

Item 4.4

Extended Trading Hours

File No: X119331

Memorandum by the Chief Executive Officer

To Council:

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras is one of Australia's most significant cultural events and one of the world's leading celebrations of LGBTQIA+ pride and visibility. What began as a protest for equal rights has grown into a globally recognised festival that brings together thousands of participants and visitors each year. It plays an important role in promoting inclusion, celebrating diversity, and affirming Sydney as a welcoming and progressive city.

The City of Sydney has long been a proud supporter of Mardi Gras and the values it represents. Our support includes financial contributions, operational assistance and year-round collaboration with the Mardi Gras organisation to ensure events are safe, inclusive and successful. This work is complemented by the Oxford Street LGBTQIA+ Place Strategy, which sets a long-term vision and actions to reinforce Oxford Street as the heart of LGBTQIA+ culture and creativity. Together, these initiatives help ensure Mardi Gras continues to thrive as a vital platform for expression, visibility and community celebration.

Special event extended trading, introduced in 2025 under section 2.132A of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008*, allows councils to declare extended trading hours for unlicensed premises until midnight for events of regional, state or national significance.

The extended trading hours apply to eligible venues automatically. Venues already able to trade beyond the extended hours can trade as usual.

Eligible venues include community facilities, entertainment facilities, restaurants, cafés, shops, and takeaway food and drink premises. Home occupations (sex services), restricted premises and sex services premises are excluded.

For licensed venues, the NSW Government may separately grant extended trading under section 13 of the *Liquor Act 2007*, which it has already done for Mardi Gras 2026.

This report recommends Council declare Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras 2026 a special event to allow extended trading for unlicensed premises, supporting local businesses and contributing to a lively night-time economy. It is noted that this is consistent with and complementary to the announcement by the NSW Government on 19 February 2026 that public transport will run for 24 hours over this period.

The areas to which the extended hours will apply includes all City of Sydney suburbs identified in the NSW Government's special event declaration for the Mardi Gras Parade and near the Mardi Gras Camperdown Park Viewing Party.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras is declared a special event as per the definition in 2.132A of the *SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008*; and
- (B) on 1 March 2026, extended trading hours until midnight will apply to eligible premises in Sydney, Darlinghurst, Surry Hills, Potts Point, Paddington, Camperdown, Newtown and Erskineville.

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Chief Executive Officer