

Good evening, everyone, it's good to see you again.

Acknowledgement of Country

I have a very strong belief that when you bring a randomly selected group together and present them with problems, with the research, and they meet with the practitioners, they see the situation first hand that they will come up with effective solutions and that is what you've done.

You have put in long days – and I believe some of you experienced late night Sydney “as it is” from late on Saturday night to around 3am on Sunday morning.

In the people you chose to hear evidence from, you have cast a wide net to find, perhaps, different points of view.

And then, you have also dealt with a great deal of reading and considering various reports.

Outcome - you were asked to answer the question, “How can we ensure we have a vibrant and safe Sydney nightlife?” You have responded with 25 recommendations. Eight of these recommendations fall within the City's direct responsibilities. The remaining 17 will require action by other levels of government, primarily the State Government.

Significantly, you have recognised that making Sydney nightlife safe and vibrant is a complex challenge. There is no quick fix or single answer. It requires action in several areas. It doesn't just rest with policing or regulation of licenced venues. You see the need to diversify Sydney's nightlife, the need for improved late night transport and you recognise education and the media have a role to play.

You have provided recommendations across all five areas. It is pleasing that several of your recommendations complement the work the City is already doing through Open Sydney, our long term strategy for developing Sydney at night.

Your first recommendation refers to the need for varied night time entertainment options that are suitable for a range of age groups and cultures and your third recommendation refers to supporting night time innovation and diversity.

I don't wish to pre-empt Council's response to these specific recommendations. However, the Live Music and Performance Action Plan which Council unanimously adopted on Monday night align with their intent.

While much of the public and media focus has been on live music, the Action Plan is much broader. It aims to support and encourage all types of performance, including comedy, cabaret, small and medium scale live theatre, literary evenings. In short, almost anything that can engage an audience.

The action plan also addresses one of your other concerns – the need to reduce red tape and to make it easier for people wanting to provide diverse types of live entertainment. We want to encourage new and innovative performances in non-traditional spaces.

Also on Monday night Council adopted our Public Toilet Strategy, which will enable us to address your recommendation that new public toilets be prioritised, and increase the number of public toilets available at night. Our City Art Strategy is already increasing temporary and permanent public art, we have adopted a wayfinding strategy and we are developing a strategy to improve public lighting.

Not surprisingly, some of your recommendations support proposals which the City and others have been advocating for some time, particularly around transport, policing and safety. Even here you have brought a fresh approach and new ideas.

Much of the focus has been on providing late night transport to help people leave the city. You have addressed the need for additional transport options to get people home when these services reach their destinations.

Your community education proposals should feed into the development of the community awareness campaign announced by the Premier earlier this year.

Other recommendations are simple, sensible and practical. For example the importance of making water easily available so they can rehydrate can be overlooked. You've suggested we address this by installing more water refill stations/bubblers in the public domain.

In making your recommendations, you haven't ignored the need to suggest a way of paying for them. Earlier this year, the Premier announced the introduction of a periodic risk-based licencing scheme. You have endorsed this and have proposing this include an annual risk-based licensing fee. You have also suggested that the revenue from this fee could pay for the new initiatives you're recommending.

This is an interesting idea, and might appeal to bureaucrats and a government that focusses on a user pays approach to cost recovery.

I reiterate here my earlier commitment to taking your recommendations to Council and the Premier will also be taking them to Parliament, so I can assure you that your work is not going to be relegated to a back shelf somewhere in Town Hall or Parliament House.

We are so grateful for all that you have put into this. On behalf of the City, I thank you all most warmly, and I also thank the newDemocracy Foundation and the Thomas Kelly Youth Foundation for suggesting this jury.

So once again, thank you all. I hope together we can get violent and anti-social behaviour off our city streets and make them the diverse, interesting, safe and welcoming places that people deserve.

[865 words]