

How cities are growing their night-time economies

Canberra Region Tourism Advisory Forum

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What is the night-time economy?

Definitions of time

- 24-hr, after hours, after dark etc
- 6pm-6am is the most commonly used definition
- Often split into phases of the night e.g. twilight, early evening, late night

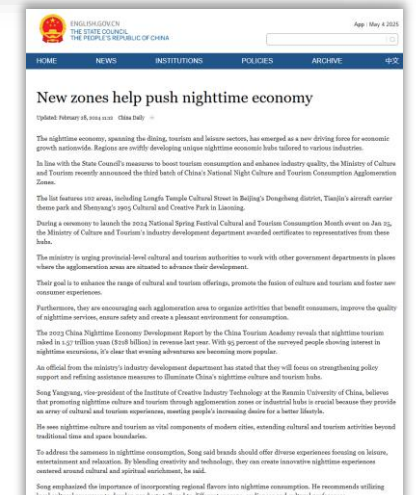
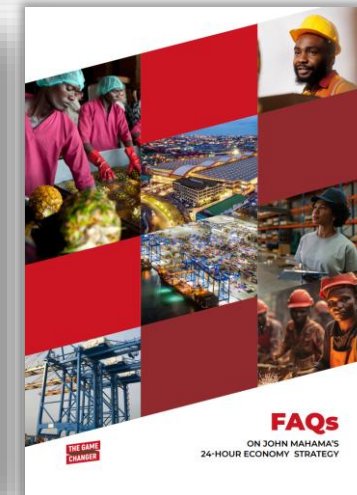
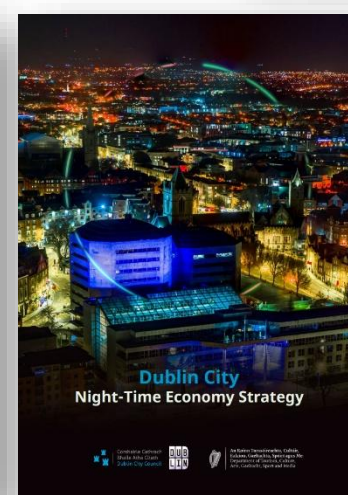
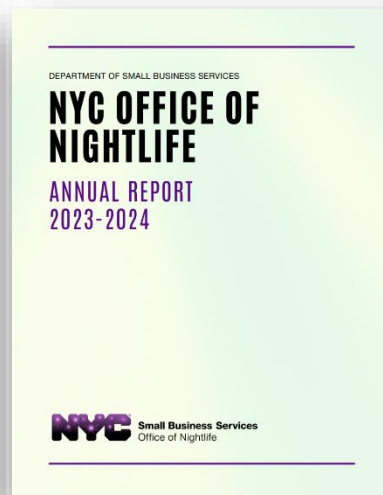
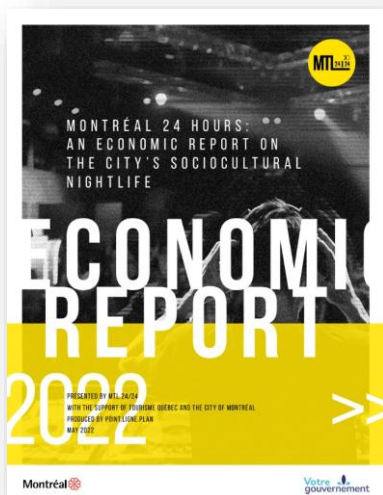
Definitions of activities

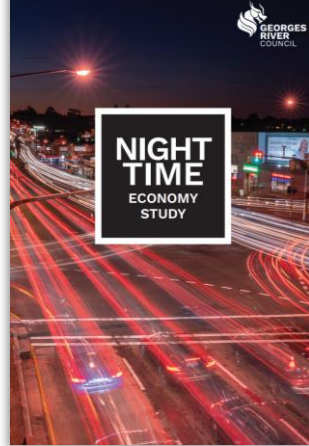
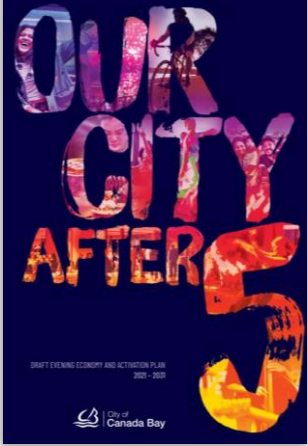
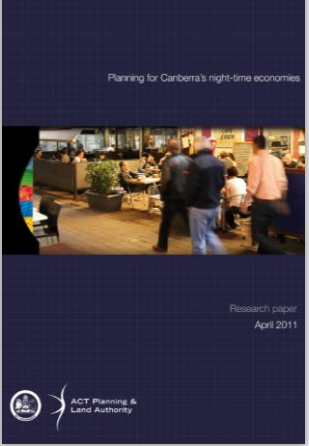
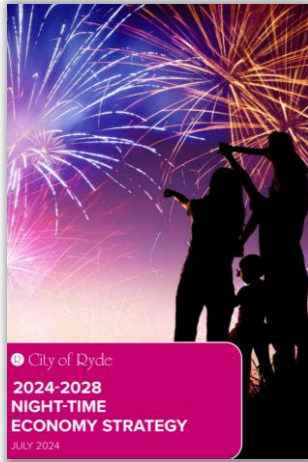
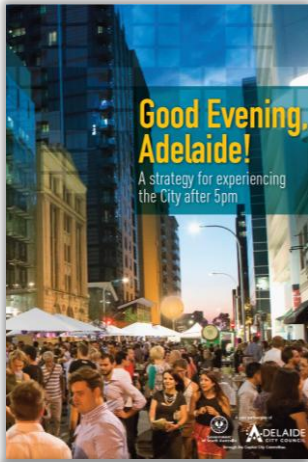
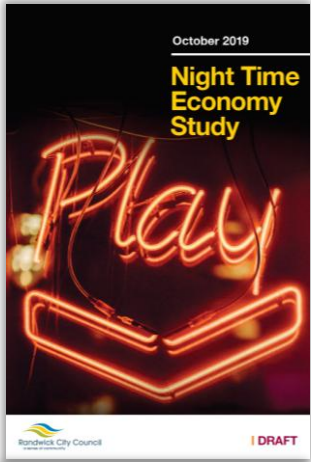
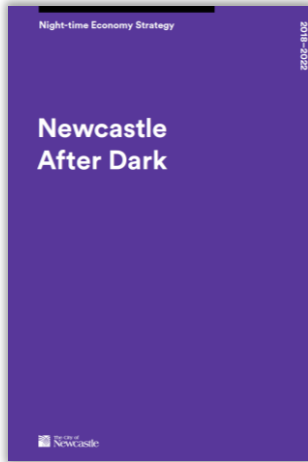
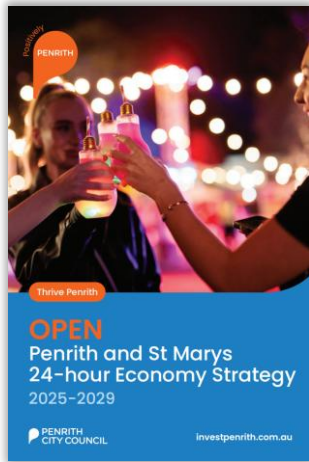
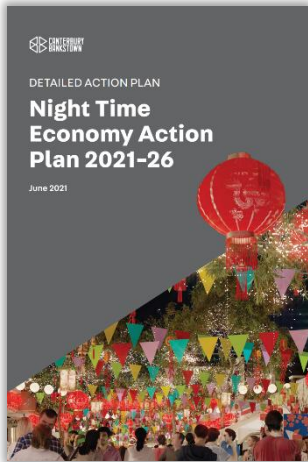
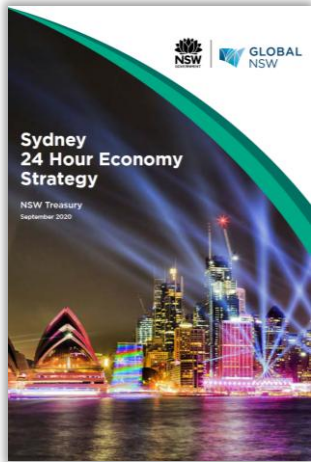
- Core NTE (food, drink and entertainment)
- There's been greater attention turned to increasing both the:
 - diversity of activities and
 - the diversity of people using the night

The rise of night-time economy governance globally

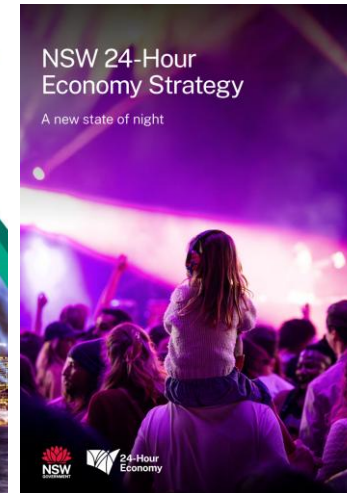
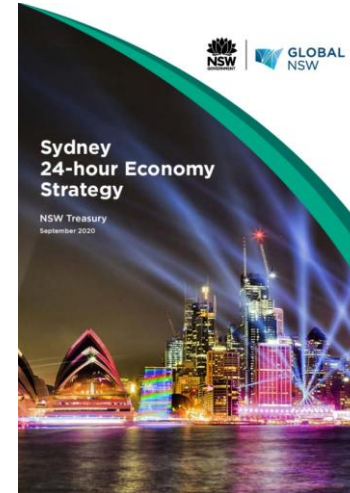
“Night mayors - also called ‘managers’ and ‘czars,’ among other designations - are individuals selected by cities to act as a liaison between nightlife establishments, citizens and local governments”

(Seijas & Gelders, 2021)





NSW Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner



Neon Marketplace

Neon Marketplace is about enabling businesses, creatives and artists to connect and collaborate to create vibrant, inclusive and sustainable places and communities across NSW. It is designed to provide more opportunities for collaborations, activations and initiatives in local business communities - all in one place.

[Read more](#) →



Live Performance Venue Program

The Live Performance Venue Program is a key Program within Venues Unlocked, aiming to increase the number of fit-for-purpose live performance venues and assist hospitality businesses to diversify and stage live performances.

[Read more](#) →



Vibrancy Reforms

Vibrancy Reforms boost NSW's night-time economy, benefiting live music, dining, creative sectors, workers and communities across NSW.

[Read more](#) →



Uptown District Acceleration Program

Uptown District Acceleration Program is a two-stage program (Uptown Accelerator and Uptown Grant) designed to fast-track the formation of local business communities and facilitate the growth of their districts into vibrant going out hubs.

[Read more](#) →



Purple Flag

Purple Flag is an international program assessing going-out areas against criteria including public transport access, street lighting and entertainment offerings.

[Read more](#) →



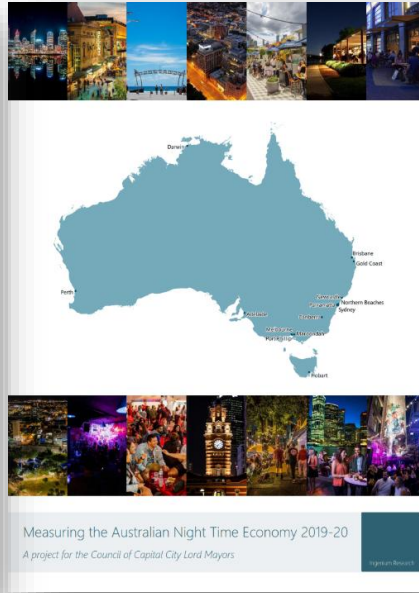
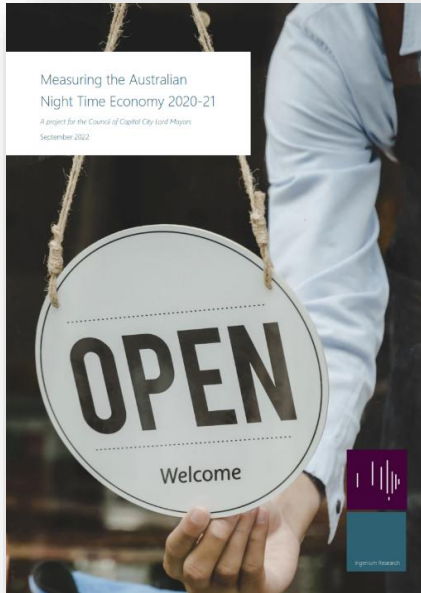
Data after Dark Quarterly Insights

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner presents the NSW Night-Time Economy Quarterly Report, a new resource providing valuable insights into the state's evolving night-time economy.

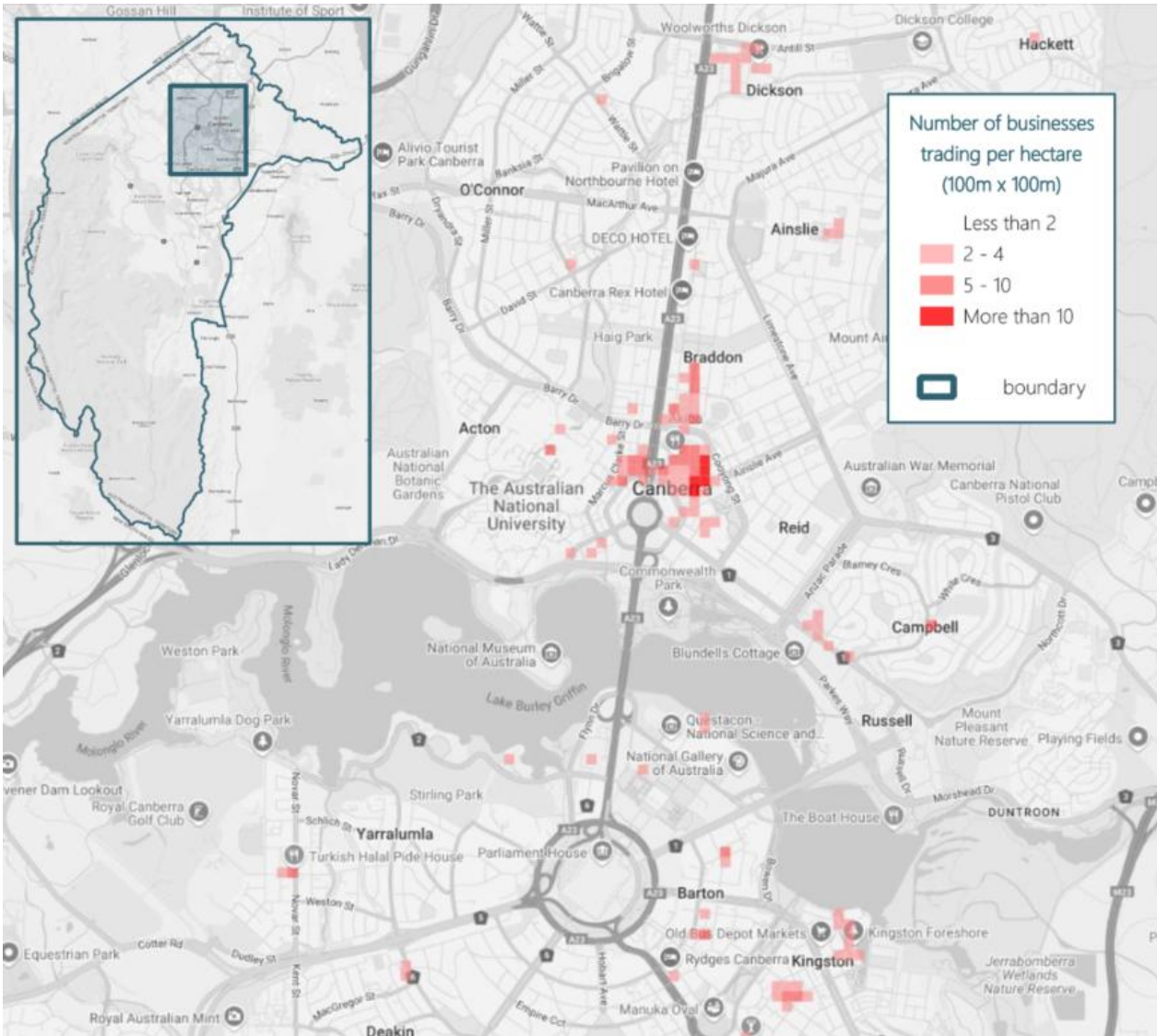
[Read more](#) →







Measuring the Australian Night-Time Economy

- Council of Capital City Lord Mayors analysis by Ingenium Research
- Measures establishments, employment and sales turnover



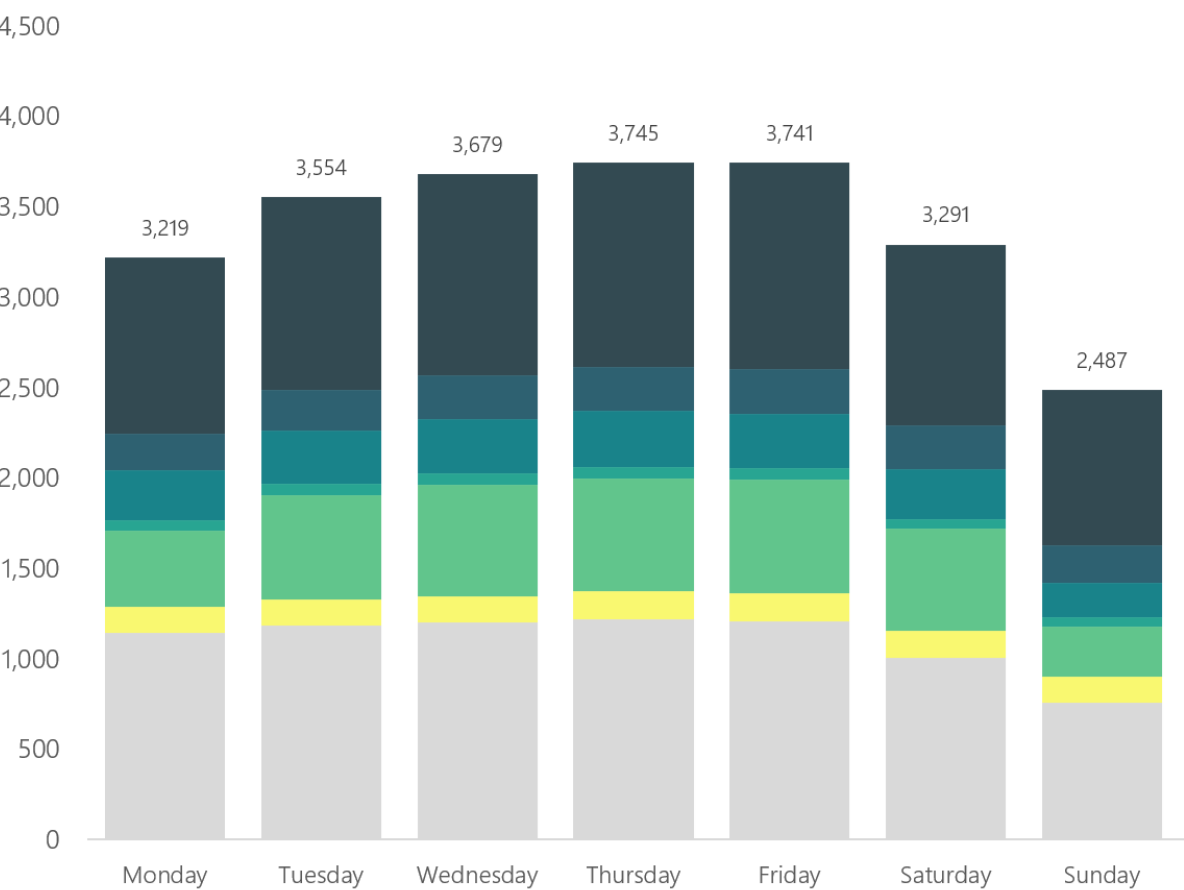
Measuring the Night Time Economy 2024



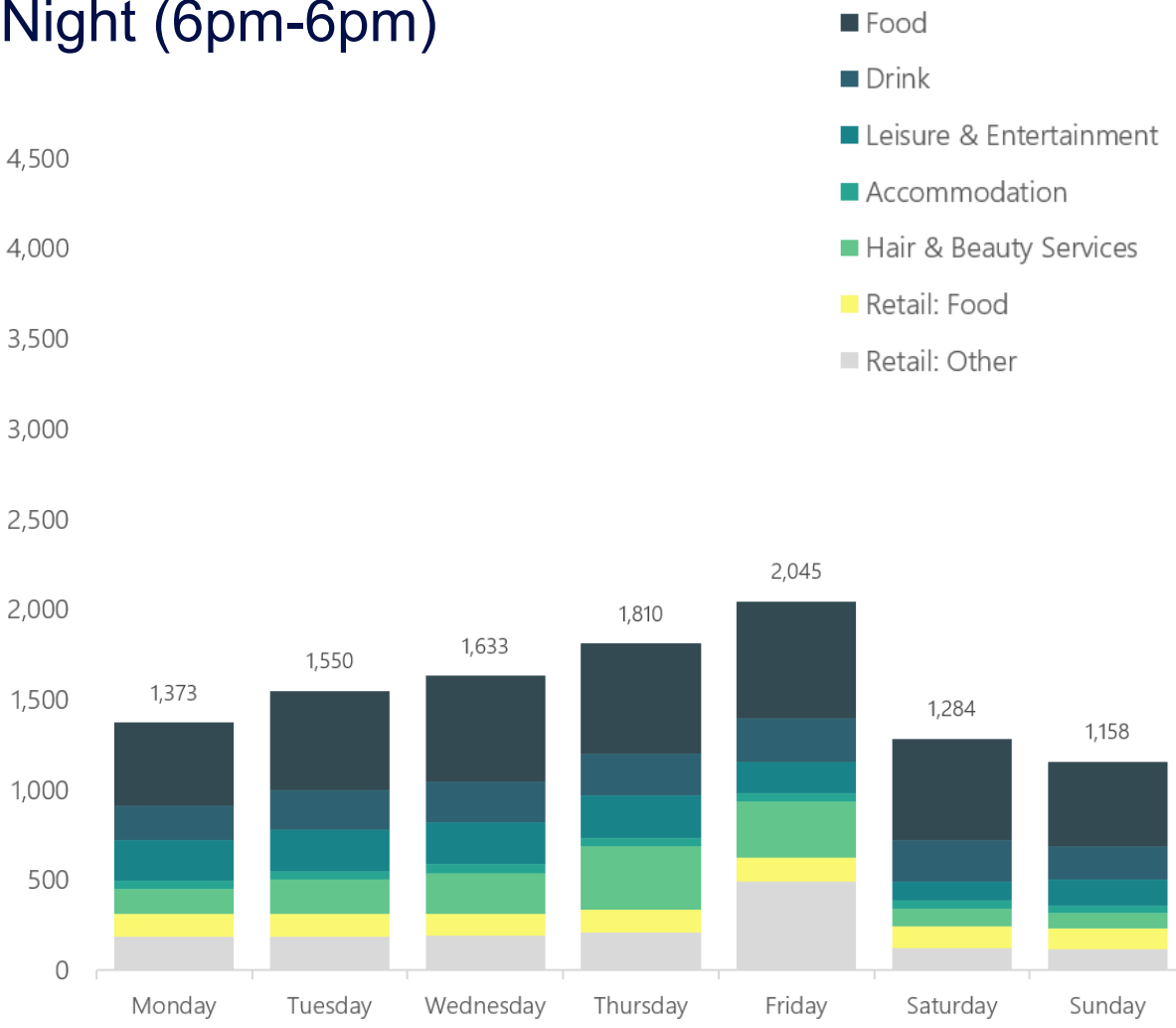
Measure	# Core NTE FY23	% Total Economy
 Establishments	2,209	6%
 Employment	34,835	14%
 Sales Turnover	\$4.5bn	6%
Sub-sector	# Establishments	% Core NTE
 Drink	129	6%
 Entertainment	521	24%
 Food	1,559	71%

Number of businesses trading in Canberra

Day (6am-6pm)



Night (6pm-6pm)



Focusing on precincts



Neon Marketplace

Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner



Districts

Discover dynamic going-out hubs across NSW to collaborate with.

Uptown District Acceleration Program

Ramadan Nights Lakemba

Ramadan Nights Lakemba 2024 was a huge success as record-breaking numbers flocked to the event, held on Haldon Street, to experience the rich food, culture and traditions

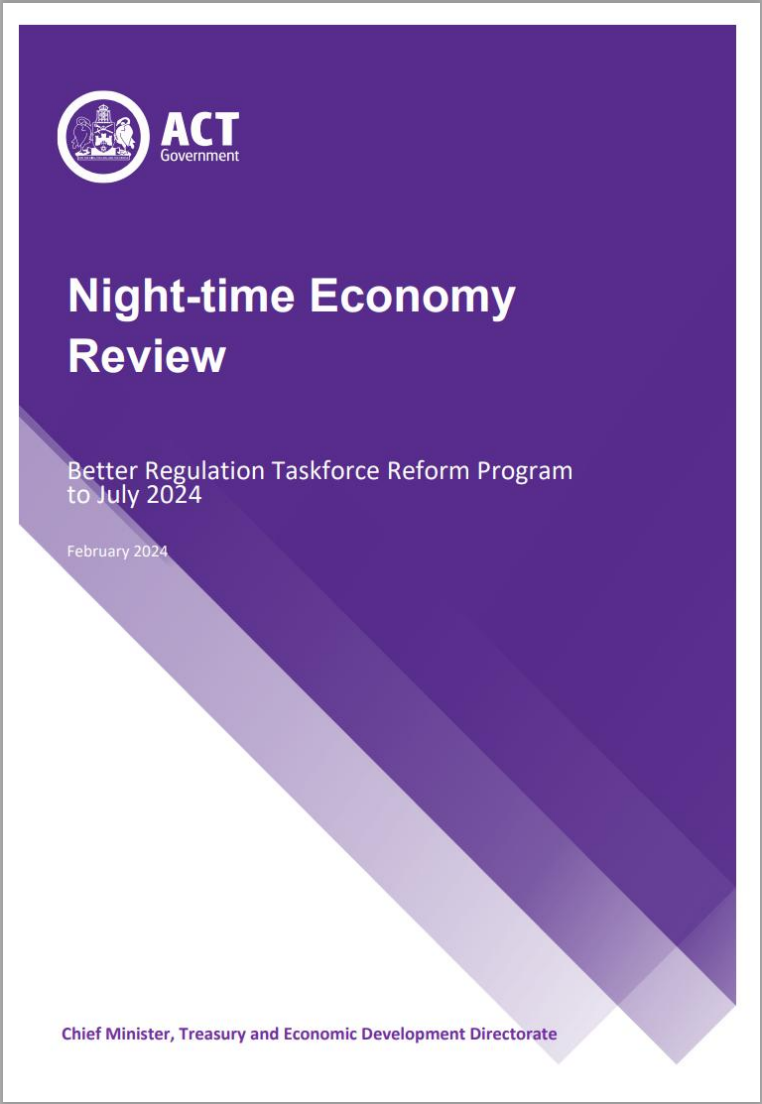
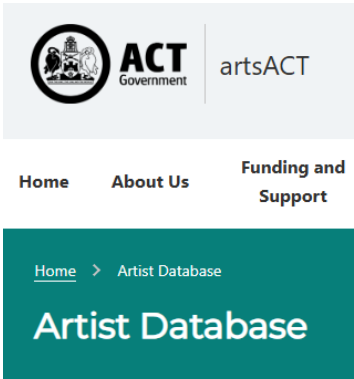
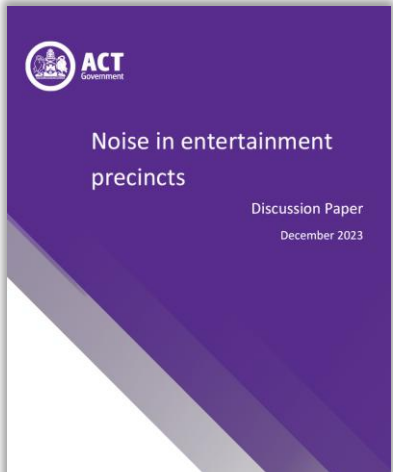
🕒 Dusk till 3am
📍 Lakemba



Kew Progressive Dinner

March 26, 2025

Supporting Canberra's night-time economy



Calls for further support in Canberra



MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 12 May 2025

Welcome Relief, But More Needed to Revive Night-time Economy

The Property Council of Australia has welcomed the ACT Government's announcement of free parking and other targeted support for businesses impacted by Light Rail construction but says more needs to be done to revitalise Civic's struggling night-time economy.

Property Council ACT & Capital Region Executive Director, Ashlee Berry, said while free parking and licence fee reductions were a good start, they were "a drop in the ocean" for businesses that have been hanging by a thread since construction on Light Rail Stage 2A began.

FEELING THE SQUEEZE Venues have backed a push for a night-time economy co-ordinator 'COVID was better than this' climate

Jasper Lindell

SOUMI Tannous, whose small bar is tucked into a lane just off Garema Place and shadowed by a major construction site, reminisces about operating in the pandemic.

"I miss the days of COVID. Imagine ... imagine how bad is that? We missed the day where the pandemic was," Mr Tannous said, his face marked by incredulity.

"It was better than this. Right now you're hanging on a thread of air. We don't know where we're heading."

Mr Tannous said Bar Beirut, his venue which opened in 2019, had been squeezed financially, as cost-of-living pressures drove people home, the price of liquor kept increasing and other costs, including insurance, soared.

"We are not beggars. We are very smart, resilient, hard workers. We work to provide an entertainment, man. We don't want to sell you anything but good times and a safe space to spend your money," he said.

Mr Tannous joined a group of venue operators on Friday to back a call for a night-time economy co-ordinator in the ACT, which they believe would better focus the government's efforts to boost the capital's nightlife.

Independent MLA Thomas Emerson led the call for the co-ordinator, which he said would give the hospitality industry a single point of contact to navigate the territory's bureaucracy.

Mr Emerson and ACT Labor signed a supply-and-confidence agreement after the 2024 election, including a commitment the government would implement a night-time economy



ONEZZ's Alex Garland, left, Beirut Bar's Soumi Tannous and The Dock's Ben Alexander on Friday, backing calls for a night-time economy co-ordinator. Picture by Keegan Carroll

support package.

The package would be designed to revitalise "Canberra's dining, bar, events and arts scene - including exploration of complementary, co-designed measures to ensure overall success".

Mr Emerson said there was a risk of further venue closures without a cross-portfolio effort to support the sector.

"Do we want students, artists and young professionals moving to Canberra to discover it's dead after dark? Local creatives leaving because there's no vibe here?" Mr Emerson said.

bookers and artists to realise Canberra's potential as a thriving cultural hub."

Mr Emerson this week asked Night-Time Economy Minister Tara Cheyne whether she thought the sector was in crisis. The minister does not.

"I acknowledge that there have actually been plenty of new venues opening, including everything from restaurants to what I think is a nightclub right near where I live. So we do need to look at the night-time economy as a whole across the city," Ms Cheyne told the Assembly.

The government in late April said it would have more to say soon on its night-time economy support package.

Cuts to liquor licences for venues supporting live music and the arts were introduced in 2024, along with special event trading, free loading zone permits for musicians and updated noise standards to protect night-time traders.

But the government should consider establishing an office or role dedicated to progressing night-time economy work, the Legislative Assembly's economics, industry and recreation standing committee on Friday recommended.

"The committee heard that resourcing for the night-time economy portfolio in the ACT public service is spread across several areas, including the business area of CMTEDD. Access

Canberra, the [Environment Protection Authority], the event and business coordination assist team, and the better regulation team," the committee's report said.

"The distribution of staff working on the portfolio across different teams makes exact resourcing difficult to quantify."

Fiction Nightclub entertainment director Frank Tapia said current supports did not reflect the reality of running a venue in 2025. He said a co-ordinator role was vital. "I've operated venues in Sydney during the peak of the lockdown laws and in Canberra throughout COVID, including during sit-down nightclubbing restrictions. What we're facing now is beyond anything I experienced

in either of those periods. The challenges are deeper and more systemic."

Lala Hospitality Group chief executive Ant Arena, whose firm runs four city venues, said foot traffic had dropped significantly and Canberra's atmosphere continued to decline. "What's particularly disappointing is the government's current response. Rather than offering tangible support measures - such as financial assistance, rates and licensing relief, or promotional programs - we were offered guidance on how to wind up our businesses. That is an insult to the years of hard work, community building, and employment we have contributed to this city," Mr Arena said.

In summary

What's working well?

- A strong night-time economy (\$4.5bn)
- Minister dedicated to the sector
- Development of entertainment precincts

Opportunities for Canberra

- Further advocacy
- Considering governance structures to connect government, business and customer
- Expanding beyond nightlife and considering the 24-hour economy
- Thinking about the night in all aspects of city planning (e.g. transport, lighting)
- Business in precincts working collectively to trial new ideas:
 - Tailored to the needs of Canberrans and its visitors
 - People need to know about it (i.e. well advertised)
 - Events need to be consistent and accessible / easy to participate in

Q&A



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