

# Sydney must keep our event good times rolling

**Paul Nicolaou**



**I**f we didn't know it already, major events are the lifeblood of our wonderful city.

Look at the impact of the Matildas' winning ways. Look at Vivid and WorldPride. The benefits eclipse dollars and cents. They're a huge psychological boost as well.

But when it comes to cash, the Minns government would do well to establish a future events fund to keep the magic happening.

Sydney loves a show. It has been proven since the 2000 Olympics that Sydney can truly deliver.

Major events in Sydney have direct and indirect positive impacts. They provide opportunities for participation, skills development, volunteering and social, cultural and economic enhancement. These events attract tourists and visitors at regional, national and international level for Sydney, NSW and Australia.

Major events boost our economy big-time.

Sydney's annual events calendar is a major contributor to boosting the city's visitor economy and are major drawcards for the harbour city.

Sydney's ongoing events calendar is vital for the community, providing a

"feel-good" psychological boost as people soak up all the excitement.

Events such as WorldPride, Vivid, the FIFA Women's World Cup and superstar concerts such as Elton John, Sting, Paul McCartney and Harry Styles, to name a few, contribute to our city's heart and soul.

Each event enhances community-building, lifestyle and leisure, cultural development, tourism promotion, increased visitation, volunteer participation, fundraising and economic development.

Major events in Sydney create a face-to-face experience for businesses and the community by creating a level of excitement, enthusiasm and community spirit, as we have seen with the Women's World Cup. It uplifts Sydneysiders, encouraging them to spend even when the external environment is tough.

Distractions are always good during challenging times.

For many, it's a shared experience in being part of something that becomes the veritable talk of the town. People talk for weeks about "their" Matildas or Elton John experience, while dreaming that Beyonce might be next – one day.

These shared experiences contribute to a cohesive society, which, in turn, contributes to the livelihood of businesses, supports jobs and adds to the bustle of the city.

Community-wide sporting and cultural events bring together people from all walks of life, strengthening



A Sydney live site for the Matildas-France World Cup quarter-final. Picture: NCA NewsWIRE/Monique Harmer

the bonds between them and building connections that can improve mental wellbeing while helping to alleviate the impact of personal struggles.

Establishing a strong city identity is important, particularly for the "villages" that exist in our wonderful city. Events – large and small – are together a huge economic catalyst for jobs and growth across the whole of Sydney and NSW.

Locals and tourists attracted to these events spend on travel, hotels, bars, pubs, cafes, retail outlets and restaurants, as well as in shops and on leisure facilities during their stay. Events are crucial to ensure our hospitality, aviation, tourism, and retail sectors survive and thrive.

It is important that in the upcoming state budget, Premier Chris Minns and Treasurer Daniel Mookhey need

to ensure there are ample funds in the budget so that Destination NSW, Business Events Sydney and the Office of the 24-Hour Economy can continue their great work in ensuring the major sporting, business and cultural events come to Sydney so it can "maintain the rage" and be the events capital in Australia and the Asia-Pacific.

The state government should consider a future major events fund to ensure NSW has the appropriate funds to allocate to unprecedented opportunities, such as the Commonwealth Games offered recently.

Sydney, we are on a roll. For our city's sake, don't stop now.

Let's keep the events economy going and maintain Sydney's mojo.

**Paul Nicolaou is the executive director of Business Sydney**