

IMPROVING WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY 10 POINT PLAN

**BUSINESS
SYDNEY**





FOREWORD

As we continue to recover from the pandemic, we must take every opportunity to revitalise our economy – and improving female participation in the night-time economy is key.

City of Sydney Council have reported that Sydney's night-time economy is currently worth more than \$3.64 billion. This has the potential to grow if we expand the night-time economy and increase the participation of women.

At a time when business is struggling to find talent, can women be the answer? NSW women are some of the most educated in the world, but still have a far lower participation rate than most OECD countries.

FOCUSING ON WOMEN AND INCREASING THEIR PARTICIPATION RATE CAN UNLEASH THE POWER OF THE ECONOMY.

It is essential that everyone is included to ensure the city's sustained growth. Submissions to a Joint Select Committee on Sydney's night-time economy¹ outlined that the city feels less safe at night because there are fewer people. This was particularly the case for women and other vulnerable groups.

Our paper highlights the issues that are holding women back from being able to fully engage in the night-time economy. It illustrates the perception of safety, or a lack thereof, is deeply engrained in the life experience of many women.

Preliminary findings in a Safe Cities Program survey² by Transport for NSW reported that 59 per cent of women do not feel safe after dark in public spaces, and nine in ten women agreed that safety influences how they move around. It will take bold and concerted action to address these shocking statistics and change such deeply entrenched, justified concerns.

This paper gives cause for hope. It contains our ten-point plan designed to enable society to harness the benefits of women being able to participate and enjoy the diverse offerings of our night-time economy.

Our ten-point plan covers everything from improving features of the built environment such as lighting and safe areas to broadening the range of activities offered and improving safety on public transport.

As we emerge from a once in a century pandemic, this is also a once in a century chance to do the right thing by women and the economy. It's imperative that government acts now.

WOMEN HAVE WAITED LONG ENOUGH FOR CHANGE – SO LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN NOW.

¹ <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/ldocs/inquiries/2519/NSW%20Government%20response%20-%20Sydney's%20Night%20Time%20Economy.pdf>

² <https://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/safer-cities>, 1 March 2023

BARRIERS FOR WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

There are a number of **impediments** that stand in the way of women being able to fully participate in the night-time economy. These barriers include:



What's on and where?

There is no single place where it is easy to find up-to-date information on everything that is available at night including venues, events, activities and programs.



Data on the reality of crime

Unfounded fears of 'unsafe' places need to be dispelled. Transparency is needed in identifying unsafe places and making public statistics on the incidence of crime by location, and by time of day or night.



Limited services and amenities

There are few places for night-time workers to eat, shop, exercise and seek recreation at or after work.



Built environment

The design and placement of physical elements, lighting and cleanliness all contribute to the overall atmosphere or experience of a place.

Low-lighting adds to other environmental factors. Planting and buildings can create blind spots, dead-ends and restrict casual surveillance.

Uncared for places can indicate no ownership and therefore no sense of community.



Lacking diversity

After 9pm in the city, there is little to do that doesn't involve food and alcohol. Most people who participate in the night-time economy reflect these limited interests.

The lack of options, and the experience of problematic behaviour and harassment, excludes diverse visitors such as families, older people, and people with disabilities.



Transport & accessibility

It is a challenge for women and vulnerable people to travel to and from home using public transport.

Transport services are limited, lighting can be poor and passive surveillance opportunities might not exist while getting to and from public transport services. These services can also be underutilised leaving these groups to feel unsafe.



10 POINT PLAN

to **improve** women's engagement in the night time economy

1 Diversify the night-time economy

Give the 24-hour Commissioner the mandate to extend the hours of operations of cultural venues that provide opportunities for families to engage with the night-time economy such as art galleries, the Royal Botanic Gardens, aquarium, zoo and museums.

Women and the wider community need more options than simply food and alcohol including hosting more outdoor events, offering weekend and holiday activities that attract diverse participants.



2 From events to programs

Curate and develop a program of more regular night-time activations of public spaces throughout the year that attract broad user groups. Sydney has a strong track record when it comes to night-time events, notably Vivid, but there is room for more.

3 Extend the Purple Flags

Increase awareness of the Purple Flag accreditation scheme and increase the number and size of inclusive precincts. Purple Flag is an international program that identifies areas that offer a diverse, vibrant and safe night out.

4 What's happening?

Develop an app (or integrate its function into the Services NSW app) or digital portal that consolidates available activities and venues in the city after-hours and integrates with Trip Planner to provide users with an end-to-end guide to engage with the night-time economy.

5 How do I find my way?

Improve wayfinding and signage to simplify the journey for citizens and visitors, particularly in tourist areas, airports and public places where people are likely to gather.

6 Successful precincts are someone's neighbourhood

Incentivise flexible and diverse housing options such as build-to-rent, mixture of tenures and conversion of commercial to residential, to create vibrant, and active, night-time precincts.

7 Make the journey safe

Designate 'extra safe' train carriages that are subject to close police surveillance or in close proximity to train guards or customer service attendants to improve perceptions of safety and to deter anti-social behaviour on after-hours services. Restore the 'blue light' concept for travel close to the guard's compartment.

8 Illuminate

Invest in lighting to increase the sense of safety between public transport, venues and surrounding areas, which in turn will improve patronage.

9 Improving public transport after hours

With most night train services stopped by midnight, it is vital for alternative services such as 'Night Ride' buses to be promoted widely including their location and frequency of service. Consideration must also be given to restoring night and early morning services across various public transport types to reflect Sydney's position as a 24-hour global city.



10 Measure for success

Effective investment, policies and programs can only be achieved if we improve the data and metrics around women's engagement in the night time economy.

DARLING SQUARE CASE STUDY

A place that evolves and grows

The original vision was to create a place for the community to evolve. Darling Square will therefore not always be the same, but grow with the community and visitors over the course of time.

It's a dynamic space with regular activations with varying themes across different occasions (e.g. Lunar New Year, Christmas, themed events).

Being agile is possible owing to:

- A design and story narrative that set the vision early.
- The delivery of public spaces that transition from everyday human-scale to events.
- Ongoing curation and management of the spaces.

More than a destination. It is a Neighbourhood

While a great place to visit, it is also a place that many call home. Students and apartment dwellers of all ages and cultures are fortunate to live there.

The diverse amenity and attractions mean there are many reasons to visit. This could be office workers, locals using the library, conference delegates, hotel visitors, and everyone else drawn to the lively food and culture scenes. The lesson is design for multiple users to achieve that round-the-clock activation.

Darling Square is a place you just feel good about when visiting.

The combination of inspirational architecture, the range of public spaces and the unique character of its streets lifts the spirit in ways a modern urban neighbourhood should.

It is designed for discovering

Darling Square invites you to enter, discover and enjoy. It's a pedestrian focussed network of city streets and laneways with a generous boulevard that entices exploration.

It is a place where you are proud to take visitors because it is a great showcase of modern urban life in Australia, without being contrived.

The high interest factor can be credited to:

- A network of legible and permeable links.
- Collection of sub-precincts each with its own identity.
- Buildings with architectural presence.
- Various points of interest.

And, it is easy to access via multiple public transport modes as well as offering the option to drive and park, yet still prioritising pedestrians.

How does Darling Square do against the 10 POINT PLAN?

- 1. Diversify the night-time economy.
- 2. From events to programs.
- 5. How do I find my way?
- 6. Successful precincts are someone's neighbourhood.
- 8. Illuminate.



SOUTH BANK CASE STUDY

A Place that put Brisbane on the map

South Bank had a bold vision - to be a redevelopment of the World Expo 88 site for commercial and community interests. Now with over 11,000,000 visitors annually this vision has become a reality – its parklands are a dynamic space offering an annual program of events that activate and bring the space to life including: Brisbane Spring Festival, River Fire, World Science Festival, and the annual New Years Eve celebrations.

Being agile is possible owing to:

- A statutory body, South Bank Corporation, that oversees South Bank's ongoing management.
- A design and story narrative that responded to the needs and aspirations of Brisbane residents.
- The delivery of public spaces that transition from daily activity and recreation to large scale events.
- Ongoing curation and management of the spaces.

A destination with a sense of connectedness

South Bank is a visitor destination of choice, as well as a place many call home. Students and apartment dwellers of all ages and cultures are fortunate to live there thanks to the diverse amenity, attractions and culture scene.

With access to university campuses, library, conservatorium, museum and theatres, restaurants and cafes, bike ways, picnic areas, and open spaces. There truly is something for everyone. Integrating the residential living with the public domain has created a sense of ownership, pride and connectedness to place.

South Bank is one of Queensland's most-loved destinations. Within South Bank, green and blue spaces connect with a rich cultural and educational precinct, and an extensive events program make it a destination for people of all ages. Hotels, restaurants and recreational facilities ensure visitors and locals are catered for.

Designed to connect people to each other and to nature

South Bank is designed to be enjoyed by all who visit. It not only invites you in, it offers an abundance of reasons to stay. Its integrated shared pathways connects the CBD and surrounding suburbs inviting active engagement.

It is a place you are proud to call home and take visitors because it is a great showcase of modern urban life in Australia, without being contrived.

The high interest factor can be credited to:

- A network of pathways that connect it to the CBD and surrounding suburbs and precincts.
- Diversity of things to see and do from early morning to late into the evening.
- Natural environment, green and blue spaces.
- Various points of interest.

And, it is easy to access via multiple public transport modes as well as offering the option to drive and park, yet still prioritising pedestrians.

How does South Bank do against the 10 POINT PLAN?

- ✓ 1. Diversify the night-time economy.
- ✓ 2. From events to programs.
- ✓ 5. How do I find my way?
- ✓ 6. Successful precincts are someone's neighbourhood.
- ✓ 7. Make the journey safe.
- ✓ 8. Illuminate.
- ✓ 10. Measure for success.



WHO ARE WE?

BUSINESS SYDNEY

Business Sydney is the voice for business in Sydney. We advocate, influence, and deliver policies and outcomes to drive economic growth and create opportunities to invest, work, live and visit our city.

For nearly two hundred years, we have worked to advance Sydney as a global, competitive, and liveable city.

Our network includes leading businesses across financial and professional services, construction and development, health, education, arts and culture, tourism and hospitality, as well as technology, transport, and logistics. Through our association with Business NSW and My Business we also influence and deliver on a state and national platform.

Business Sydney can proudly trace its history to 1826 when the Sydney Chamber of Commerce was established as the first organisation of its kind in the fledgling colony. In 2006 we became the Sydney Business Chamber and now to reflect our broader reach, influence, and strength we have transformed to become Business Sydney – the voice of business in Sydney.

URBIS

We have one simple goal – to shape cities and communities for a better future.

It's something we achieve by drawing together a network of the brightest minds. Think of Urbis as a creative community of practice experts, working collaboratively to deliver fresh thinking and independent advice and guidance – all backed up by real, evidence-based solutions.

We act for clients who are making the places we live and reshaping the way we live there. Whether you engage us for planning, design, policy, heritage, valuations, transactions, economics or research, you know you're dealing with the experts who will connect you to a better outcome, every time.



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