

Attachment A

Planning Proposal - Special Entertainment Precincts

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Executive summary

The City of Sydney proposes to establish special entertainment precincts across more than 20 late-night trading areas covering over 5,000 businesses to support a vibrant, diverse and well-managed night-time economy.

Special entertainment precincts:

- make it easier for many licensed and unlicensed businesses to trade later without a development application
- allow the City to put in place bespoke sound criteria that suit the context of the area and encourage live music and entertainment; and
- unlock incentives from the NSW Government for liquor licence fee discounts and additional licensing hours.

The planning proposal establishes special entertainment precincts by mapping the precinct boundaries in the planning instruments and enabling the precincts to operate in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*.

A Special Entertainment Precincts Management Plan sets trading hours, sound criteria, and compliance processes for licensed and unlicensed premises and provides the operational framework required under section 202 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

The draft DCP updates Sydney DCP 2012 and Green Square Town Centre DCP 2013 to align with the introduction of special entertainment precincts. It clarifies how trading hours will operate in these precincts, updates late-night trading maps with several precinct upgrades and boundary refinements and makes complementary changes to entertainment sound controls to reflect fixed sound limits and improve regulatory certainty.

The proposed special entertainment precincts encompass metropolitan and commercial centre and mixed-use neighbourhoods where there are established or potential clusters of hospitality and cultural uses, supported by infrastructure and transport connections. More than 5,000 businesses could benefit from trading hours, reduced red tape, incentives for live music, and a coordinated approach to managing entertainment sound. Early engagement shows strong community support, with 70% of submissions endorsing the proposal to convert existing late-night areas into special entertainment precincts.

The proposal aligns with City Plan 2036, the Cultural Strategy (2025–2035), the Economic Development Strategy (2025–2035), the Eastern City District Plan, Draft Sydney Plan, and relevant Ministerial Directions. It responds to long-term objectives for a safe, diverse and economically resilient night-time economy. The proposal balances economic opportunity with residential amenity through a bespoke sound plan and a monitoring and evaluation framework to track unintended impacts.

With Gateway approval, the proposal will proceed to public exhibition in 2026 alongside the management plan and DCP amendments. Following consideration of submissions, the LEP and SEPP amendments will be finalised, and a year-long trial of the management plan will commence in late 2026, informing final adoption.

1. Background

City of Sydney has a long history of supporting the night-time economy

The City of Sydney is home to a diverse and iconic nightlife, with mixed and lively neighbourhoods. The proposed introduction of special entertainment precincts is the latest step in a long history of work to support the continued growth of the cultural sector and the night-time economy.

The City's late night trading planning controls were first adopted in 2007. The controls mapped late night trading areas and established trading hours for venues according to the type of precinct and type of venue. It encouraged greater diversity in Sydney's nightlife with later trading for small bars and good management through trial periods for extended trading hours.

The controls were reviewed in 2019 to extend and create new late night trading area and incentivise live music and performance with additional trading hours.

The OPEN Sydney Strategy was adopted in 2013 after extensive consultation with the community and industry and establishes the City's long-term vision for its night-time economy. One of the actions of this strategy is to investigate changes to planning controls to support the night-time economy and support venues.

In 2014, Council endorsed the Live Music and Performance Action Plan. The Plan saw cash grants and rent-free spaces to support the live music and performance sector, as well as matched funding to businesses and venues operating in the night-time economy to introduce or improve live entertainment.

In June 2020, Council endorsed the Open and Creative Planning Reforms to make it easier for cultural, creative and community uses to operate by removing unnecessary red tape and expanding the types of low-impact activities allowed without development consent.

In March 2025, the Council approved planning controls which establish sound management requirements for new residential developments that may be affected by entertainment sound as well as new and significantly altered entertainment venues. We also made it easier for businesses to trade later with changes to trial periods.

NSW Government Vibrancy Reforms

In December 2023, the NSW Government introduced the Vibrancy Reforms, which sought to remove regulatory barriers to nightlife and bring in incentives for live music and performance.

When implemented in July 2024, the reforms significantly changed the regulatory environment for entertainment sound. Sound complaints are subject to higher requirements, especially for new residents, Liquor & Gaming NSW have taken over responsibility for handling sound complaints, and council-imposed sound conditions of consent no longer have a role in sound complaint management.

The Vibrancy Reforms brought in a new framework for special entertainment precincts by amending Section 202 of the Local Government Act 1993 and introducing *NSW Government Special Entertainment Precinct Guideline*.

An ambitious approach to special entertainment precincts

The City of Sydney already has a successful, well-established approach to late night trading. Therefore, our proposed approach is to upgrade our existing late-night trading areas to special entertainment precincts.

Our approach is precinct-focused, considering clusters and potential clusters of late trading businesses and cultural activity. These precincts are strategically located in areas well supported by infrastructure and transport, ensuring a safe and vibrant nightlife while maintaining residential amenity.

The areas are extensive, including more than 20 precincts and more than 5,000 potential participating businesses (retail, F&B, entertainment, arts, recreation, and services). This means we can extend benefits further and support a diversity of nightlife locations across the city, each with their own character and offer.

These locations and trading hours are for the most part already identified and designated as late night trading areas. Where additions or changes to tier are proposed, they are supported by analysis and consultation.

Process

Early engagement

From 21 November 2024 to 20 January 2025, we asked our communities about the proposed approach to special entertainment precincts through consultation on a discussion paper. A total of 271 surveys and 85 emailed submissions were made in response to the discussion paper. There was strong support for the proposal to designate the existing late night trading areas as special entertainment precincts. We also asked questions about the proposed areas, hours, and sound levels to inform our Draft Special Entertainment Precincts Management Plan (management plan).

In March 2025 Council endorsed the proposal to designate our late-night trading areas as special entertainment precincts.

Developing the proposal

In 2025, we carried out a sound study, with extensive testing of existing sound levels and modelling of scenarios to deriving proposed sound levels which support live music and entertainment, while protecting residential amenity. We consulted our Nightlife and Creative Industries Advisory Panel, as well as NSW Government agencies and neighbouring councils to establish our draft management plan.

Next steps

With Council and DPHI approval, the next step in 2026 will be public exhibition of this planning proposal, alongside the management plan and DCP amendments. This will include consultation with business, residents, local organisations, and further consultation with the relevant agencies and local authorities.

Following public exhibition, the proposal will be brought back to Council prior to drafting and adoption of the planning controls. A year-long trial will be undertaken and assessed before finalisation of the management plan.

Proposed special entertainment precincts

We are proposing to designate special entertainment precincts as mapped in section 4. These areas include parts of:

- Central Sydney including Barangaroo, Wynyard, Circular Quay, Darling Harbour, Haymarket and Central
- Walsh Bay and The Rocks
- Broadway and Chippendale

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- Oxford Street and Darlinghurst
- Redfern and Waterloo
- Surry Hills
- William Street, Kings Cross and Potts Point
- Union Street and Blackwattle Bay, Pyrmont
- Glebe Point Road, Glebe
- Oxford Street, Paddington
- Danks Street, Waterloo
- Erskineville Road, Erskineville
- Woolloomooloo
- Green Square town centre
- Botany Road in Alexandria, Rosebery and Beaconsfield
- North Alexandria
- South Eveleigh
- East Village, Zetland

2. Objectives and intended outcomes

Objectives

The objectives of this planning proposal are to:

- Amend the Sydney LEP 2012 to designate the subject areas as special entertainment precincts.
- Amend the Green Square Town Centre Sydney LEPs 2013 to designate the subject areas as special entertainment precincts.
- Amend the Eastern Harbour City SEPP 2021 to designate the subject areas as special entertainment precincts.
- Give effect to the draft Special Entertainment Precincts Management Plan and Sydney DCP 2012 amendment

The objectives of the proposed special entertainment precincts are to:

- Enable businesses to invest in and offer more live music, culture, entertainment and performance as part of their regular activities
- Foster vibrant, inclusive, mixed-use neighbourhoods that support local community amenity
- Improve quality, safety and diversity of the late-night offering
- Enhance economic outcomes, supporting businesses to thrive
- Streamline the process for businesses and the City of Sydney to make it easier and more affordable to operate late night trading premises

Intended outcomes

In special entertainment precincts, the intended outcomes of the planning controls are to introduce:

- trading hours which override development consents
- dedicated venue and program trading hours to incentivise live music and performance
- notification of special entertainment precincts on planning certificates and the City's website
- a sound plan with fixed maximum sound criteria
- a governance framework with regular oversight from the panel and processes for compliance and responding to issues if they arise
- a monitoring and evaluation plan to measure the success of the special entertainment precincts, while also tracking potential unintended impacts

3. Explanation of provisions

This planning proposal seeks to establish special entertainment precincts by amending:

- Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 (Sydney LEP 2012)
- Sydney Local Environmental Plan (Green Square Town Centre) 2013
- Sydney Local Environmental Plan (Green Square Town Centre—Stage 2) 2013 and
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts—Eastern Harbour City) 2021 (SEPP Precincts Eastern Harbour City 2021).

Proposed amendments to Sydney LEP 2012 and Green Square Town Centre LEPs 2013

The following amendments are proposed to the Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012 and Green Square Town Centre LEPs 2013:

Suggested wording

A new LEP section X.X Special entertainment precincts to be added:

- (1) This clause applies to land identified as “City of Sydney Special Entertainment Precincts” on the Special Entertainment Precinct Map.
- (2) For the Local Government Act 1993, section 202, a special entertainment precinct is established on the land to which this clause applies.

Mapping amendments

This planning proposal maps the precincts in the new Special Entertainment Precinct as shown in in Section 4.

Proposed amendments to State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts—Eastern Harbour City) 2021

Some sites within the proposed precincts are subject to Eastern Harbour City Precincts SEPP.

NSW Government Special Entertainment Precinct Guideline states that the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces may designate a special entertainment precinct, “where the relevant council has endorsed the establishment of a SEP on land where the Minister is the consent authority and the council’s LEP does not apply.”

This planning proposal requests that the Minister amend the SEPP to establish special entertainment precincts in state government areas including Darling Harbour, new Fish Markets, Barangaroo, Walsh Bay and The Rocks as mapped in Section 4.

Suggested wording

Insert a new section: X.X Special entertainment precincts

- (1) This clause applies to land identified as “City of Sydney Special Entertainment Precincts” on the Special Entertainment Precinct Map.
- (2) For the Local Government Act 1993, section 202, a special entertainment precinct is established on the land to which this clause applies.

Mapping amendments

This planning proposal maps the precincts in the new Special Entertainment Precinct as shown in in Section 4, which are to be inserted into the SEPP.

Special entertainment precincts management plan

Clause 202(5)(a) of the Local Government Act 1993 requires Council to “prepare a plan for regulating noise from amplified music from premises in the special entertainment precinct and publish it on the council’s website”.

The draft Special Entertainment Precincts Management Plan (the management plan) is attached.

In accordance with the *NSW Government Special Entertainment Precinct Guideline*, the management plan includes:

- a sound management framework including a plan for regulating noise from entertainment activity, for different locations in the SEP
- trading hours for licensed and unlicensed premises
- compliance processes for unlicensed premises
- thresholds or local circumstances for when a SEP may be suspended or revoked and the processes that will be undertaken
- the exclusion of adult entertainment, sex service and restricted premises.

The management plan is for the use of businesses, residents, Council, Liquor & Gaming NSW, and NSW Police in understanding their role and responsibilities in the management of late trading and entertainment sound in and around special entertainment precincts.

Draft development control plan (DCP) – special entertainment precincts

The draft development control plan (DCP) proposes a series of updates to Sydney DCP 2012 and Green Square Town Centre DCP 2013 to align it with the introduction of special entertainment precincts and ensure consistency with the new planning framework. The draft DCP will be exhibited concurrently with the planning proposal.

Section 3.15 Late Night Trading Management

Amendments to Section 3.15 Late Night Trading clarify how trading hours operate within special entertainment precincts, confirming that venues may rely on the hours set out in the precinct management plan without requiring a development application for base hours. Extended hours will continue to be subject to assessment and issued on a trial basis, through the DCP. The amendments also refine the definitions for business categories, remove redundant preambles and duplicated provisions, and update operational requirements such as opening times and incentive hour terminology to ensure clarity and consistency across policy settings.

In addition to clarifying policy settings, the draft DCP incorporates changes to the late night trading area mapping, which designates 3 tiers each with their own trading hours. Five precincts are proposed to be upgraded in tier, allowing them to trade later: Hollywood Quarter, Redfern / Waterloo, Walsh Bay, The Rocks, Oxford Street (east of Taylor Square). The draft DCP also

includes a new late night trading area on Harris Street, Ultimo and expanded precincts on Knox and Grafton Streets near Broadway and Meagher Street, Chippendale.

The draft DCP includes boundary refinements to include venues and sites located at the edges of existing late-night trading areas. These additions include venues such as Qtopia, Paddington Town Hall, the National Art School, the Eveleigh Hotel, and several sites in Pyrmont and Darlinghurst, reflecting their existing or potential contribution to night-time vibrancy.

The resulting late night trading areas correspond with the proposed special entertainment precincts.

Section 3.18 Entertainment Sound

The draft DCP also proposes changes to Section 3.18 Entertainment Sound to align with the precincts-wide sound plan. The current DCP requires venues to demonstrate compliance with relative background-based noise limits; however, the new management plan introduces fixed maximum sound levels for SEPs. To ensure alignment, the DCP will require new and substantially modified venues to be designed to meet these fixed limits, reducing the need for background testing and improving regulatory certainty. Complementary changes are proposed for residential development, reducing the default acoustic assessment radius from 150 metres to 50 metres due to the stronger protections offered by fixed sound limits, while extending acoustic requirements in city living areas to ensure mixed-use neighbourhoods remain compatible with growing night-time activity.

4. Justification

4.1. Strategic merit and community consultation

The City of Sydney already has a successful, well-established approach to late night trading. Our Late Night Trading DCP has been in place and evolving since 2007. Late trading is enabled, and impact is managed through our 3 tiers and 3 business categories. This proposal represents the latest evolution of that policy:

- Supporting businesses wanting to trade late through trading hours which override consents
- Introducing more incentives for live music and performance
- Better managing sound to balance business and residential amenity, through a bespoke sound plan, produced by acoustic experts

Our approach is precinct-focused, considering clusters and potential clusters of late trading businesses and cultural activity. These precincts are strategically located in areas well supported by infrastructure and transport, ensuring a safe and vibrant nightlife while maintaining residential amenity.

The areas are extensive, including more than 20 precincts and more than 5,000 potential participating businesses (retail, food and beverage, entertainment, arts, recreation, and services). This means we can extend benefits further and support a diversity of nightlife locations across the city, each with their own character and offer.

There is strong community support for the proposal. Through early engagement in 2025, a total of 271 surveys and 85 emailed submissions were made in response to a discussion paper, with 70% support for the proposal to designate the existing late night trading areas as Special Entertainment Precincts. The main reasons people support the proposal are:

- Growth in night life
- Cultural and nightlife diversity
- Flexibility for businesses

The City's Nightlife and Creative Industries Advisory Panel, government agencies, neighbouring local authorities and key industry stakeholders have also been consulted in the preparation of the precincts and management plan.

4.2. Need for the planning proposal

Q1. Is the planning proposal the result of any strategic study or report?

The planning proposal is a response to recent resolutions by Council and new legislation made by the State Government. The proposal aligns with City Plan 2036 the endorsed Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), Cultural Strategy (2025-2035) and Economic Development Strategy (2025-2035).

Special Entertainment Precincts under the Local Government Act 1993

On 30 April 2021 Section 202 of the Local Government Act 1993 was gazetted. It enables the establishment of Special Entertainment Precincts by a Council. This planning proposal has been developed in accordance with this legislation. This legislation was further refined in December 2023 through the passing of the Vibrancy Reforms, introducing the special entertainment precinct framework. NSW Special Entertainment Precinct Guideline was finalised in November 2024 which sets the process by which Councils can designate and manage special entertainment precincts.

Council resolutions

In October 2024, a Minute by the Lord Mayor (Item 3.3 Supporting Sydney's Nightlife) resolved "Council continue to work with the NSW Government to implement special entertainment precincts and other measures to support Sydney's nightlife."

Also in October 2024, Council resolved to "approve the Special Entertainment Precincts Discussion Paper... for public exhibition."

In March 2025, Council resolved to "note the matters raised in response to the public exhibition" and "endorse the establishment of special entertainment precincts in late night trading areas identified in Attachment D to the subject report."

City Plan 2036: Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)

While our adopted LSPS pre-dates the introduction of S202 of the Liquor Act, there is strong alignment between the aims of the LSPS and this proposal.

Our LSPS sets the strategic context for special entertainment precincts by planning for a more balanced, diverse and inviting night-time economy. The LSPS references Open and Creative City: "these reforms will promote a more balanced, inviting and safe night-time economy and encourage a range of cultural, entertainment, arts and leisure activities. They support our global city offering and help attract visitors, workers and investment."

The LSPS also plans for culture and performance. It acknowledges "the Sydney live music and performance sector makes a substantial social, economic, and employment contribution to Sydney and is vital to the City's cultural life... we are investigating planning reforms to support performance venues by reducing uncertainty and complexity and better managing entertainment sound."

The LSPS identifies that "The centres and activity streets are increasingly important for late night activity. As the City's population increases, the availability of social, cultural and business services operating at night will increase. The City has moved to increase opportunities for late night activities while managing the amenity of residents and other sensitive users in the neighbourhood." Many of our special entertainment precincts are centres and activity streets, further supporting operation at night, while introducing a sound plan to manage amenity of residents.

The LSPS also specifically mentions these areas, which are proposed to be designated as special entertainment precincts:

- Circular Quay – the LSPS identifies the importance of the nighttime economy and the hospitality sector as the tourism gateway to the city.
- Central Sydney – the importance of the nighttime economy is stated in Priority 1 of the LSPS "growing a stronger, more competitive Central Sydney. The objective includes that Central Sydney is "home to a diverse mix of regionally and globally focused industry sectors and businesses, retail, tourism and entertainment uses."
- Oxford Street and Crown and Baptist Streets village areas – the LSPS identifies the requirement to support creative, cultural, food and drink and entertainment businesses in key areas and vibrant high streets.
- Kings Cross – Action L1.10 reads "The City will support and investigate the revitalisation of the Kings Cross night time economy as an emerging performing arts precinct."
- North Alexandria – The LSPS identifies it as a "late night arts and cultural precinct" and mentions "incentives for night-time businesses to host performance."

The special entertainment precinct proposal responds to the LSPS' plan for these locations by better supporting later trading businesses, as well as providing incentives for live music and performance.

Economic Development Strategy (2025-2035)

Our Economic Development Strategy (2025-2035) positions Sydney as a global, connected city with distinct precincts and strong local economies. It emphasizes innovation-led growth, visitor economy recovery, and creating great local experiences. Special entertainment precincts align with

these objectives by stimulating hospitality and creative industries. They also contribute to the strengthening local economies by taking a precinct approach and diversifying night-time offerings. This approach reinforces Sydney's role as Australia's economic heart while enhancing its global reputation for culture and lifestyle.

Cultural Strategy (2025-2035)

Our Cultural Strategy focuses on retaining, rebuilding, and reimagining Sydney's cultural life, addressing challenges such as the loss of creative spaces and rising costs for artists. The proposal to designate special entertainment precincts strongly aligns with the City's Cultural Strategy, which prioritises planning and regulatory reform to support a culture-led nightlife. The Strategy identifies cultural precincts as key locations for increasing creative employment and cultural experiences. The strategy also seeks to address the underlying challenges of the cultural sector, namely affordability and the lack of cultural production space. Special entertainment precincts play a role in addressing these challenges by expanding demand for live music and performance through incentives and fostering cultural participation in local communities.

Q2. Is the planning proposal the best means of achieving the objectives or intended outcomes, or is there a better way?

Section 202 of the Local Government Act 1993 states that "A special entertainment precinct may be established by the council for the area in which the precinct will be located, by identifying the precinct in a local environmental plan that applies to the land on which the precinct will be located."

Nightlife and creative industries have faced significant disruption from past lockdown laws, which restricted trading hours and reduced opportunities for late-night cultural activity. The COVID-19 pandemic compounded these challenges, leading to prolonged closures, job losses, and later, rising costs. Introducing special entertainment precincts is one of a series of measures the City has undertaken to address these impacts and support our night and creative industries.

In September 2025, NSW Productivity and Equality Commission carried out a review of regulatory barriers impeding a vibrant 24-hour economy. The report found that businesses are constrained by regulations and rising costs. They concluded that special entertainment precincts can make it faster and simpler for councils and businesses to deliver entertainment and extended trading while managing local amenity.

Through the incentive hours, the planning proposal will help achieve the intended outcome of enabling businesses to invest in and deliver more live music, culture, entertainment, and performance as part of their ongoing offer. Trading hours in a precinct management plan can override those on a development consent. This will help to reduce the administrative burden on councils and businesses, making it easier and more affordable to operate late night trading premises. The management plan gives operational certainty, which will also help to enhance economic outcomes, supporting businesses to thrive.

Most of our proposed precincts are well-established mixed use and commercial centres with vibrant or growing nighttime economies. An intended outcome of this proposal is to strike a balance between night activity and amenity for residents. In special entertainment precincts sound from entertainment activity from premises in the area is regulated in accordance with a precinct management plan. Sound criteria in the draft management plan have been derived by acoustic experts, bespoke to each area. The planning proposal is considered the best means to directly achieve this.

4.3. Relationship to the strategic planning framework

Q3. Is the planning proposal consistent with the objectives and actions of the applicable regional or sub-regional strategy (including any exhibited draft plans or strategies)?

The draft Sydney Plan (2025)

The draft Sydney Plan is the new regional strategic plan, to replace the adopted Greater Sydney Regional Plan. The Sydney Plan will guide how the NSW Government manages growth in the Sydney region over the next 20 years. It covers 33 local government areas and lays out a plan for housing, infrastructure, jobs, sustainability and vibrant communities. The draft Plan was released in late 2025 and at the time of writing is on exhibition.

Response 6 of the draft Sydney Plan 'Create a more vibrant Sydney' is directly relevant to this proposal. Council action 6.3 is 'Establish special entertainment precincts where appropriate to accommodate critical community, arts, cultural and retail uses as part of Council-led precinct planning'. This Proposal directly addresses that action.

Greater Sydney Regional Plan: A Metropolis of Three Cities

The Plan sets a 40-year vision (to 2056) and a 20-year plan to manage growth and change. It sets an overarching strategic planning policy to align land use, transport, and infrastructure outcomes for Greater Sydney concurrently with Future Transport 2056 (Transport for NSW) and State Infrastructure Strategy (Infrastructure NSW). The Plan provides a set of objectives under the 10 Directions set out in Directions for a Greater Sydney 2017-2056.

Objective 9 of the Plan is states that "Stimulating the night-time economy supports dynamic places and boosts local economies. This can generally occur in mixed-use centres with adequate noise control, locally appropriate operating hours and safe late-night travel options."

This Planning Proposal will assist in achieving this objective by making it easier for businesses to trade later in mixed-use centres, identifying locally appropriate trading hours. The proposal also ensures adequate noise control, through the management plan's sound criteria, which have been set in response to local context.

Eastern City District Plan

The Eastern City District Plan is a 20-year plan to manage growth in the context of economic, social, and environmental matters to achieve the 40-year vision for Greater Sydney. It further explores the objectives of the Greater Sydney Regional Plan as discussed above. Several planning priorities under the Plan are directly supported by this proposal. They include:

- E4 – Fostering healthy, creative, culturally rich and socially connected communities.
- E6 – Creating and renewing great places and local centres and respecting the District's heritage.
- E11 – Growing investment, business opportunities and jobs in strategic centres, and
- E13 – Supporting growth of targeted industry sectors.

In particular, Action 14 requires Council's to "Facilitate opportunities for creative and artistic expression and participation, wherever feasible with a minimum regulatory burden, including:

- a. arts enterprises and facilities, and creative industries
- b. interim and temporary uses
- c. appropriate development of the night-time economy."

Our proposal for special entertainment precincts seeks to decrease the regulatory burden for artistic expression and for development of the night time economy. By designating most of our commercial and mixed-use centres, the proposal aligns with plan's priorities of renewing great places and growing business opportunities and jobs in strategic centres.

Q4. Is the planning proposal consistent with council's local strategy or other local strategic plan?

Yes, the planning proposal is consistent with City Plan 2036 the endorsed Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), Cultural Strategy (2025-2035) and Economic Development Strategy (2025-2035). See row 1.

Q5. Is the planning proposal consistent with applicable State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs)?

State Environmental Planning Policies	Comment
SEPP (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021	Not applicable
SEPP (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX) 2004	Not applicable
SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008	Not applicable
SEPP (Housing) - 2021	Consistent. The management plan protects the amenity of residents in and around our Special Entertainment Precincts, balancing nightlife with amenity for residential uses. Sydney DCP 2012 Entertainment Sound Management ensures higher noise attenuation standards will apply to new residential accommodation near to venues and in our latest trading special entertainment precincts. The management plan and DCP controls proposed to give effect to this are not in conflict with the SEPP.
SEPP (Planning Systems) 2021	Not applicable
SEPP (Precincts – Eastern Harbour City) 2021	Consistent. The establishment of special entertainment precincts in Barangaroo, Darling Harbour, Walsh Bay, The Rocks and Fishmarkets supports the growth of tourist, recreational, entertainment, cultural and commercial facilities. The SEPP is designed “to facilitate the development, redevelopment or protection of important urban ... sites of economic, environmental or social significance to the State,” and to deliver public services and major site regeneration. The proposed entertainment precincts reinforce these aims by activating key harbour-front areas, boosting economic outcomes, and improving access to night-time cultural amenities consistent with state-level planning objectives.
SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021	Not applicable
SEPP (Sustainable Buildings) 2022	Not applicable

Q6. Is the planning proposal consistent with applicable Section 9.1 Ministerial Directions?

Ministerial Direction	Comment
Focus Area 1 Planning Systems	
1.1 Implementation of Regional Plans	Not applicable
1.2 Development of Aboriginal Land Council Land	Not applicable

1.3 Approval and Referral Requirements	Consistent. The proposal will decrease the need for development applications, through trading hours in the management plan which override development consents. Therefore, approval and referral requirements will be reduced.
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1.4 Site Specific Provisions	Not applicable
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Focus Area 1: Planning Systems – Place-based

1.5-1.22 Place based directions	Not applicable
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1.15 Implementation of the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy	Consistent. The proposal includes special entertainment precincts on Union Street, Pyrmont, Fish Markets, and Harris Street, Ultimo. These are consistent with the Direction, Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy and the City's Pyrmont-Ultimo Planning Proposal, supporting the vision for Pyrmont as a renowned and treasured cultural and entertainment precinct. There is also spatial alignment with special entertainment precincts proposed in the Place Strategy's identified centres and focal points for renewal.
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Focus Area 3: Biodiversity and Conservation

3.2 Heritage Conservation	Consistent. No changes are proposed which would result in negative impacts to heritage conservation.
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3.9 Sydney Harbour Foreshores and Waterways Area	Not applicable
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Focus Area 4: Resilience and Hazards

4.1 Flooding	Not applicable
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4.2 Coastal Management	Not applicable
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4.4 Remediation of Contaminated Land	Not applicable
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4.5 Acid Sulfate Soils	Not applicable
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Focus Area 5: Transport and Infrastructure

5.1 Integrating Land use and Transport	Consistent. The proposal supports the continued growth of appropriately zoned land. Each precinct is located in an area well serviced by public transport, including late night transport options.
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5.2 Reserving Land for Public Purposes	Not applicable.
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Focus Area 6: Housing

6.1 Residential Zones

Consistent. The proposal will not reduce the capacity of land within the precincts for residential development. It will ensure future residential accommodation developed in the area is designed to mitigate against entertainment sound, preserving adequate amenity for the enjoyment of future residents.

Focus Area 7: Industry and Employment

7.1 Business and Industrial Zones

The proposal will support the operation and objectives of land zoned for employment, commercial, services, retail, and industry by making it easier to trade later and making the acceptable sound levels coming from premises clear to businesses and residents.

Council expects special entertainment precincts to increase business confidence and lead to the establishment of new businesses.

4.4. Environmental, social and economic impact

Q7. Is there any likelihood that critical habitat or threatened species, populations or ecological communities, or their habitats, will be adversely affected as a result of the proposal?

No.

Q8. Are there any other likely environmental effects as a result of the planning proposal and how are they proposed to be managed?

Increased patronage and the potential establishment of new venues or increased activity from existing venue may lead to an increase in sound levels.

Any additional sound generated by venues from amplified sound and patron noise from within venues will be regulated and enforced under the management plan. The compliance procedures for such incidents are outlined in this plan. Regulating this environmental effect is at the core of this planning proposal.

Q9. Has the planning proposal adequately addressed any social and economic effects?

The economic and social impacts resulting from the planning proposal are expected to be positive.

Nightlife and creative industries have faced significant disruption from past lockdown laws, which restricted trading hours and reduced opportunities for late-night cultural activity. The COVID-19 pandemic compounded these challenges, leading to prolonged closures, job losses, and later, rising costs. Introducing special entertainment precincts is one of a series of measure the City has undertaken to address these impacts and support our night life and creative industries.

In September 2025, NSW Productivity and Equality Commission carried out a review of regulatory barriers impeding a vibrant 24-hour economy. The report found that businesses are constrained by regulations and rising costs. They concluded that special entertainment precincts can make it faster and simpler for councils and businesses to deliver entertainment and extended trading while managing local amenity

Through the incentive hours, the planning proposal will help achieve the intended outcome of enabling businesses to invest in and deliver more live music, culture, entertainment, and performance as part of their ongoing offer. Trading hours in a precinct management plan can override those on a development consent. This will help to reduce the administrative burden on councils and businesses, making it easier and more affordable to operate late night trading premises. The management plan gives operational certainty, which will also help to enhance economic outcomes, supporting businesses to thrive.

Nevertheless, there is potential for unintended consequences, such as:

- Increased antisocial behaviour
- Loss of residential amenity
- Homogenisation of the area (loss of day trading business, loss of small or independent business, etc)
- Lack of affordability / inclusion of offer

The management plan includes a monitoring and evaluation framework. Indicators and data sources have been identified for these potential unintended consequences. They will be monitored on a regular basis and reviewed by the precinct working group, with the potential to adjust the policy, or suspend or revoke the special entertainment precincts if needed.

4.5. State and Commonwealth interests

Q10. Is there adequate public infrastructure for the planning proposal?

The proposal does not change development potential, so any impact on requirements for public infrastructure would be minor.

The proposal is likely to result in an increase in footfall in the special entertainment precincts, particularly at night. The locations have good public transport accessibility, including Metro, rail, light rail, ferry, buses, and nightrider buses. They are also supported by taxi and rideshare services.

A recent report by Night Time Industries Association identified lack of late night public transport as a barrier to growth in the night time economy. Extending public transport services at night would support further growth.

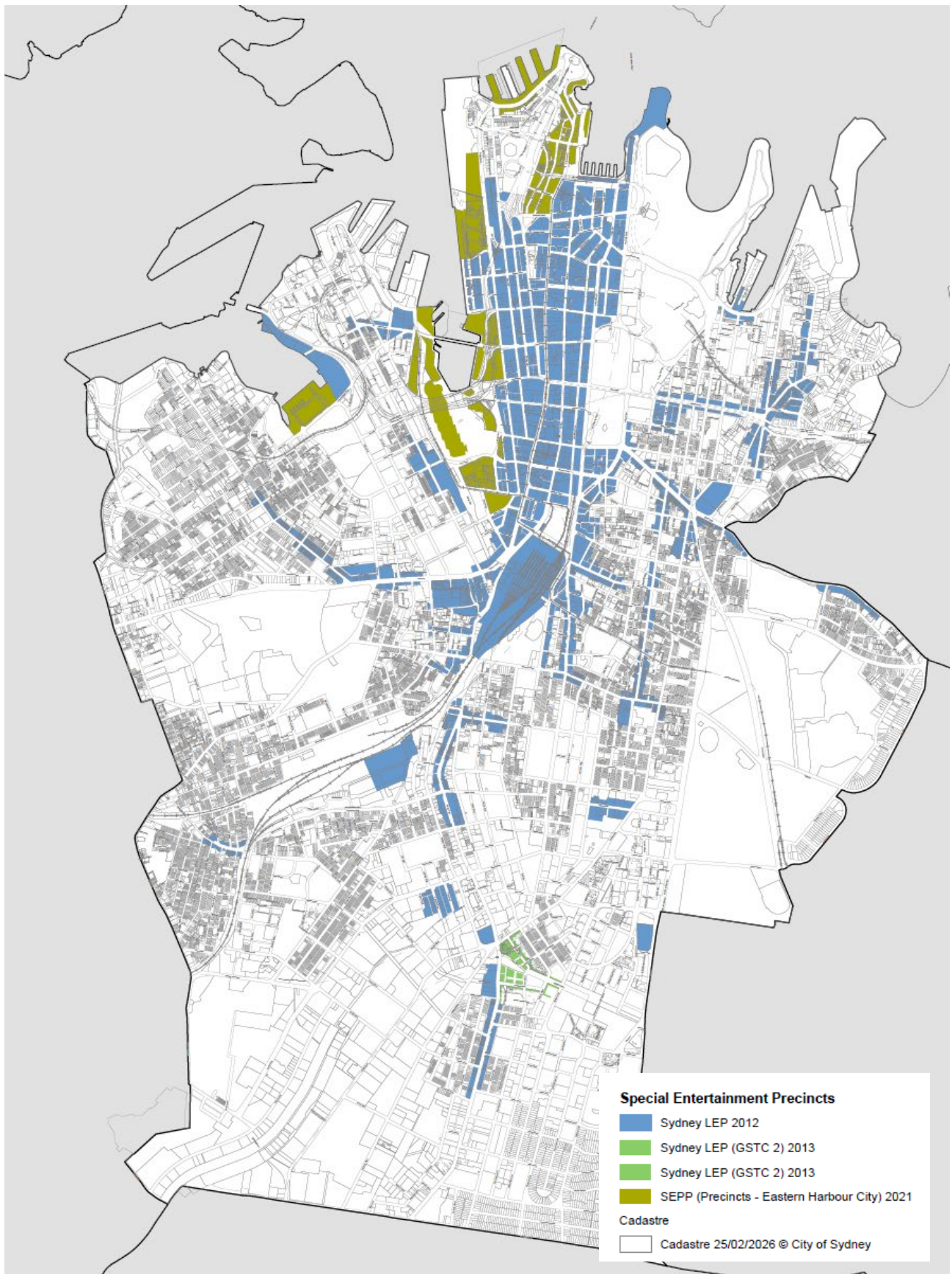
Q11. What are the views of state and Commonwealth public authorities consulted in accordance with the Gateway determination?

In line with the *NSW Government Special Entertainment Precinct Guideline*, the following organisations were notified of our intention to designate special entertainment precincts and consulted on the draft proposal:

- Liquor & Gaming NSW
- NSW Police
- Office of the 24-Hour Commissioner
- Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
- Woollahra Municipal Council (proposed Paddington SEP on shared boundary)
- Randwick City Council (proposed SEP on shared boundary)

There is no objection to the proposal on the part of these public authorities.

5. Maps



6. Community consultation

Early consultation – Special entertainment precinct discussion paper

From 21 November 2024 to 20 January 2025, we asked our communities for feedback on the proposed approach to special entertainment precincts through consultation on a discussion paper. A total of 271 surveys and 85 emailed submissions were made in response to the discussion paper. There was strong support for the proposal to designate the existing late night trading areas as special entertainment precincts. We also asked questions about the proposed areas, hours, and sound levels to inform our management plan.

For more detail, see the [Engagement Report: Special Entertainment Precincts Discussion Paper](#).

Agency and local authority consultation

In line with the *NSW Government Special Entertainment Precinct Guideline*, the following organisations were notified of our intention to designate special entertainment precincts and consulted:

- Liquor & Gaming NSW
- NSW Police
- Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
- Office of the 24-Hour Commissioner
- Woollahra Municipal Council (proposed Paddington SEP on shared boundary)
- Randwick City Council (proposed SEP on shared boundary)

Precinct working group

The City's Nightlife and Creative Industries Advisory Panel act as a precinct working group for the special entertainment precincts. The panel is made up of key nightlife stakeholders from industry associations, cultural institutions, creatives, live music and performance venues, small bars and festivals. The panel is an independent advisory body.

In supporting the City's approach to establishing entertainment precincts, the panel has provided advice on the development of the precincts and the management plan.

Future consultation

With Council approval and DPHI gateway determination, the next step will be public exhibition of this planning proposal, alongside the management plan and draft DCP. This will include notification of affected parties and consultation with business, residents, visitors, local organisations, and further consultation with the relevant agencies and local authorities.

7. Project timeline

The anticipated timeline for completion of this planning proposal is as follows:

Stage	Timeframe
Gateway determination	Q2 2026
Public exhibition and government agency consultation	Q2/Q3 2026
Consideration of submissions	Q3 2026
Post exhibition consideration of proposal by Council/CSPC	Q3 2026
Drafting of LEP provisions	Q4 2026
Finalisation of LEP and DCP and notification	Q4 2026
Year-long trial commences	Q4 2026
Year-long trial ends	Q4 2027
Pending outcome of review, SEPs rescinded, amended or made permanent.	Q4 2027

