

Rebuilding Adelaide's Night Life

Tuesday, 14 June 2022

Council

Strategic Alignment - Strong Economies

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Public

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report responds to Council's decision at its meeting on 9 June 2020 that Administration investigates the appointment of an advocate of the City's nightlife and economy. A subsequent Council decision on 8 June 2021 requested further information at a workshop in The Committee which was held on 17 August 2021.

The 17 August 2021 workshop presentation included extensive research on the Night Mayor concept that has been implemented in different cities around the world. Further consideration of the City of Sydney strategy, City of Melbourne model and existing City of Adelaide (CoA) engagement mechanisms, including Roundtables and the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA) are provided post the workshop.

In addition, a commitment has been made through a CEO Undertaking on 10 May 2022 to review the CoA policy framework against the Strategic Plan and the review will consider an economic policy.

For this report, the Night-Time Economy (NTE) describes the essential, social, cultural and economic activities that take place between 6pm and 6am.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the report.
 2. Approves development of a vision for Adelaide's Night-Time Economy and strategic response for achieving the vision in 2022-2023 financial year.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2020-2024 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Strong Economies
Policy	Not as a result of this report
Consultation	A presentation was made to the meeting of the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA) Board on 10 May 2022 including discussion of the Night-Time Economy. The approach received general support.
Resource	If Council decides to approve the development of a vision for Adelaide's Night-Time Economy and strategic response for achieving the vision, it is proposed this work will be undertaken in the 2022-2023 financial year within existing staff resources.
Risk / Legal / Legislative	Not as a result of this report
Opportunities	There is opportunity to craft a strategic vision and response to the night-time economy for the city.
21/22 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Proposed 22/23 Budget Allocation	A budget proposal is not included in the draft 2022/23 Annual Business Plan and Budget for development of a vision and strategic response to Adelaide's Night-Time Economy. If Council decides to develop a vision and strategic response, the first stage will involve scoping the project. This can be undertaken within existing staff resources. If there is an identified budget impact at this time, a report will be presented to Council as part of the budget review process.
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
21/22 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

1. At its meeting on 9 June 2020, Council resolved the following motion:

That Council:

1. *Notes the City's \$1 billion per annum night economy has been devastated by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.*
2. *Notes that many cities around the world now have nightlife advocates, such as New York (the 'Nightlife Mayor'), London (the 'Night Tsar'), Amsterdam (the 'Nachtburgemeester') among many others, but that no Australian jurisdiction has a nightlife advocate.*
3. *Investigates the appointment of an advocate for the City's nightlife and economy that would act in the interests of all elements of the night economy, including live music and entertainment, hospitality, liquor licensing and other related policy matters, such as managing the complicated interface between the night and daytime economies and residents' rights to the quiet enjoyment of their properties.*
4. *Investigates a soundproofing subsidy scheme so that residents and hotels may be supported in soundproofing their premises to allow for increased night time activation around them that does not impinge upon their rights.*

2. A report was presented to Council on 8 June 2021, recommending an Expression of Interest process for the selection of a Night-Time Economy Advocate.

3. The Council decision of 8 June 2021, follows:

That Council

1. *Notes a review of the Noise Management Program is underway and Council Members will be provided with an update on the outcomes of the review by November 2021.*
2. *Notes the importance of continuing to advocate for the small venue liquor license and its role in the reactivation of the Adelaide CBD and the NTE.*
3. *Requests a comparison of other international jurisdictions with nightlife advocates, including their method of appointment, roles and responsibilities, is made and presented to Council Members for feedback as a Committee Workshop, with a view to the Council providing further direction to the Administration on the method of appointment, roles and responsibilities of any City of Adelaide nightlife advocate.*

4. Part 3 of the Council decision on 8 June 2021 was delivered at a workshop at The Committee meeting on 17 August 2021 (Link 1 view [here](#)).
5. The night-time economy (NTE) describes the essential, social, cultural and economic activities that take place between 6pm and 6am. It is, and continues to be, of importance to the City of Adelaide which is challenged with reclaiming the central business district as the primary place for the NTE and supporting sectors; and delivering initiatives which will draw people back into the city.
6. Since 2009 the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors (CCCLM) has reported on the NTE by the sub-sectors of Drink, Entertainment and Food (referred to in the reports as "core" NTE activities).
7. The CCCLM report for 2019-20 found that Adelaide has the third highest density of both Food and Drink establishments in Australia. This is driven by a large number of Cafes and Restaurants, (432) Takeaway Food Services (176) and Pubs, Bars and Taverns (120). Historically, Food and Drink establishments have formed a high proportion of Adelaide's core NTE. This is still the case, with 71% of Adelaide's core NTE businesses belonging to the Food sub-sector (compared 62% nationally) and 15% belonging to the Drink sub-sector (compared 8% nationally).
8. The CCLM 2019-20 report identified initial impacts of the pandemic. Revenue from core NTE businesses in Adelaide dropped 11% and the number of employees plummeted 20%. Further impact on businesses will be shown in the new release by mid-2022 of official 2020-21 financial year data.
9. An additional survey from CCCLM in November 2021, found that all CBDs across Australia have experienced substantial changes following the onset of the pandemic. These are related to many people now working from home, office occupancy rates and public transport use across the states and territories remain below pre-pandemic levels. The main challenges are related to the pandemic uncertainty (due the Omicron variant), the drop in city footfall and changing consumer behaviours and the staff and skill shortage.

10. CCCLM also identified opportunities for diversifying the city's offering to attract new audiences through experiences and events, support live music and the arts. Suggested actions included implementing city loyalty programs to encourage repeat visits, promotion of COVID-safety measures on public transport and flexible pricing and timetabling models, long-term retention and support for outdoor dining and creation of avenues for businesses to collaborate with governments, to share ideas and identify challenges and opportunities. Many of these initiatives have been taken up in the city including through Reignite and Reignite 2.0.
11. Since COVID-19, the NTE has suffered however, recent spending and activity data indicates a firm recovery started in 2021, delayed in the last quarter due to the impact of the COVID-19 Omicron Variant (Link 2 view [here](#)).
12. Recent independent research commissioned by CoA from McGregor Tan, indicates that while COVID-19 placed pressure on city visitation, and dispersed activity to the suburbs, COVID-19 is no longer the primary barrier for workers and city users to return to the city. Rather, city accessibility is identified as the main barrier for attracting people back to the city as people engage in social, leisure, essential and business-related activities in the suburbs.
13. The McGregor Tan research identifies reductions in city usage associated with changes in dining and shopping behaviours, with more people dining at home or ordering food from local restaurants. Online shopping has impacted retail and grocery shopping in the city.
14. The McGregor Tan research identifies a range of strategies to address the primary barrier(s) to city visitation which will be presented to Council in a subsequent report. In short, the strategies provide a focus for city planning, land use, parking, alternative modes of transport, activation and vibrancy, events, business support, affordable housing, and residential growth strategies.
15. The City of Adelaide (CoA) has a vision to be the world's most liveable city. The research commissioned from McGregor Tan, suggests liveable cities will be advantaged in post COVID-19 planning. Based on the research, increasing city usage could require a focus on matters such as:
 - 15.1. Social and leisure activities
 - 15.2. Creative and innovative industries
 - 15.3. Improving the perceived prestige (and progressiveness) of working in the city
 - 15.4. Creating distinct 'hubs' and precincts; and specialist fields
 - 15.5. Creating city experiences, events and dynamic city spaces
 - 15.6. Investing in technology
 - 15.7. Aligning shopping, working, living and visiting experiences with the core values of environmental and social responsibility (including amenity and open space).
16. The strategies and areas of focus outlined in the research provide for strong alignment with the CoA Strategic Plan and Reignite 2.0 initiatives. These priorities and initiatives are being delivered under existing CoA governance structures, advocacy roles, and service delivery models.
17. A vibrant NTE is important for attracting investment and supporting businesses, festivals, and events, as well as visitor, student, and residential growth. Supporting nightlife, also promotes the City of Adelaide as a destination and 'magnet city' and increase its potential visitation and use by residents, workers, visitors, and the community.
18. A diverse NTE is important to the city's future and a vision for Adelaide's NTE and formulation of a strategic response (such as strategy, policy or framework) would assist in understanding the diversity in Adelaide's nightlife. Such an approach can inform planning, placemaking activities, support clusters, specialised precincts, diversification of activities and cultural offers, and building the narrative to attract more visitors, residents, and investors to the city.
19. For comparison, the OPEN Sydney strategy and action plan 2013-2030, identifies broad key action areas, such as:
 - 19.1. 24-hour trading in the Sydney city centre
 - 19.2. Extended trading hours for low-impact businesses along selected village main streets
 - 19.3. New late-night trading areas in some of the city's fastest-growing neighbourhoods
 - 19.4. Extended trading hours for unlicensed shops, like bookstores and clothing shops, and businesses like gyms, dry cleaners and hairdressers
 - 19.5. A new 24-hour cultural, arts and entertainment precinct within a heritage warehouse precinct

- 19.6. Expansion of existing late-night trading areas
- 19.7. Additional trading hours for performance and cultural venues.
20. With respect to a potential Night-Time Advocate for the City of Adelaide, further consideration has been given to the City of Melbourne model of a Night-Time Advisory Committee, comprising 18 un-remunerated positions (Link 3 view [here](#)).
21. The City of Melbourne Night-Time Advisory Committee was established in June 2021 for 12 months as a direct response to the impact of COVID-19, to:
- 21.1. Provide advice to City of Melbourne on the growth and sustainability of the night-time economy.
- 21.2. Provide feedback on proposed City of Melbourne initiatives that support the night-time economy.
- 21.3. Contribute to City of Melbourne decision-making with data and expertise.
22. The Advisory Committee took an immediate focus on advocacy to the Victoria Government concerning the safe reopening of the retail, hospitality, entertainment and performing arts sectors, and specifically the planning and implementation of a vaccination/health pass (this initiative was approved as a pilot but not broadly implemented due the launch of the MyGov digital vaccination certificate).
23. A proposal that is under development to extend the Advisory Committee for a further twelve months includes consideration of remuneration for the Chair to facilitate strategic operation of the Committee.
24. While the NTE has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 compared with the day-time economy, the stimulus measures of CoA and its long-term strategic planning objectives and priorities are considered to provide a suitable focus for planning a post-pandemic city (as aligned with the McGregor Tan research).
25. Since the decision of Council on 9 June 2020, Council has established the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA) as a subsidiary of the Council. AEDA commenced operating on 18 January 2021 with a mission *"to accelerate economic growth in the city by attracting investment and supporting businesses, growing the visitor economy, supporting residential growth, growing an annual events calendar and marketing the city as a whole including Rundle Mall"*.
26. AEDA's current Business Plan 2021-2022 does not identify a priority focus on the NTE, however, it can through its role and Board structures, play an important function in providing expedient advice on proposals and activations to draw people back into the city and re-establish the Central Business District as the primary place for the NTE.
27. The Lord Mayor's Roundtables for Hutt Street, O'Connell Street and Melbourne Street have also been formed (the Hindley Street Roundtable was in operation) post the Council decision of 9 June 2020. The Roundtables provide a suitable mechanism for Council to obtain advice, feedback and ideas on the NTE, specifically as it relates to safety of the NTE.
28. Other existing mechanisms such as precinct groups, resident forums, events, Council grant programs and recent accreditations such as the UNESCO City of Music, are also directly and indirectly targeting priority investment in local businesses and economic recovery of the city.
29. On the basis the CoA has mechanisms in place to support the recovery of the city and the NTE, and a broad focus on returning residents, business and visitors to the city, it is considered that a dedicated a Night-Time Advocate (or Night-Time Advisory Committee) for the CoA is not warranted at this time.
30. CoA does not have an agreed strategic vision for the NTE that other cities mentioned above have in place. Council may wish to consider a strategic response (such as a strategy, policy or framework) to inform current activities and assist in the development of a vision for Adelaide's NTE.
31. A review of the CoA policy framework is underway to ensure the policy setting supports achievement of the CoA Strategic Plan. This review will address a CEO Undertaking from 10 May 2022 and will be presented to Council in August 2022. The review will identify gaps in the policy framework including economic policy.
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DATA AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Link 1 – Night-Time Economy Advocate Committee Workshop held on 17 August 2021

Link 2 – Night-Time Economy spending data

Link 3 - Night-Time Economy Advisory Committee - City of Melbourne

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

- END OF REPORT -