

Relevant Information for Council

FILE: X128576 **DATE:** 26 June 2026

TO: Lord Mayor and Councillors

FROM: Emma Rigney, Executive Director City Life

THROUGH: Monica Barone PSM, Chief Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Information Relevant To Item 10.3 – Public Exhibition - Outdoor Alcohol Restrictions

For Noting

This memo is for the information of the Lord Mayor and Councillors.

Purpose

To provide further information on proposed Outdoor Alcohol Restrictions.

Background

At the meeting of the Community Services and Facilities Committee on 22 June 2026 further information was sought on the following:

Clarification of the criteria used to establish proposed outdoor alcohol restrictions for exhibition, the role of crime data and analysis of additional information

As set out in the report, when developing the list of proposed alcohol-free zones and alcohol-prohibited areas on City streets and public spaces to be placed on public exhibition, City staff ensured that the area meets one or more of the following criteria:

- (i) Locations with increasing incidents of alcohol-related crime and assaults outdoors – these were identified using NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research crime data for alcohol-related (24 hour) assaults for the previous 3 calendar years.
- (ii) Areas of concern as identified by NSW Police and/or community - this includes locations where there are persistent and ongoing concerns that the consumption of alcohol is impacting on community wellbeing, public safety and amenity.

Those locations that meet criteria (ii) were notified to the City through new and valid applications for outdoor alcohol restrictions and have also been identified as areas of concern at Police Community Safety Precinct Committee Meetings, at local Neighbourhood Advisory Board meetings, at the Lord Mayor's Social Housing forums and/or through NSW Police dispatch data.

Requirements for reasons to support an alcohol-free zone

The criteria suggested by staff in the report reflect the guidance given in the Ministerial Guidelines on Alcohol Free Zones, August 2025 ("Guidelines") regarding the reasons for supporting alcohol free zones. The Guidelines state that reasons could involve "instances of obstruction, littering, the actual commission of, or police intention to avoid the commission of, more serious offences".

The Guidelines go on to state that "it is not appropriate to consider alcohol free zones for reasons that are unrelated to the irresponsible behaviour of drinkers, for example, the congregation of drinkers where irresponsible behaviour does not occur, general conduciveness to business or tourist activities or the personal beliefs of particular citizens."

As advised previously, crime data is not available to the City at the level of individual streets and the criteria suggested by staff represent the best efforts to assess the applications received against the requirements of the Guidelines in the absence of detailed further information. The public consultation process is intended to assist staff to identify whether the information contained in the applications is accurate and complete.

In addition, City staff work closely with relevant stakeholders such as NSW Police, NSW Health, Homes NSW, community organisations, local businesses and licensed premises to identify if harm reduction approaches are appropriate for managing the use of alcohol in public spaces.

The City has reviewed and assessed all available information to support the list of proposed alcohol-free zones and alcohol-prohibited areas on City streets and public spaces to be placed on public exhibition and consider that those areas proposed for public exhibition meet the requirements of the Guidelines.

Consultation/feedback from the Aboriginal Legal Service / Anti-Discrimination Board and the Ministerial Guidelines requirements.

The City follows the requirements for Council consultation with interested parties as set out in the Guidelines. The Guidelines require that this consultation takes place after the preparation of a proposal to establish an alcohol-free zone.

As per the Guidelines, in preparing a proposal to establish an alcohol-free zone the City consults with the relevant Police Local Area Commander about the appropriate number and location of alcohol-free zones.

The City provides written notification of the public exhibition period to relevant stakeholders, including local residents, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, Aboriginal legal services, government agencies, liquor licensees, social housing residents, neighbourhood advisory boards, community legal centres, homelessness services, health services, women's advocacy groups, faith-based organisations, LGBTIQ+ community organisations, resident groups, youth services, local business chambers, sporting clubs, backpacker premises, businesses and community garden groups. In addition, a survey is conducted via Sydney Your Say open to all residents, businesses and visitors, with promotion through the Sydney Your Say email newsletter.

Only those local councils identified in Appendix 2 of the Guidelines are required to send a copy of their proposed alcohol-free zones to the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board. No Councils are currently listed in Appendix 2. Despite this, we continue to notify the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board about proposed alcohol-free zones during the public consultation process.

Advice around the proposed amendments

City staff have reviewed the proposed amendments. As noted above, staff believe that the recommendations in the report are in accordance with the requirements of the Guidelines and are justified to proceed to the public consultation stage.

If these proposed amendments are adopted there would be an inconsistency in how the list of proposed alcohol-free zones and alcohol-prohibited areas on City streets and public spaces to be placed on public exhibition process is developed. This is demonstrated by the effect these amendments would have on the proposed alcohol prohibited areas in Woolloomooloo.

On 28 April 2026, Council unanimously approved the 30-day public exhibition of the proposed alcohol prohibited areas in Woolloomooloo for a 4-year period. The 3 locations in Woolloomooloo only met criteria (ii). The areas in Woolloomooloo do not meet criteria (i) as the BOCSAR crime data indicated a decreasing number of alcohol-related (24 hour) assaults for the previous three-year period. Therefore, if only those locations that meet both criteria (i) and (ii) are placed on public exhibition it would mean that these areas should not have been placed on public exhibition.

The 3 areas in Woolloomooloo are frequently used by people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness and are located close to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and social housing communities. Therefore, the proposed amendment that alcohol-free zones or alcohol-prohibited areas will not be approved where there is a significant risk that the installation could lead to increased policing, displacement and discrimination to vulnerable communities would mean that these areas should not have been placed on public exhibition.

If Council resolves that both criteria must be met in order for an area to be placed on public exhibition, it is recommended that a further criterion or note be added to advise that Council reserves the right to put an area on exhibition outside of the criteria if there is strong community support or other significant circumstances arise.

Memo from Emma Rigney, Executive Director City Life

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Approved

P.M. Barone

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Chief Executive Officer