



September 2023



# Acknowledgement of Country

Willoughby City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we stand, the Gamaragal people. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Indigenous people and cultures have made and still make a significant contribution to the nation that we share, Australia.

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# Executive summary

The *Willoughby Night Time Economic Development Strategy* provides the overarching framework, strategic direction and guiding principles for delivering a City that has a prosperous and vibrant night time economy .

The Strategy identifies the key night time economic outcomes for the City that will deliver a vibrant night time economy, based around Chatswood being the cultural hub of the North Shore of Sydney .

Where people know they'll find new and exciting events and activities that stimulate and bring the community together. Where all sectors of the night time economy work together to provide the reason that people come back again and again .

To achieve this, four strategic outcomes have been identified:

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- 1 . Making the Places
- 2 . Promotions and events
- 3 . Business and Cultural Development
- 4 . Diversification

Throughout these four outcomes, the culture and food and beverage sectors will be the key focus of activity to maintain and grow night time visitation, the number of activities and events, the number of local jobs, and the number of local businesses .

Willoughby City Council will be the lead agency in driving the Strategy and acting as the key facilitator, however the delivery and implementation of all the aspects will need the engagement and involvement of other governmental agencies and the business community through collaboration and partnership working .This is a strategy for the whole business community to deliver .



## INTRODUCTION

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*The Willoughby City Council area is a medium sized local government area occupying 23 square kilometres on the lower North Shore of Sydney with a thriving and vibrant economy, driven by a skilled workforce, living in attractive natural environments and significant historical areas. It is only 10km from the Sydney CBD forming the northern part Sydney's 'Global Economic Corridor', and is centred around the North Shore's economic hub of Chatswood, known for its wide range of retail and commercial activities and it's regional performing arts complex at The Concourse.*

## Population

# 82,000



The population of around 82,000 people have a diverse cultural and ethnic mix with larger sections with backgrounds including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Italian, Armenian, Greek, and Croatia, with the majority extremely well educated and skilled, with residents having higher than average household weekly incomes when compared with the Greater Sydney averages .

A broad range of vibrant cultural events and programs and inclusive social activities enables communities and neighbourhoods to provide a choice of social interaction and cultural experiences where they can feel a sense of belonging .

The City of Willoughby includes a blend of retail, commercial, industrial, residential, institutional and recreational districts .The Concourse creates a major cultural precinct further enhancing its attractiveness as a home to people and business .The City's scenic waterways, bushland reserves, parks, playgrounds, stunning bush walks, combined art and environmental projects, green corridors and significant heritage items provide an inspiring and healthy environment for its communities and visitors .It is a City of many people, places and experiences.

The local economy is strong and diverse focusing on high skill, quality employment opportunities that encompass innovation and creativity where GRP, business formation and employment continue to grow .With the vibrant natural environment and access to a full range of services and facilities providing key attractors for business location .

# INTRODUCTION

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This Strategy focuses on how to continue that success story and growth trajectory over the coming years .It outlines a plan to continue to build on the strengths of the local economy and develop the night time economy, encourage growth opportunities, and work with partners to continue the strong economic output and employment provision in the Chatswood CBD through enhancing the offering and range of night time activities that will increase the visitation to the CBD and local centres stimulating the development of key sites to expand the range of employment opportunities.

The strategy's ambition is to continue to grow Willoughby's night time economy to be the key cultural hub of Sydney's North Shore. This strategy represents the first steps, and the beginning of focusing on the night time economy to add to the economic growth of the area, especially through the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic that has heavily impacted the whole Sydney basin .

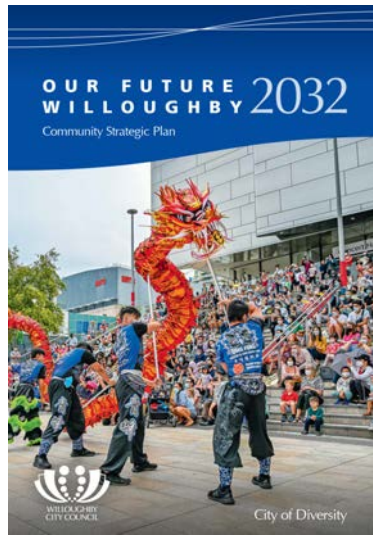


# STRATEGIC POSITION

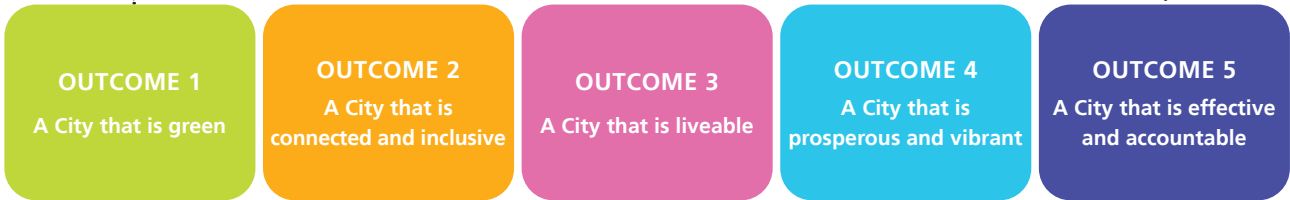
The *Draft Night Time Economy Strategy* is part of delivering Outcome 4 of Our Future Willoughby 2028, in particular Outcome 4 2 Build and support a night time economy .

It aligns with a range of existing, and developing strategies that will deliver a robust local economy.

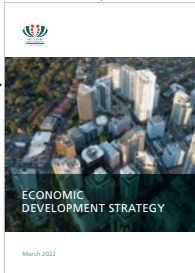
**Figure 1: Strategic Position of Economic Development Strategy**



## Our Future Willoughby 2028 Community Strategic Plan



- Linked Strategies:**
- Willoughby Local Strategic Planning Statement
  - The Chatswood CBD Strategy
  - Willoughby Industrial Lands Strategy 2036
  - Willoughby Local Centres Strategy
  - Chatswood CBD Planning and Urban Design Strategy 2036
  - Resilient Willoughby Strategy and Action Plan
  - Our Green City Plan 2028
  - Willoughby Integrated Transport Strategy 2036



(this document)



# THE WILLOUGHBY NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

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## BACKGROUND

The night-time economy is one part of the overall economy and encompasses the activities that take place once the normal business day comes to an end at 6pm. The NSW Government 24 Hour Strategy defines three distinct night time periods:

- Evening: 6.00pm to 9.00pm
- Night Time: 9.00pm to 2.00am
- Late Night: 2.00am to 6.00am

The night-time economy is made up of a broad range of industries .These include ‘core businesses’ such as restaurants, theatres, festivals, markets, live music, late night retail, cafes, bars, sports and recreation activities and ‘non-core’ or supporting businesses, including transport, service industries, educational establishments and gyms .

Ensuring a strong night time economy and increased activity in centres provides many benefits including bringing the community together in shared activities and focus on events, increased feelings of safety in public spaces through the higher levels of activity and focus on “fun”, more opportunities for economic activity for businesses increasing income and providing more job opportunities, and higher levels of utilisation of both public and private space .

The night time economy also drives the cultural sector and provides greater opportunities for artists and creative businesses and establishes the identity of a place in a positive way .It adds to the value of tourists when they visit .

As a regional centre, the Chatswood CBD has the ability to establish a level of activity that could extend to 2am and not seek to have activity through the late night period .

The Local Centres within Willoughby will have different levels of activity, where it is likely that the level of the night time economy will extend into the early part of the night and not seek to be locations of activity after 11pm.



## OUR NIGHT TIME ECONOMIC ASPIRATIONS

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Willoughby is a place where people want to visit. Where they can find a range of activities and events that extends the vibrancy of the day into the night .Where Chatswood is the north shore hub for culture, events and entertainment and where the local centres have their distinct identity and level of night time activity .

It is a place where people spend their leisure time and businesses have the opportunity for additional economic activity that supports the cultural needs of the community .

### **To achieve this, four strategic outcomes have been identified:**

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1 . Making the Places

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2 . Promotion and Events

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3 . Business and Cultural Development

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4 . Diversification

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Overall in the next five years we will lead, support, and drive the local night time economy to grow the number and range of activities, the levels of visitation, the number of local jobs, and local businesses .

## OUR ECONOMIC ASPIRATIONS

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### COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council will act as the lead agency to drive the strategy and bring together partners from the business community to ensure that these strategic outcomes are delivered. Council's role in leading the strategy will vary depending on the specific action plan item from providing leadership in setting the strategic goals, providing data and analysis through to establishing promotional and inward investment activities .

Council will directly deliver some of the actions through its role as a local government agency in improving and adapting the public realm to be more usable and attractive to the community .Council will facilitate actions by supporting businesses and organisations through training and development activities, enhancing the capability of those entities .Through all of these varying roles, Council will need the support and input of the local business community .



## OUTCOMES

The Community Strategy, Our Future Willoughby 2028 set out to create a City that is prosperous and vibrant with a specific outcome to “Build and support a night time economy .” Draft Night Time Economy Strategy sets out more detailed action to implement the outcome .

OUTCOME	
1	Making the Places
2	Promotion and Events
3	Business and Cultural Development
4	Diversification

This Strategy defines, and expands on the community’s long-term vision and priorities for the future of the City. These actions will form the basis of activity within the Strategy, however where opportunities present, or the economic landscape changes the Outcome areas provide the overarching direction for additional or varied actions to be created and implemented .

### OUTCOME 1 | Making the Places

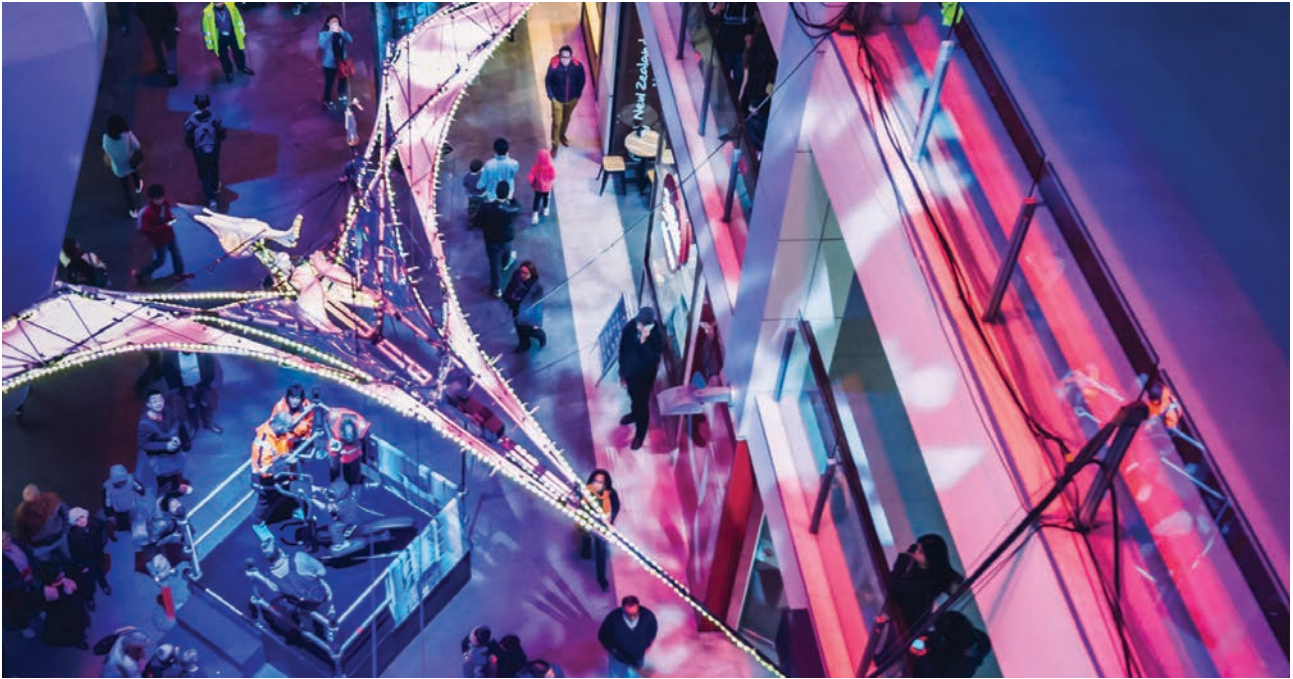
To ensure places that are active and vibrant, people must feel safe and comfortable in an attractive and welcoming space . To enable this, the following priorities have been identified:

PRIORITY	ACTIONS
Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify key sites for improvement in the public domain</li> <li>Identify key sites for improvement in private ownership that impact on the public space</li> <li>Identify additional areas to create new spaces for pedestrians, outdoor dining, small art installations and open space</li> </ul>
Wayfinding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review existing signage and identify immediate improvements</li> <li>Establish a Wayfinding program for each local centre</li> </ul>
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare a Night Lighting Plan that extends existing public space lighting to include additional focus and artistic lighting</li> </ul>
Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish Chatswood as a certified Neon Grid location under the NSW Government’s 24 Hour Strategy</li> <li>Become a Night Time Hub Certification Program location under the NSW Governments 24 Hour Strategy</li> <li>Establish local centres as “night time hubs” and define their role and activity times</li> </ul>
Safety and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review existing community safety programs</li> <li>Review existing safety and inspection measures including the use of CCTV</li> </ul>

# OUTCOMES

## OUTCOME 2 | Promotion and Events.

To ensure a vibrant night-time economy, each place needs to be activated through events, activities and places to visit . To enable this, the following priorities have been identified:



PRIORITY	ACTIONS
Promoting the City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use The Concourse as the key location to attract visitors to the CBD</li> <li>• Expand the Culture Bites program providing ongoing events throughout the Council area</li> <li>• Create a night time brand for Chatswood</li> </ul>
Activations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with land and building owners with vacant spaces to create new areas for the creative sector</li> <li>• Work with businesses to extend opening hours</li> <li>• Work with businesses and building owners to widen the range of night time activities and range of businesses</li> <li>• Work with sporting groups to create linkages and extensions to other activities and events</li> </ul>
Evening openings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with local businesses to extend opening hours</li> <li>• Program dedicated evening events aligned with extended business opening hours</li> </ul>

## OUTCOMES

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### OUTCOME 3 | Business and Cultural Development

To ensure visitors have many choices, there needs to be a range of activities and places to visit .To enable this, the following priorities have been identified:

PRIORITY	ACTIONS
Business Offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create programs for cultural events in new public spaces</li> <li>• Identify affordable spaces for creative industries</li> <li>• Identify new spaces for cultural and creative activities</li> <li>• Identify new spaces for hospitality venues</li> </ul>
Business Friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review application processes for use of public space and events and activities</li> <li>• Explore extended opening hours for low impact retail businesses</li> </ul>

### OUTCOME 4 | Diversification

To ensure the City and local centres can be vibrant and attractive, the night time offer has to be varied .To enable this, the following priorities have been identified:

PRIORITY	ACTIONS
Product Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake “Activity Mix” assessments of the CBD and local centres to identify the current offer and gaps</li> <li>• Examine a program to retain and initiate cultural talent in the creative sector</li> <li>• Investigate programs to link musicians to venues and businesses</li> <li>• Identify areas for pop ups and cultural events</li> <li>• Identify locations for food trucks and approval processes</li> </ul>
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create training programs for businesses to cater for night audiences</li> </ul>

## MEASURES

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*The Economic Development Strategy identified a number of key measures, including:*

- Increase Local Jobs from 72,612 to 90,000
- Increase the number of businesses from 13,210 to 16,000
- Increase the number of Employed Residents from 43,928 to 50,000

**This Strategy will add additional measures to these:**

- Increase visitation to Chatswood CBD by **2% per year**
- Increase the number of cultural and creative activities by **5% per year**

Each of the actions in the Outcome areas will each have a target measure identified within their individual project plan. The activity and progress will be reported annually in the Annual Economic Development Statement produced in August each year .

## RESOURCING AND TIMELINES

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The Council will resource the Strategy through its operational resources and through project funding through its quarterly budget reviews. It will also seek additional external funding to enable some of the actions to be completed. These funding sources including the NSW Government and the Commonwealth Government as well as private sector contributions . The timeline for delivery of each of the Actions will vary with an update being provided through the Annual Economic Development Statement .







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ADDRESS

Level 4, 31 Victor Street, Chatswood, NSW 2057

PO Box 57 Chatswood, NSW 2057

PHONE

02 9777 1000

EMAIL

[email@willoughby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:email@willoughby.nsw.gov.au)