there is a counter trend. We have witnessed exactly that during the pandemic with our appreciation of public space and being together in the community growing stronger.

Economically and socially, governments at all levels now understand the importance of communities being connected in the public domain and at different times of the day and night.

This toolkit has been prepared in collaboration with local councils across NSW and we are grateful for all their input. We hope you find it a useful aid for your council.

Furthermore, in the spirit of collaboration we appreciate any feedback you can provide. Please email 24hour@investment.nsw.gov.au to help us make it even better.



Michael Rodrigues
24-Hour Economy Commissioner

Image credit: Destination NSW

Your toolkit for getting it done

Want a more compelling proposition for consumers? Establish alignment and ongoing collaboration between NSW Government agencies, your council and industry.

1

Team

Who is going on the journey with you?



2

Discovery

What else do you need to find out?



3

Alignment

Is your strategy aligned to leverage initiatives?



4

Stakeholder plan

Are your stakeholders engaged and aligned?



5

Media and communications

What's your story and how will you tell it?



6

Execution

What are the resources your team collectively has to start executing?



Step 1. Assemble your local team

For an A-class night-time economy, you need an A-class team. Who within your area will join you on your journey?

Locating the pulse

- What Local Government Area (LGA) do you represent?
- In your local area, are there multiple districts with existing night-time economy activity? Or is there only one area (e.g. a high street)?
- When you think about your district/s, what is the story you could tell about it?
- Are there any famous landmarks people are proud of?
- When visitors come, where do you take them?
- Who are the traditional owners? Are they engaged with council?
- Are there community or ethnic groups whose story or cultural expression is unique to the area?

Commercial analysis

- What are the key businesses that have an interest in activating your local 24-hour economy hub?
- Who owns these businesses?
- Which businesses understand the value of partnering with each other for a greater benefit to the area?
- Is there a local chamber of commerce?
- Who are the key influencers within it?
- Are there significant commercial landowners in the area?
- Are they active or passive about their community?
- Who from an economic development agency or relevant industry association could you include?

Putting your team together

- Who will be part of your internal council team?
- How will your work be supported by the executive and council?
- Who within council needs to be involved to support the work?
- Who are your champions and influencers?

Step 1. Assemble your local team

Diversity

The most sustainable night-time economies are built on a diversity of offerings across food and beverage, arts, entertainment and retail.

- What cultural assets (museums, galleries, cinemas or performance spaces) are in your area?
- How often are they open or activated?
If so, by whom?
- Is there a calendar of events (council led or otherwise)?
- Are there festival producers or market owners active in your area?
- Is there a diversity of businesses in your local area open late?
- Who are your key anchor night-time businesses?

Risk management

- Consumption of alcohol as part of night-time economy activity requires specialist considerations. Is there an active liquor accord in your local area?
- Are there executive members who see the value of working alongside or in partnership with other 'going out' economy businesses?
- Who in your local police area command is responsible for supervision of and engagement with licensed premises?
- Which staff at Liquor & Gaming NSW are responsible for your local area?

You should now have a lengthy list of names representing a range of skills and backgrounds.

- How can you bring these stakeholders together?
- Would an information evening, business lunch, roundtable, virtual event, webinar or other stakeholder engagement forum with the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner help to bring a community together?

Step 2. What else do you need to find out?

Gathering the right information about your local area is an important part of the process. Information can be used to align stakeholders, dispel myths and inform decision making. It's also important to help establish benchmarks for performance to be measured. This is vital when it comes to showing stakeholders success.

- Do you have an existing night-time economy or 24-hour economy strategy? If so, when was it published?
- If the strategy pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic, is it still accurate or have the fundamentals of your area shifted?
- If so, what updates might be needed, or are the principles sound and it's only the benchmark data that needs refreshing?
- Do you know what your key night-time businesses are?
- What data do you have on your night-time businesses?
- What are the key industries in your local area? Do you have a 24-hour workforce? Where?

If you don't have a plan, it's not the end of the world. You can complete a basic study.

Useful resources

NSW 24-Hour Economy Strategy

investment.nsw.gov.au/greater-sydneys-24-hour-economy

City of Sydney

bit.ly/3ihXJPZ

City of Parramatta

cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/vision/night-city

Randwick City Council

randwick.nsw.gov.au/about-council/business/public-space-projects/night-time-economy

Georges River Council

georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/StGeorge/media/Documents/Council/Publications/Night-Time-Economy-Study-FINAL.pdf

24-hour economy strategies from other global cities

bit.ly/3Ca21Rl

Step 3. Align your strategy to leverage initiatives

The NSW Government 24-Hour Economy Strategy sets out a comprehensive plan to reinvigorate night-time economies across Greater Sydney. Alignment between the NSW Government Strategy and your local council's plan is likely to deliver the greatest benefit to your local community.

Purple Flag

A central initiative in the Strategy is the Purple Flag program. It aims to identify defined districts that meet a strict standard and benchmark for good night-time destinations.

Districts that achieve a Purple Flag accreditation offer the following:

- Wellbeing – good lighting, welcoming, clean and safe
- Movement – easy to navigate, good access in and out, including through public transport
- Broad appeal – a vibrant choice and rich mix of entertainment and activity for a range of interests and ages
- Place – a stimulating destination with diverse offerings.

Neon Grid

Strong place identity helps with storytelling and audience engagement. Purple Flag eligible districts with strong, clear identities are candidates for identification through the Neon Grid. The Neon Grid is a series of connected night-time hubs that stand to benefit from marketing and promotion by government agencies.

Are any of your entertainment districts candidates for special identification through the Neon Grid? If not, could they be improved over time to become candidates?

Safety, mobility and wellbeing

Coming together in the community has enormous social benefit. However, barriers sometimes diminish or prohibit this. Concerns around safety can include:

- street lighting
- wayfinding
- footpath
- handrails.

Do you need to improve accessibility and safety in your area? What needs to be done?

Industry development

It is often said that birds of a feather, flock together. Are any of your districts centres of industry (e.g. film-making, advertising, micro-brewing, music or textiles)? Do industry professionals naturally congregate in your area? If so, are there opportunities to host industry networking events and workshops on a regular basis?

Events, pop-ups and occasional use

We sometimes make the mistake of thinking big is best. While unique and high-profile events capture imagination and attention, ritual also plays an important role. Regular ongoing visitation builds audience muscle memory.

How easy is it to pull together an event or pop-up in your area? Is there embedded infrastructure like staging, lighting and three-phase power? Are approval processes through council simple or complicated?

Sport

Sydney is an active town with a temperate climate and amazing outdoor spaces. We often overlook the natural rhythm of our communities, not only when it comes to game day attendance, but also post work evening training sessions and competitions. As a result, it's worth asking:

- are there any stadiums in your LGA and if so, are they activated before or after major fixtures?
- are council run or leased sporting facilities well lit? Are there other services (such as food and beverage or retail) in close proximity? Is there under-utilised private or public space in proximity that could be activated around use of the sporting facilities?

Transport

Major public transport links normally get citizens close to home but not quite there. The so called 'last mile' becomes an impediment to the going out experience because it gives rise to safety concerns. What local council transport amenities could be improved or created to improve connectivity (e.g. Taxi/rideshare ranks, lighting etc.)?

Narrative

Citizens use a variety of information sources to decide where they will go out and what they will do. How well are your activities promoted? Does council facilitate the promotion of events by others?

What are the marketing capabilities of businesses in your LGA? Are they digitally literate or do they require help? Are there language sensitivities that need to be considered when engaging a wider audience?

Are your events fed through to other NSW Government agencies like Destination NSW to populate websites like sydney.com?

Other strategies and programs

What other state strategies or initiatives can you factor into your plan (e.g. smart places, smart curb side parking or technology enablers)?

Step 4. Build a stakeholder plan

Building a successful 24-hour economy depends on building partnerships with key stakeholders in your local area. There are a number of ways you can coordinate and collaborate with local stakeholders.

Building a stakeholder map

A good place to start is to map out a stakeholder matrix that identifies key individuals and organisations that can impact and influence the 24-hour economy in your area. Creating this map will ensure that you can dedicate resources efficiently and use external stakeholders to deliver key programs and initiatives. It also identifies risks from potentially negative stakeholders or those who feel they might not be heard.

Examples of key stakeholders can include:

- local businesses
- chambers of commerce
- cultural institutions
- elected representatives
- state and federal government officials
- police and health professionals
- charities and NGOs
- advocacy groups
- media outlets.

Once you have identified and mapped your key stakeholders, you can work out how best to engage them and what type of formats to use.

How will you keep stakeholders engaged?
It's worth considering:

- **Regular meetings** – what frequency and where? Who is well placed to host (e.g. a business chamber, council or hospitality company)? Is there an existing meeting or forum that could be repurposed or adopted?
- **Keeping in touch** – often workers and owners in the creative industries aren't stuck behind a desk on email, preferring to use WhatsApp, Facebook groups or Slack to communicate. How can you find a way of keeping a conversation going beyond traditional means (while ensuring you don't forget about those either)?
- **Value proposition** – people make time for things they see the benefit from. What value are you creating beyond your own agenda for your stakeholders? These could include networking opportunities, learning, career development, entertainment, political advancement and media stories.

Step 5. Media and communication strategy

Narrative plays an important part in the formation and development of ‘going out’ districts. Developing a considered media and communication strategy that is embraced by all stakeholders will accelerate community awareness of the district amongst locals, as well as potential visitors to the area.

Place identity	
<p>What is the identity of the area? Does it already have a strong brand that can be adapted? Or does it need a moniker that better tells the story of the community?</p> <p>Often place identity is left to suburb names. This may work well for your local area’s objectives in some instances, but districts tend to be more memorable if they develop their own brand either organically (e.g. Soho) or deliberately (e.g. YCK and Brookvale Arts District).</p>	
Communications capabilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are you going to communicate your messages over the short, medium and long term? • Do you have internal media, communications and marketing support, or do you to resource externally? • What capability do your stakeholders have in terms of public relations/marketing and communications? Can you work collaboratively (e.g. by developing uniform assets and co-funded campaigns) with them? • Are there local ambassadors or success stories who can help tell the story of the area? • Can you work with your stakeholders to build an extended media campaign? Is there a strategy that will help build momentum as you begin to execute your plan? 	
Wider considerations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does this message fit with other area messages (i.e. Destination NSW, local/state/national/international tourism boards, industry publications, general media)? • Are those messages in conflict or complementary? 	

Step 6. Executing your plan

You have covered a lot of ground already and no plan is ever final. However, you have to start somewhere.

Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What resources do the stakeholders have collectively between them to support the plan? These can be 'in-kind' such as products and services, or financial such as cash. • What existing council funding arrangements are in place for 24-hour economy initiatives? Are there existing programs that can be redesigned in line with the 24-hour economy agenda? 	
Personnel	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What personnel will the council assign to support development of the area's 24-hour economy? • Are these resources adequately skilled and trained (i.e. business development, communications, planning, policy, marketing, place development, community safety, etc.)? • Are they dedicated or split across an existing team? What will internal governance look like? • Where does executive level responsibility lie? Is that person engaged with the 24-hour economy agenda? • How can you bring your elected councillors on the 24-hour economy journey? • How will you measure and report on success? 	
Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What support can the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner provide? 	

Local area acceleration toolkit

Concluding note

This toolkit is designed to help councils identify the key elements of a plan to develop a local 24-hour economy.

We recommend outputs be collated into a formal document that can be shared amongst your stakeholders and that can be updated as your 24-hour economy evolves.

Benchmarks should also be set at local council level so that outcomes can be measured over a period of time. Refer to the 24-Hour Economy Strategy for thought starters on what these might be for your local area.

This toolkit has been developed in line with the 24-Hour Economy Strategy (published September 2020). It is by no means a definitive guide to establishing or maintaining 24-hour economies in local council areas.

We welcome feedback on the utility of this toolkit and ideas on how to make it better.

Thanks for helping to make Sydney one of the world's great night-time destinations.

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Notes



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