

Attachment C

**Engagement report – Woolloomooloo –
Proposed outdoor alcohol restrictions**

Engagement report - proposed outdoor alcohol restrictions in Woolloomooloo



Overview

Background

In accordance with its legislative obligations under the Local Government Act 1993, the City considers valid applications for outdoor alcohol restrictions. These restrictions include alcohol-free zones which apply to public roads, footpaths and public carparks and alcohol prohibited areas which apply to parks and civic spaces. Council can resolve to establish an outdoor alcohol restriction for a maximum of four years or on a temporary basis for special events.

Alcohol-free zones apply to public roads and footpaths, 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Alcohol-prohibited areas apply to parks and civic spaces and can be timed.

Engagement summary

At its meeting on 28 April 2026, Council approved the 30-day public exhibition of the proposed alcohol-free zones and alcohol prohibited areas in Woolloomooloo.

The public exhibition process was undertaken in accordance with Section 644A of the Local Government Act 1993 which outlines the consultation requirements to establish alcohol restrictions. The public exhibition period took place from Thursday 21 May 2026 to Friday 3 July 2026, which exceeded the required 30-day public exhibition period.

Consultation on the proposed plan provided stakeholders and the wider community with an opportunity to review the proposal and provide feedback.

Consultation included:

- A letter distributed to all addresses in the suburb of Woolloomooloo.
 - Publication of the proposal on Sydney Your Say.
 - An email notification sent to all key stakeholders including outreach and legal services.
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Purpose of engagement

The purpose of engagement was to invite feedback from residents, community groups, organisations, local businesses and government agencies on proposed changes to alcohol prohibited areas in Bourke Street Park, Tom Uren Place and Walla Mulla Reserve in Woolloomooloo. Current outdoor alcohol restrictions are timed and apply from 10pm to 10am, seven days a week. The proposal is to increase the timed outdoor alcohol restrictions so that they apply 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Outcomes of engagement

The following is a snapshot of the outcomes from the engagement.

Submissions received during Thursday 21 May 2026 to Friday 3 July 2026 consultation

A total of 57 submissions were received via the online survey and email during the public exhibition period. The Sydney Your Say page was visited 345 times during the consultation period.

Six submissions were made on behalf of local community organisations and government agencies:

1. Aboriginal Legal Service – Against
2. Hope Street - Baptist Care Woolloomooloo – Support
3. Inner Sydney Legal Service – Against
4. Kings Cross Police Area Command - Support
5. NSW Health (Kirketon Road Centre) – Comment only
6. St Vincent de Paul - Against

Submissions and engagement activity

Quantity	Description of activity
57	Total submissions received
46	Survey submissions
11	Emailed submissions received from community organisations / stakeholders
345	Sydney Your Say webpage visits
3606	Sydney your Say email mail out (reach)

Key findings

Overview of key findings –

Do you support the proposed outdoor alcohol restriction - 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Location	Support (Yes)	Against (No)	Comment Only
Bourke Street Park	50	6	1
Tom Uren Place	49	7	1
Walla Mulla Park	50	6	1

Key themes in support of proposed outdoor alcohol restriction - 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Personal safety – 24 Submissions

Respondents reported feeling unsafe in and around these locations due to intimidation, aggressive behaviour, public intoxication and violence. Many avoided the areas, particularly after dark, and believed 24-hour outdoor alcohol restrictions would improve community safety.

- "Tom Uren Place is a very intimidating area for people to pass through."
- "I am now genuinely concerned for my personal safety."
- "It will be an important step towards creating a safer community environment."

Reduction of antisocial behaviour – 23 Submissions

Respondents linked alcohol consumption to ongoing antisocial behaviour in these locations, including public intoxication, aggression, fighting and verbal abuse. Many supported the proposed changes to the outdoor alcohol restrictions and believed they would reduce disturbances and improve public amenity.

- "The current anti-social behaviour in these three locations is out of control."
- "Since the restrictions were lifted, antisocial behaviour has increased."
- "Alcohol abuse, public disturbance and antisocial behaviour."

Improved access to local services – 10 Submissions

Respondents reported avoiding local parks, shops, transport stops and services due to safety concerns and believed the proposed outdoor alcohol restrictions would make public spaces more accessible and welcoming.

- "Unable to go to the corner shop, chemist and doctors because we do not feel safe."
- "Patients who won't come here anymore due to the fear they feel."
- "Members of the community are no longer able to comfortably use the park."

Improved local amenity – 8 Submissions

Respondents believed local conditions had worsened since the previous 24-hour restrictions had expired and timed restrictions which apply from 10pm to 10am were established, citing increased litter, waste and alcohol-related impacts. Many viewed the proposal as restoring effective management of the area.

- "Increase of needles and glass from the bottles on the ground."
- "Human waste, empty cans, broken glass and drug paraphernalia."
- "It stinks due to people urinating."

Key themes against proposed outdoor alcohol restriction - 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Disproportionate impact on people who are homeless and priority populations – 5 Submissions

Respondents argued the proposed restrictions would disproportionately impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, people experiencing homelessness and/or systemic social disadvantage. Many felt the proposal could further marginalise groups without addressing underlying social and health issues.

- "This proposal unfairly targets and discriminates against homeless people."
- "The disproportionate impact of this proposal on already marginalised cohorts."
- "A significant number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people use these public spaces."

Increased Police intervention – 5 Submissions

Respondents viewed the proposal as a law enforcement response that could increase police interactions with vulnerable community members. Many expressed concern that the restrictions may be punitive and lead to greater policing without addressing underlying causes.

- "Universal alcohol bans are inherently punitive."
- "Will lead to over policing of a community who are already very visible to law enforcement."
- "Alcohol restrictions have too often served as a pretext for police to interact with our clients."

Limited evidence that restrictions reduce antisocial behaviour – 4 Submissions

Respondents questioned the effectiveness of the proposed restrictions, arguing there is limited evidence they reduce antisocial behaviour or improve safety. Several noted that police already have powers to address disruptive conduct.

- "The City's own review found no evidence that they decreased antisocial behaviour."
- "This proposal will not materially improve enforcement outcomes."
- "NSW Police have a very broad range of powers available."

Preference for harm reduction approaches – 4 Submissions

Respondents supported addressing alcohol-related issues through housing, health and social support services rather than restrictions. Many argued that long-term outcomes are better achieved through treatment, support and harm minimisation measures.

- "The most effective approach must be health-led, person-centred and trauma informed."
- "Explicitly opposed to an interdisciplinary solutions required by issues of addiction."
- "Punitive outcomes that do not resolve social problems of homelessness."

Summary of key themes

Consultation feedback reflected differing views on how alcohol-related issues can be addressed. Supporters generally viewed the proposed 24-hour alcohol restrictions as a way to improve safety, reduce antisocial behaviour and improve access to public spaces and local services.

Opponents argued the restrictions could disproportionately impact socially disadvantaged groups, questioned their effectiveness, and raised concerns about increased police intervention. Many advocated for health, housing and harm reduction approaches instead.

While both perspectives acknowledged alcohol-related challenges in the area, they differed on whether 24-hour outdoor alcohol restrictions are the most appropriate response.

The perspectives of people who consume alcohol in these public spaces are underrepresented in the consultation. The organisations that work directly with people who drink alcohol in the locations are best positioned to advocate for and reflect their experiences in the absence of direct consultation.

Submissions from organisations and NSW Police Force

Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS)

The Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) advised that it opposes the proposal, consistent with its position on previous initiatives to extend or increase alcohol restrictions within the City of Sydney.

ALS noted that the affected public spaces are regularly used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are located near key support services, including Matthew Talbot Hostel, and the Kirketon Road Centre. ALS expressed concern that outdoor alcohol restrictions can facilitate increased police interactions with vulnerable community members, which may escalate into criminal legal action despite the legislation being limited to alcohol confiscation and disposal powers.

ALS further advised that it continues to represent clients charged with low-level public order offences arising from proactive police engagement in public spaces. It highlighted that NSW Police data indicates that Aboriginal people are disproportionately subject to stop and search powers and criminal charges, with heightened impacts on Aboriginal young people, people experiencing homelessness, and those with mental health conditions or cognitive impairments.

ALS considers that the proposed restrictions may contribute to the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system and are inconsistent with commitments under the NSW Closing the Gap Partnership Agreement to reduce Aboriginal over-representation in the legal system

BaptistCare HopeStreet (Woolloomooloo)

BaptistCare HopeStreet supports the proposed 24-hour alcohol restrictions. As a service provider located in the immediate area, it is aware of the impacts of alcohol consumption on residents, people experiencing homelessness and the broader community.

Inner City Legal Centre (ICLC)

Inner City Legal Centre (ICLC) advised that it does not support the proposal, consistent with the feedback it and other legal services provided during the comprehensive review on outdoor alcohol restrictions undertaken by the City of Sydney in 2024.

ICLC noted that Woolloomooloo has a high concentration of social housing, homelessness services and community organisations supporting people experiencing homelessness, rough

sleeping and housing instability. While acknowledging the City's ongoing efforts to support the community and maintain a safe and clean environment, ICLC stated that NSW Police already have extensive powers to address anti-social behaviour, including move-on directions, infringement notices and criminal enforcement powers.

ICLC expressed the view that extending alcohol restrictions in Woolloomooloo would not address the underlying challenges faced by community members. It raised concerns that the proposal could result in increased policing of people experiencing homelessness and lead to punitive outcomes that do not address the underlying causes of homelessness, mental ill-health or alcohol and drug dependency.

ICLC further argued that the proposal may disproportionately impact people experiencing homelessness by restricting the public consumption of a legal substance in areas where they are known to congregate. It noted that some neighbouring local government areas do not have alcohol restrictions and instead address alcohol-related issues through alternative approaches aimed at improving community safety. Accordingly, ICLC does not support the proposed extension of alcohol restrictions.

NSW Health (Kirketon Road Centre)

NSW Health advises that it delivers regular outreach services in Woolloomooloo within a harm reduction framework. NSW Health emphasises the importance of ensuring any changes outdoor alcohol restrictions needs to align with harm minimisation principles and support broader community wellbeing outcomes. NSW Health also notes the need to ensure that any restrictions do not inadvertently discourage or displace vulnerable individuals from accessing essential health, social and support services.

NSW Police Force

Police advise that ongoing anti-social behaviour in and around Tom Uren Square, Walla Mulla Park and Bourke Street Park remains a significant concern for the local community. Reported incidents include offensive conduct, alcohol-related disturbances, drug-related activity and other criminal offences, contributing to perceptions of reduced safety and a decline in the amenity of these public spaces.

Concerns have also been identified regarding the current timed alcohol restrictions, which apply between 10:00pm and 10:00am. These arrangements may limit opportunities for proactive intervention and allow alcohol-related issues to escalate before enforcement action can be taken.

Police advised that the original intent of permitting responsible public alcohol consumption is not being achieved in these locations. Strong community support exists for the introduction of 24-hour, seven-day-a-week outdoor alcohol restrictions with anticipated benefits including improved public safety, reduced anti-social behaviour, and increased community use and enjoyment of public spaces.

Police acknowledge their ongoing efforts to improve community safety through collaboration with local homelessness service providers and the City of Sydney. The planned reopening of Woolloomooloo Police Station, currently undergoing refurbishment, is expected to strengthen the local policing presence. In addition, a multi-agency working group has been established to coordinate responses and develop longer-term solutions for the area.

Police note they give full support is given to the implementation of a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week outdoor alcohol restrictions in Tom Uren Square, Walla Mulla Park and Bourke Street Park. This position is supported by ongoing community concerns, the established association between alcohol consumption and anti-social behaviour in these locations, and the need to complement existing community safety and place management initiatives.

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW (Vinnies NSW) outlined its longstanding involvement in the Woolloomooloo community through the operation of the Matthew Talbot Hostel, Matthew

Talbot Hostel Primary Health Clinic and the Ozanam Learning Centre, which provide support to people experiencing homelessness, disadvantage and social exclusion.

Vinnies NSW expressed opposition to the proposed 24-hour outdoor alcohol restrictions in Bourke Street Park, Tom Uren Square and Walla Mulla Park. Concerns were raised regarding the potential impacts on vulnerable community members, particularly people experiencing homelessness, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and low-income residents. Vinnies NSW submitted that a universal alcohol prohibition may have a disproportionate impact on already marginalised cohorts and could be perceived as a punitive response.

Further concerns were raised that a 24-hour restriction may displace alcohol consumption to indoor settings or more isolated locations, potentially increasing health and social harms and reducing opportunities for engagement with support services. Vinnies NSW also noted potential impacts on housing stability, social connections and access to health and support services. Frontline staff anticipated that displacement of activity may result in increased anti-social behaviour and related health incidents in the vicinity of the Ozanam Learning Centre and Matthew Talbot Hostel.

Vinnies NSW submitted that existing alcohol restrictions and current enforcement powers are sufficient to address anti-social behaviour in the area and considered that the proposed changes would be unlikely to materially improve enforcement outcomes.

Vinnies NSW advocated for a health-led, person-centred and trauma-informed approach to addressing anti-social behaviour, supported by coordinated service responses, intensive case management and greater integration between health, housing and social support services. Vinnies NSW recommended that the current alcohol restrictions be maintained and emphasised the importance of harm reduction and consideration of the social determinants of health, including housing and homelessness, when developing community responses to alcohol and other drug use.

Note

Anti-Discrimination New South Wales (ADNSW)

Anti-Discrimination NSW (ADNSW) was notified of the proposal. In its response, ADNSW advised that, in August 2025, the Office of Local Government amended the Ministerial Guidelines for Alcohol Free Zones (the Guidelines). The updated Guidelines no longer identify any councils that are required to consult ADNSW in relation to Alcohol Free Zone (AFZ) or Alcohol Prohibited Area (APA) proposals under sections 644A(3) and 646(3) of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW). It also noted that it does not have the resources or operational capacity to undertake such reviews.