

**RE: Special entertainment precincts discussion paper**

To Ms. Laura Dodds-Hebron,

The Night Time Industries Association (NTIA) appreciates the opportunity to respond to the City of Sydney's proposal for the establishment of Special Entertainment Precincts (SEPs).

As the representative body for Australia's night-time economy, encompassing hospitality, arts, live performance, and cultural institutions, NTIA welcomes initiatives that bolster cultural vibrancy and economic growth while addressing the regulatory challenges faced by our members.

SEPs represent a transformative opportunity to create a more dynamic, accessible, and resilient night-time economy. The NTIA applauds the City of Sydney for commencing the process to introduce SEPs.

Should any further information or clarification be required the NTIA would be pleased to assist.

Regards,

Mick Gibb  
CEO  
Night Time Industries Association  
e: [comms@ntia.org.au](mailto:comms@ntia.org.au)

## **The Value of Special Entertainment Precincts**

Special Entertainment Precincts (SEPs) align closely with the NTIA's vision of a thriving night-time economy that is diverse, growing, and reflective of local communities. By providing extended trading hours, bespoke sound management plans, and incentives such as reduced licensing fees and streamlined regulatory processes, SEPs have the potential to address significant barriers currently facing night-time businesses.

Key incentives, including an 80% reduction in liquor licensing fees and additional trading hours for venues hosting live performances, align with NTIA's advocacy to ease the financial burden on businesses. Such measures directly help to reduce the cost of doing business in the night-time sector, which has faced rising costs across areas such as public liability insurance, compliance, and operational overheads.

By upgrading existing late-night trading areas to SEPs, Sydney can create hubs of cultural and economic activity that promote live music and performance while supporting a broader mix of night-time uses. Encouraging diversity in entertainment offerings is crucial to engaging a wide range of audiences, from young patrons seeking live music to families and professionals enjoying cultural events.

A core benefit of SEPs lies in their ability to streamline planning and licensing requirements, removing the need for development applications (DAs) for trading within base hours or for program incentive hours tied to live performances. This simplification addresses a persistent concern for NTIA members, who often face significant time and cost barriers in navigating complex planning frameworks. Reducing these administrative burdens allows venues to focus on delivering high-quality experiences, fostering innovation, and attracting audiences.

The NTIA has long advocated for reforms to planning legislation to enable faster, simpler event approvals. SEPs represent a critical step in achieving this goal by aligning regulatory frameworks with the realities of operating night-time venues. However, we urge that any transition to SEPs ensures no business is disadvantaged, particularly in retaining their existing trading hours and access to incentives.

## **Response to Figure 1: Proposed special entertainment precincts**

The NTIA has proposed amendments to the SEPs identified in Figure 1 of the discussion paper.

### Barangaroo & William Street

The NTIA recommends that Barangaroo and William Street be changed from a 'City Living Area' to a 'Late Night Management Area'.

In Barangaroo, the diversity of offerings, premium dining and luxury accommodation are considerable draw cards for local, domestic and international visitors. It is also an area with high income earners in professional careers. Currently, these opportunities cannot be fully realised by night time economy operators. According to analysis by the NTIA using the Pathzz platform:

- Between 5pm to 10pm, the visitation to Barangaroo plummets by 59% as visitors either head home or travel elsewhere for later evening offerings
- Unlike other areas of Sydney, Barangaroo has consistently high visitation throughout the week with Wednesday, Thursday and Friday being the busiest nights.

By making Barangaroo a 'Late Night Management Area' and allowing venues to trade to the proposed restrictions in Figure 2, businesses would have a greater opportunity to grow.

William Street is a key thoroughfare connecting two Late Night Management Areas' in the Sydney CBD and Kings Cross. It is also home to iconic night time economy institution Club 77 which has become a hub of cultural activity in Sydney. Despite being home to a nightclub, the area draws in a diversity of age groups with 40-44 year olds being the second largest cohort (9.5%) of total visitors behind 30-34 year olds (10.5%).

### Crown Street

Along its course from Oxford Street to Cleveland Street, the diversity and density of businesses along Crown Street changes considerably. The hubs around each bookend of Crown Street should be recognised as 'City Living Areas' as should the central stretch between Fitzroy Street and Arthur Street. Rather than deem all of Crown Street as 'Local Centre Areas' the NTIA recommends that more nuance is provided to better reflect the area and provide the greatest opportunity to businesses.

## **Response to Figure 2: Proposed special entertainment precincts**

The NTIA welcomes the initiative that would support venues to unlock additional trading hours without having to submit a DA. This can help businesses realise increased revenue without additional costs associated with lodging a DA. However, the NTIA has recommendations regarding the trading hours.

### Late Night Management Areas

- Larger venues and nightclubs should have the base hours as 6am to 2am to make it commercially viable to trade to that hour.

### City Livings Areas

- Base trading for larger venues and nightclubs should be to 12am to make it commercially viable for the venues.

### Local Centre Areas

The trading hours for local centres do not reflect the fact that these spaces are mere kilometres away from the Central Business District of one of the most significant economic centres in the Asia Pacific. A venue operating with a Hotel Licence on Crown Street should not have to submit a DA to be able to trade until midnight. While the city seeks to strike a balance between the needs of residents, businesses and visitors it cannot do so in a manner that fails to recognise the role of City of Sydney as a key economic hub in the region. The ability to have an venues trade to midnight in various precincts across the city as a starting point (not through an application) will assist in rebranding Sydney as a vibrant city and an attractive draw card for international visitors and workers alike.