

Attachment D

**Engagement report – Darlinghurst and
Ultimo – Proposed outdoor alcohol
restrictions**

Engagement report - proposed outdoor alcohol restrictions in Darlinghurst and Ultimo



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 prohibited areas in McKee Street Reserve and Mary Ann Street Park, Ultimo and Taylor Square North, Darlinghurst.

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 20 July 2026 to 19 August 2026.

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

Consultation included:

- An email notification sent to all key stakeholders including outreach and legal services.
 - A notice placed on the park entry sign of McKee Street Reserve, Ultimo and Mary Ann Street Park, Ultimo.
 - Publication of the proposal on Sydney Your Say.
 - Sydney Your Say engagement email
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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. Current alcohol restrictions apply from 10pm to 10am in Taylor Square North, Darlinghurst and the proposal is to increase alcohol restrictions to apply 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are no current restrictions in McKee Street Reserve, Ultimo and Mary Ann Street Park, Ultimo and the proposal is for outdoor alcohol restrictions to 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 20 July 2026 to 19 August 2026 consultation

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A total of 11 submissions were received via the online survey and email during the public exhibition period. The Sydney Your Say page was visited 189 times during the consultation period.

One submission was from the Friends of Ultimo community group via Sydney Your Say

Two email submissions were received from NSW Police:

1. Surry Hills Police Area Command
2. Sydney City Police Area Command

Submissions and engagement activity

Quantity	Description of activity
189	Sydney Your Say webpage visits
3606	Sydney Your Say email mailout (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)	No Opinion
Mary Ann Street Park	7	5	0
McKee Street Reserve	9	3	0
Taylor Square North	3	3	6

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

Noise, Safety and Park Amenity – 6 submissions

Respondents supported restrictions to reduce noise, discourage disruptive gatherings, improve perceptions of safety and maintain the parks in Ultimo as welcoming community spaces.

- “Reduce gatherings which are very noisy and can feel unsafe for locals walking through.” (Ultimo)

Protection of community uses and residential amenity - 2 submissions

Respondents supported restrictions to protect community facilities, recreational uses and residential amenity in and around the parks in Ultimo.

- “McKee Street Reserve is home to a community garden and a children’s playground.” (Ultimo)

Antisocial behaviour and crime - 4 submissions

Respondents supported restrictions to reduce antisocial behaviour, litter and other nuisance activities in the two parks in Ultimo.

- “Having parks alcohol free will help local residents keep them free of antisocial behaviour.” (Ultimo)

Taylor Square North submissions outlined concerns for community safety, intimidation and the Surry Hills Police Area Command outlined incidents of alcohol-related crime

- “Makes the area unsafe and intimidating.” (Taylor Square North)
- “Alcohol-related incidents occur across all times of day, with offending and antisocial behaviour linked to public space consumption of alcohol regularly occurring during daylight hours.” (Taylor Square North)

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

Lack of evidence of issues – 3 submissions

Respondents said they had not observed alcohol-related problems at Mary Ann Park or McKee Street Reserve in Ultimo and questioned whether restrictions were necessary.

- "Never witnessed... any alcohol consumption or inappropriate behaviour." (Ultimo)

Support for responsible alcohol consumption - 1 submission

Respondents considered moderate alcohol consumption to be an appropriate use of Mary Anne Street Park and opposed a blanket prohibition.

- "Mary Anne Street Park is an appropriate place for picnics with moderate alcohol consumption." (Ultimo)

Existing powers are sufficient - 1 submission

Respondents considered further restrictions in Taylor Square North unnecessary and preferred existing enforcement mechanisms.

- "There are already options in place that enable police to deal with people who are publicly intoxicated and/or disorderly." (Taylor Square North)

Summary of key themes

In general, supporters of the outdoor alcohol restrictions cited the benefits of reducing noise, improving community safety and preserving residential amenity, particularly in the Ultimo parks, which are surrounded by homes and community facilities.

Opponents generally questioned whether there was sufficient evidence of alcohol-related issues to justify the establishment of outdoor alcohol restrictions, noting that responsible alcohol consumption can occur without causing problems and there are existing enforcement powers available to Police.

There was overall support for the introduction of outdoor alcohol restrictions in McKee Street Reserve and Mary Ann Street Park in Ultimo. However, in relation to Taylor Square North there were conflicting views about the introduction of outdoor alcohol restrictions in this area, and many respondents did not express an opinion either way.

Submissions from organisations and NSW Police

Friends of Ultimo (Feedback on Ultimo locations)

Friends of Ultimo support outdoor alcohol restrictions in principle where there is evidence that they are necessary to address anti-social behaviour or public safety concerns. However, Friends of Ultimo does not consider there to be sufficient justification for imposing alcohol restrictions in Mary Ann Street Park or McKee Street Reserve, as there is no known evidence of alcohol consumption or other inappropriate behaviour in either of these pocket parks.

McKee Street Reserve primarily serves local families and includes a community garden and children's playground. It is also located adjacent to a kindergarten.

Mary Ann Street Park is a valued local open space that is particularly popular with local dog owners.

Sydney City Police Area Command (Feedback on Ultimo locations)

NSW Police support the proposed Alcohol Prohibited Areas at Mary Ann Street Park and McKee Street Reserve, Ultimo. Police consider alcohol restrictions to be an effective early-intervention measure that helps address public alcohol consumption and prevent alcohol-related antisocial behaviour, disorder, and offending, while enhancing community safety and amenity.

Police support is informed by operational experience and crime data, which indicates that alcohol remains a significant contributor to violence and antisocial behaviour across the Sydney LGA.

In 2025, approximately one-third of assault offences were alcohol-related, with alcohol also featuring prominently in offensive conduct, intimidation and other public order offences commonly occurring in parks and public spaces. Police advise they regularly respond to incidents involving street drinking, intoxication, and nuisance behaviour in Ultimo and continue to receive community concerns regarding these issues.

Based on the available evidence and local policing experience, NSW Police consider the establishment of alcohol restrictions at Mary Ann Street Park and McKee Street Reserve to be a reasonable, proportionate, and evidence-based measure to reduce alcohol-related harm and support safer public spaces.

Surry Hills Police Area Command (Feedback on Taylor Square North)

Taylor Square North continues to experience a disproportionate concentration of alcohol-related crime and antisocial behaviour. Analysis of Surry Hills Police Area Command data for the last financial year identified alcohol-related incidents within the immediate area including assaults, affrays, move-on directions, public intoxication and antisocial behaviour. Importantly, incidents were not confined to late-night trading hours or on-premises consumption of alcohol; with alcohol-related crime and antisocial behaviour occurring throughout the afternoon and evening.

Surry Hills Police emphasise alcohol-related incidents occur across all times of day, with offending and antisocial behaviour linked to public space consumption of alcohol regularly occurring during daylight hours.

The submission details three matters in January, May and July 2026 that occurred during the day or earlier evening when current alcohol restrictions in Taylor Square North do not apply. The incidents include homophobic and transphobic crimes where perpetrators are intoxicated, and their consumption of alcohol did not take place within licensed premises.

Surry Hills Police Command recommend the 24-hour alcohol prohibited area is implemented to provide police with a 'consistent preventative enforcement mechanism, reduce opportunities for public alcohol consumption throughout the day and thereby contribute to improved public safety within the Taylor Square North precinct.'

Note

Anti-Discrimination New South Wales (ADNSW)

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.