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Emerging

Kickstarting your night-time economy

How to use this volume

Who is this volume for?

Councils just getting started with a night-time economy.

Council officers and executive roles involved in your night-time economy.

In practice this means:

- You have identified the night-time economy as a priority but have limited experience fostering and supporting night-time activity in your area

- You do not have a comprehensive, shared vision for what the night-time economy could look like in your LGA

- You have limited understanding of the needs of the local community and businesses around the night-time economy

- There are limited businesses open later than 7.00pm in your LGA, with night-time activity characterised by alcohol-serving venues

- Council is limited in resources and funding to support a dedicated direction and actions to grow your night-time economy

- Actions around night-time economy development are typically small-scale, limited in impact or siloed in a single department

- Separate departments may be working in isolation on night-time economy initiatives or interacting with businesses operating in the night-time economy without cross-organisational oversight or integration

What you'll get from this volume

The actions in this volume will help you:

- Understand the skills and expertise available in your organisation – together with any knowledge gaps – and the key roles involved in the night-time economy

- Understand your community's interests and priorities for your night-time economy

- Engage with relevant parties to understand transport and mobility in your area

- Frame key factors to measure and evaluate the development of your night-time economy.

Use this volume if the maturity level of your night-time economy corresponds to **LEVEL 1: EMERGING** in the Maturity and Capability Framework.

You can find the framework and diagnostic self-assessment tool in **Part 1 of this toolkit**.

How to use this volume

This volume provides a set of actions to support you to grow your local night-time economy. These actions are divided into four domains:

Governance	Strategy	Place	Data

Alongside these actions you'll find different types of guidance:

Tools	Tips	Enablers	Case studies
Developed to help you complete specific actions	Guidance for specific actions based on the experience of others	NSW Government programs and policies that can support your local efforts	Learnings from local and international cities and their night-time economies

Steps

As you work through this volume some key steps to consider are:

1. **Adapt:** Consider the recommended actions for each focus area and adapt them to your local context

2. **Implement:** Put your actions and initiatives into practice

3. **Track:** Use the checklist at the back of the volume to track your progress

4. **Review:** Evaluate the impact of your activities and initiatives on your night-time economy

5. **Progress:** Reassess your position with the diagnostic tool and move to the next level of maturity

Reviewing your progress

Councils progress through maturity levels at different speeds.

While you are at this maturity level, you should undertake annual or bi-annual reviews to evaluate the impact of your activities and initiatives.

Undertake reviews via your cross-organisational working group to identify:

- Tangible benefits from new night-time activity

- Any required improvements to support on-the-ground activity and organisational capability, with a focus on maintaining community satisfaction and success

- Opportunities to grow or enhance your night-time economy through new activities or programs

- Unexpected impacts to your night-time economy, including both opportunities and threats.

Governance

Governance is an important part of establishing your night-time economy.

It provides the framework of systems, structures and decision-making tools needed to align proposed night-time activity with your vision, objectives and responsibilities.

Your activities will have a greater impact if you undertake the following governance actions before tackling the those specified for strategy, place and data.

Art for All Concert, The Domain, Sydney. Credit: Destination Sydney

ACTION 1

Review your organisation to identify the areas and departments with an interest in the night-time economy.

Your aim with this action is to understand your organisational capabilities, establish the night-time economy as a project and formalise initial responsibilities around it.

Key outputs:

- List of internal stakeholders
- List of existing initiatives, events and programs
- Forums to foster internal collaboration
- Council-wide project team
- Project plan.

Step 1: Strategic review

Get started with a strategic review or cross-organisational forum, identifying the departments that impact, influence or intersect with your area's night-time economy.

Build a list of internal staff, identifying which positions regulate night-time activity and which have tools that can encourage its sustainable growth.

Speak with colleagues from:

- Economic development
- Events and cultural activities
- Tourism
- Urban and land use planning, including strategic planning and development assessments
- Compliance and regulatory, including noise and licensing officers
- Community safety and crime prevention
- Marketing and communications
- Legal.

Step 2: Learn from others

When you're starting out, a good way to advocate for the night-time economy is through the success of others.

Organise forums with representatives from NSW Government agencies and LGAs with thriving night-time hubs to build internal interest in your local night-time economy. These forums can help internal stakeholders understand the value of the night-time economy and foster greater collaboration within your organisation.

Step 3: Create a project team

Establish a council-wide project team to take responsibility for the night-time economy.

This may involve formalising the night-time economy as a council project. Be sure to assign a team lead and include the relevant cross-organisational stakeholders, drawing on your stakeholder list established at Step 1.

Key actions for this team:

- Creating a project plan with clear objectives and deliverable
- Mapping responsibilities and challenges for the night-time economy across internal departments and positions
- Holding regular meetings to track progress against the project plan.
- Brainstorm solutions

TIP ✨

Identify any initiatives, events or programs delivered by existing teams.

ACTION 2

Obtain council support to start early consultation.

Before you begin developing your night-time economy, you will need to ensure your councillors and executive support increased night-time activity in your LGA.

You can do this by:

- Submitting business papers to your council to advocate for the development of your local night-time economy

- Obtaining a mandate from your leadership team to start developing the night-time economy in your area.

> **TIP** ✨
>
> You will need the ongoing support of your selected councillors and executive to establish a thriving night-time economy, ensuring you have the community support, resources and funding required to maintain it over the longer term.

ACTION 3

Consult with people to understand your community's appetite for enhanced night-time activity.

Early consultation is critical to test community and business views about when and where late-night trading should occur.

It provides the opportunity to assess people's satisfaction with existing night-time activity and their appetite for changes to precinct boundaries and late-night trading hours.

Who to consult

Consultation should be extensive and reach your whole community, providing people a safe space to share their priorities for a local night-time economy.

Representing the demographic make-up of your area, consultation should target:

- Residents

- Visitors

- Licensed premises operators

- Entertainment venue operators

- Creative sector

- Advocacy groups

- Industry, health and government representatives.

Identify demographics that have a keen interest in nightlife, such as:

- Young consumers

- Residents

- Night-time workers

- Local businesses.

Be sure you also reach groups who do not always participate in night-time activity (such as First Nations people, elderly people, families and people with a disability).

Method

Use qualitative methods to understand the diverse perspectives, ideas, behaviours and challenges around the night-time economy in your area.

Qualitative consultation methods:

- Surveys with multiple-choice and free-text options

- Pop-up consultations in specific precincts and night-time trading areas

- Telephone surveys

- Mobile phone apps.

> **TIP** ✨
>
> Early consultation can help establish a mandate for a more diverse night time economy – allowing both council and the community to understand issues and develop long-term support solutions.

Strategy

Strategy defines the actions required to deliver the desired outcomes for your night-time economy.

The following tasks will lay the foundations for your night-time economy strategy, which we recommend developing once you progress to **LEVEL 2: GROWING** (see **Volume 2**).

These strategy actions will be most effective if you have already undertaken the actions specified for governance.

Sydney's Open for Lunch at Parramatta Square, Parramatta. Credit: Destination NSW

ACTION 1

Integrate the views of key stakeholders into a shared vision for your night-time economy.

Part 1 of this toolkit provides guidance on developing a minimum viable vision that outlines your night-time economy ambitions.

It's important that your key stakeholders share your vision for the local night-time economy.

You should therefore develop your vision via a two-way process: sharing your thinking (or minimum viable vision) with local organisations and individuals interested in nurturing a more vibrant night-time economy and providing opportunities for them to share their thoughts and ideas with council.

Opportunities include:

- Hosting forums where people can share their thoughts, concerns and aspirations for a night-time economy
- Engaging early with the local business community around their needs, ideas and challenges regarding the night-time economy
- Circulating a discussion paper or action plan to share key ideas for your night-time economy.

Ensure you document stakeholder perspectives in a form you can use to refine your shared vision for the night-time economy.

TIP

Discussion papers and action plans provide an effective way to guide conversations with the community, capturing your initial vision, the key themes and challenges from early consultation, and any practical solutions you propose to potential issues and concerns.

You should evaluate a full range of ideas and policy options in your discussion paper. These will help gauge people's sentiment around different proposals, allowing you to develop planning controls that have the support of the community and minimise the risk of objections when proposals are formally exhibited.

The City of Canterbury Bankstown case study (page 50) highlights the value you can deliver from a night-time economy action plan.

ACTION 2

Assess and map transport and mobility for your area.

TIP ✨

Transport and mobility accessibility are long-term success factors for a sustainable night-time economy.

As you start growing your night-time economy, it's important to consider how different people access, move around and travel between your precincts and trading areas safely and efficiently.

Your aim is to develop a better understanding of how your area is currently serviced at night.

Step 1: Reviewing transport options

Engage with council's transport planner to review existing night-time transport in your LGA. They should have a good understanding of current and planned transport options, as well as any issues that exist with these services.

Encourage them to consult with relevant state government agencies around heavy rail, regional road infrastructure and point-to-point transport options. They should also consult with rideshare, point-to-point and private bus companies that service your area to gain a full picture of existing transport options.

Step 2: Mapping existing services

Map transport options relevant to your night-time activity. The objective here is to determine if your area's night-time activity is well-matched by access to transport mobility options, or whether there are any gaps in locations serviced – or hours of operation – that require advocacy or attention.

Key state agencies include:

- Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner
- Liquor and Gaming NSW
- Department of Planning and Environment
- Transport for NSW
- Destination NSW.

Public transport	On-demand transport (taxis and rideshares)
• Where are routes and stops located? • What are the public transport schedules? • Are services accessible? • When do different services cease for the night?	• Where are your taxi ranks? • Where are the hotspots for rideshare providers to pick up and drop off?
Cycling infrastructure	**Pedestrian mobility**
• Where are your bike paths, separated cycleways, bike parking rings and U-rails? • Where are public end-of-trip facilities and what hours are they available?	• How and where do people walk in your area at night? • Are footpaths accessible for all levels of ability and mobility, including prams, wheelchairs and mobility scooters?

Step 3: Engaging state government agencies

Consider ways to engage with government agencies, including audit walks or workshops.

Your aim with these engagements is to brief these agencies on both your current situation and your vision for future development and improvements, obtaining their buy-in to ensure future transport planning is aligned with projected night-time activity in your area.

The City of Canterbury Bankstown

Located in Sydney's south-west, Canterbury Bankstown is one of Greater Sydney's most culturally, socially and economically diverse communities. The area combines urban and suburban neighbourhoods with abundant parkland, rivers, sports grounds and a university campus.

The area:

The City of Canterbury Bankstown spans more than 40 suburbs. It is the largest council in NSW by population. The traditional owners of the land are the Darug and Eora people, with Darug also forming the largest Aboriginal language group in the LGA.

Governance

- Identified the need to create a more connected night-time experience

Strategy

- Ambition to move from a 'drive-through' city to a 'drive-to' city
- Night Time Economy Action Plan 2021-26 adopted by Council in 2021

Place

- 8th largest economy in NSW (National Institute of Economic and Industry Research, 2018)
- 20% of employment across the LGA is linked to the night-time economy (Ingenium, 2020)
- Structured around 34 hubs that offer local services, facilities and business opportunities
- Dominance of larger venues dampening the contribution of small businesses
- Dedicated support for increased outdoor dining provisions, events and live music post-COVID
- Data
- Data collected during to the development of their action plan highlighted that larger establishments dominate town centres
- People stay in larger establishments and are less inclined to visit other venues in the area

Purple Flag Lakemba. Credit: NSW Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade

The city at night:

The City of Canterbury Bankstown has experienced strong night-time economy growth since 2015, influenced by its diverse cultures and strategic frameworks that support the development of local businesses, places and activities.

The Night Time Economy Action Plan 2021-26 details Council's strategy to build a vibrant, welcoming night-time economy that celebrates the area's cultural diversity and creativity. Community aspirations for the night-time economy included easier parking and more family-friendly places, more spaces for outdoor dining, and a greater focus on events, markets, and festivals.

Initiatives and activations like Eat Global Visit Local and the Ramadan Night Markets allow local businesses to showcase their offerings while responding to the desire for outdoor dining.

To address the prevailing idea that the area is unsafe, Council has articulated the need to incorporate a City Marketing Strategy into the promotion of night-time activities to audiences outside the LGA, with a particular focus on young consumers.

Furthermore, Council has proactively identified key delivery partners for actions in the plan, highlighting the importance of an integrated, multidisciplinary approach.

Key challenge:

Establishing a new narrative and brand to attract a broader audience to Canterbury Bankstown's unique night-time experiences and culture.

Key Lesson:

The night-time economy action plan provided an effective framework for steering action, engaging the community and forming partnerships with local businesses to grow the area's night-time economy.

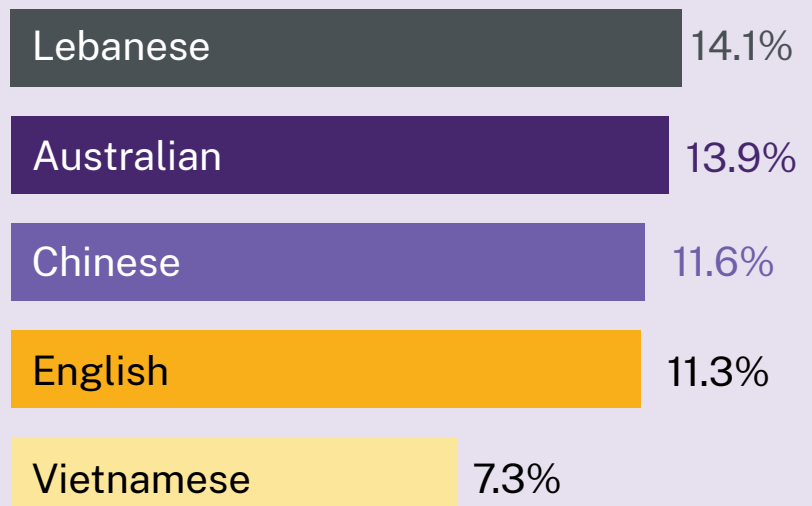Population
372,322

Median age
36 years

NTE value
$15.8b

Cultural diversity

Lebanese	14.1%
Australian	13.9%
Chinese	11.6%
English	11.3%
Vietnamese	7.3%

Place

Placemaking is a complex process. It involves the interaction of strategy, land use, the public domain, compliance and regulation, economic policy, transport and cultural policy.

The following actions are targeted at helping you develop an understanding of the night-time places in your LGA: where they are, what's happening in them, who's participating in them and when.

ACTION 1

Survey residents and visitors to understand who is participating in your night-time economy.

As you look to establish your night-time economy, it's important to understand who is already participating in night-time activity in your area and who is not, including any barriers or incentives to getting involved.

Survey people in your LGA to capture a range of perspectives and experiences on your night-time economy. You can do this as part of the community outreach described in **Governance Action 3**.

> **TIP**
>
> Survey topics include:
>
> - **Customer experience:** Accessibility of venues, diversity of offering, quality of service, trading hours and overall satisfaction
> - **Safety:** Perception of safety and experiences of crime, violence and harassment
> - **Economic activity and impact:** Spending patterns, employment and overall economic impact
> - **Community amenity impact:** Littering and disturbances to residential areas
> - **Accessibility:** Transportation, affordability and accessibility for people of all abilities
> - **Sustainability:** Energy use and waste management, the impact of the night-time economy on the environment
> - **Emerging trends and activities:** New trends and activities emerging in your night-time economy and innovative approaches for growth.
>
> The Newcastle After Dark Community Engagement Report provides further guidance on how to create a survey to understand who is accessing your night-time economy.
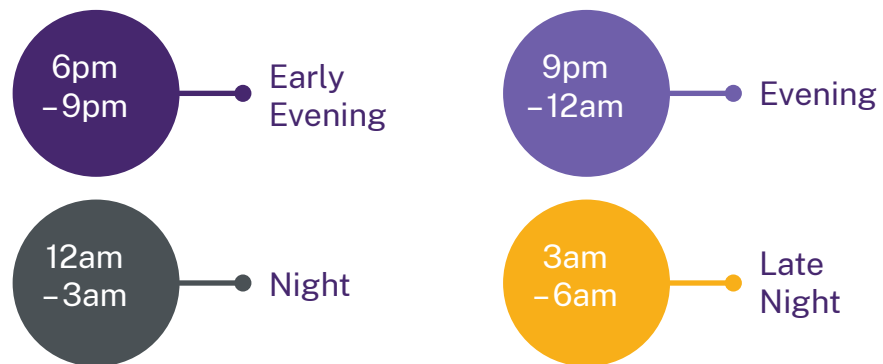
ACTION 2

Audit your area
to identify where
night-time activities
already exist
and operate.

Map the places and precincts in your LGA where activities currently occur, identifying areas for potential activation and enhanced activity.

Use all the information at your disposal to enhance your understanding of place, including written surveys, on-the-ground surveys, planning approvals, occupation certificates and real estate advice.

What are the different time periods at play in your night-time economy?

Which areas are active at different times of the night?

6pm –9pm — Early Evening

9pm –12am — Evening

12am –3am — Night

3am –6am — Late Night

Consider the following layers of policy as you undertake this action:

- Land use zoning of night-time areas and the nature of surrounding neighbourhoods
- Permissible uses and their current trading hours
- Location of existing performance venues (theatres, cinemas, live music venues)

- Density of licensed venues
- Crime data
- Transport infrastructure
- Mix of retail, commercial and creative spaces
- Residential and visitor demographics.
- Public facilities and amenities
- Public open space

TIP

Observe different places in your LGA and engage the community to understand where activity happens after dark. Ask people to share their favourite places to visit through an online survey or conduct intercept surveys while they are out at night.

- Where do people spend their time?
- What do they do there?

- Are they staying or just passing through?
- Why do they like it?

Data

Data is a powerful tool to measure the success of your night-time economy and provide insights for decision-making. The two recommended actions below will enhance the data capabilities to create your night-time economy.

Before collecting data on your night-time economy, you need to identify the key indicators that align with your vision and undertake a data discovery process to understand what data already exists within your organisation and networks that can be used to support your efforts.

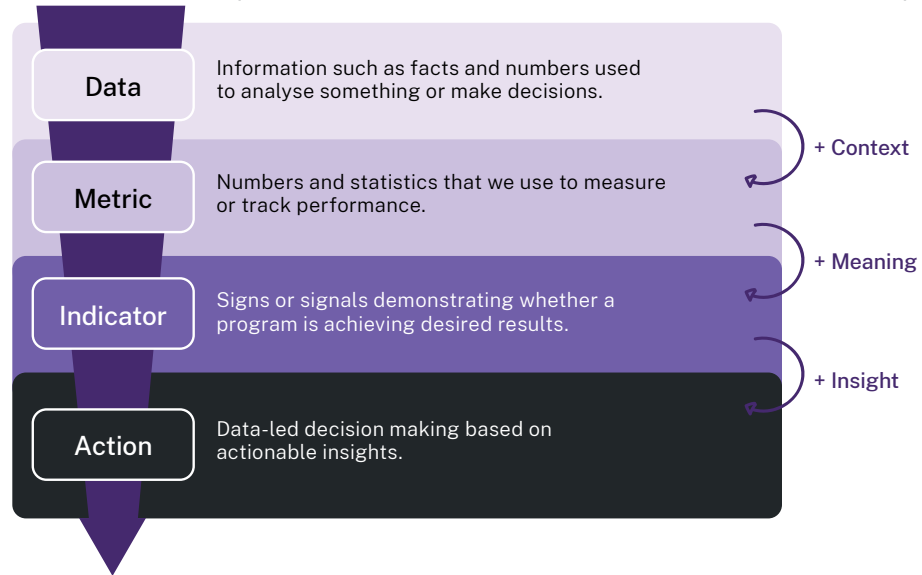Uptowns Bar, Newcastle. Credit: Destination NSW

ACTION 1

Identify the key indicators for measuring your night-time economy.

As part of establishing a minimum viable vision for your night-time economy (see **Part 1**), you would have identified your ambition for your local area. Your key indicators should be closely linked to this vision. They will allow you to assess and track the success of your night-time economy against your vision and objectives.

The following diagram shows the relationship between data, metrics and indicators, and how they support data-led decision-making.

Indicators can be quantitative measures such as train station arrivals, or qualitative

Data	Information such as facts and numbers used to analyse something or make decisions.	
Metric	Numbers and statistics that we use to measure or track performance.	+ Context
Indicator	Signs or signals demonstrating whether a program is achieving desired results.	+ Meaning
Action	Data-led decision making based on actionable insights.	+ Insight

measures around sentiment or perceptions which may be gauged from a survey response. Focus on indicators that lend themselves to measurable outcomes in the long term, and start with general, LGA-level information at this stage. As you progress on the maturity pathway, you will learn about new indicators and gather more information sources and data.

TIP

Don't focus on sourcing data and statistics for this action.

Focus instead on identifying the needs of your community and council – and establishing these as indicators for success.

Use the results from your stakeholder consultation to guide this process.

Key indicators	Examples (as identified by your community and council)
Business data	• What is the turnover of night-time businesses? • What is the composition of businesses trading at night?
Demographic data	• Age, household composition, income
Movement data	• Number of visitors your LGA receives annually
Crime data	• Number of offences at night (6pm–6am) • Number of alcohol-related non-domestic assaults at night (6pm–6am)
Community sentiment	• Through a community survey you can find out attitudes towards nightlife in your LGA

ACTION 2

Undertake a data discovery process to support a data-driven approach to your night-time economy.

What data does your council collect or source that might be relevant to the night-time economy?

This may include:

- The number of licensed businesses or businesses that have extended trading hours

- Demographic data about your community

- Pedestrian footfall on main streets

- Tourism or visitor numbers

- Community participation in council-supported events that include night-time activity.

Are there departments within council that gather and manage this data, or which work with government entities to secure transport data from Opal, employment data from the ABS, or spend data from local businesses or credit card operators?

Work with your council-wide project team to determine which departments in your council collect, source or own relevant data.

This data discovery process will be the basis for a more detailed inventory and for future IT processes to enable you to store and analyse night-time economy data. You may also develop a data gap analysis in future stages of your organisational maturity to support a data-driven approach to your night-time economy.

With this information you can work with your IT team to identify and procure the digital infrastructure required to support your night-time economy in the future. This may involve licensing an off-the-shelf solution or engaging in a formal procurement process with external vendors.

Next steps

Having completed the actions recommended in this volume, you have taken some crucial steps in creating your night-time economy.

Now is a good time to reassess where you are against your original vision and goals:

- Have your actions been effective in kickstarting your night-time economy?

- Are your efforts supported by staff in different areas and departments within council?

- Has your organisational capability increased and are you able to manage night-time activity effectively?

- Have you been able to identify stakeholders within the community and agencies across government to support your progress?

- Are key decision-makers in council informed and supportive of future actions and ambitions?

Checklist

Use this checklist to track the progress of your actions across governance, strategy, place and data.

Once you've completed all the recommended actions, progress to next steps.

Framework	Focus	Action	In Progress	Complete
Governance	Organisational Structure	Review your organisation to identify the areas and departments with an interest in the night-time economy		
	Resources and Funding	Obtain council support to start early consultation		
	Community Engagement	Consult with people to understand your community's appetite for enhanced night-time activity		
Strategy	Changing the Narrative	Integrate the views of key stakeholders into a shared vision for your night-time economy		
	Mobility and Connectivity	Assess and map transport and mobility for your area		
Place	Participation	Survey residents and visitors to understand who is participating in your night-time economy		
	Location and Time	Audit your area to identify where night-time activities already exist and operate		
Data	Measurement	Identify the key indicators for measuring your night-time economy		
	Planning	Undertake a data discovery process to support a data-driven approach to your night-time economy		

TOOL ✂

Use the diagnostic tool in **Part 1 of the toolkit** to reassess your maturity and capability.

This will tell you how far your night-time economy has advanced from your original position – as well as how much your organisational capability has improved.

If this maturity level aligns with your council's vision and goals:

- Continue to monitor performance of your night-time economy against your key indicator framework

- Undertake annual or bi-annual reviews to evaluate the impact of your activities and programs

- Adjust your activities and initiatives as required

If your ambition lies beyond this level, your new score will let you know if you're ready to progress to **Level 2: GROWING**, or if you need to first revisit some actions in this volume.