

# Central Coast Night-Time Economy

Discussion Paper

March 2024

# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging and recognise their continued connection to these lands and waterways. We acknowledge our shared responsibility to care for and protect our place and people.

## Authors

- Julia Cretan (Senior Consultant, Urban Enterprise)
- Nancy Yoo (Senior Consultant, Urban Enterprise)
- **Reviewed by:** Mike Ruzzene (Director, Urban Enterprise)



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## Image Credit

Destination NSW

## Acronyms

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<b>ABS</b>	Australian Bureau of Statistics
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<b>AAGR</b>	Average Annual Growth Rate
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<b>IVS</b>	International Visitor Survey
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<b>LEP</b>	Local Environmental Plan
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<b>LGA</b>	Local Government Area
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<b>NTE</b>	Night-Time Economy
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<b>PA</b>	Per Annum
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<b>NVS</b>	National Visitor Survey
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<b>TRA</b>	Tourism Research Australia
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# Executive Summary

Urban Enterprise was engaged by Central Coast Council to develop a discussion paper for the development of the night-time economy (NTE) in the Central Coast region. The report aims to identify interventions and project concepts to enhance and activate NTE precincts - creating better places for businesses, the local community and visitors after dark in the Central Coast.

The discussion paper was informed by robust stakeholder engagement process, an analysis of development constraints in public policy and the built environment, as well as research best practice NTE initiatives across Australia. Key insights uncovered through consultation and analysis were:

- There is an overall lack of vibrancy and things to do at night in the Central Coast towns, especially for families with children.
- The region is highly dispersed with a lack of transport infrastructure and parking.
- The public realm and streetscape is unattractive in many locations, and infrastructure is poorly maintained, particularly in Gosford.
- Alcohol related antisocial behaviour & concerns about security and safety have been raised by industry and community.
- Noise complaints associated with conflicting land uses prevent late night economic activity and NTE investment proposals.
- Existing Council NTE governance structure and policies are unclear – delaying approval times and preventing NTE investment. They also limit on-street economic activity, impeding the creation of vibrant public spaces.

A strategic framework was developed, centred around the following four themes:

- **Policy & Leadership:** Policy, planning and governance structures should enable and support night-time economy objectives.
- **Activation:** Cultural and social activity is integral in defining the night-time economy.
- **Attractiveness:** An attractive, immersive and vibrant public realm brings places to life at night.
- **Enabling Environment:** A successful night-time economy must be underpinned by well-functioning infrastructure and services, to ensure it can be accessed and enjoyed safely.

A total of 41 initiatives have been identified over short, medium and long term timeframes, to address issues and realise opportunities for enhancement of the NTE in the Central Coast. Priority actions, to be delivered in the short-term, include:

- Deliver the following *Safer Cities: Her Way* pilot initiatives:
  - **Burns Park Refresh** – Undertake landscaping upgrades, decorative lighting and public art installations and temporary activations at Burns Park.
  - **William St Plaza Refresh** – Undertake works including hut removal, painting and shade sail refresh, landscaping, seating upgrades and decorative lighting installations.
  - **Laneway Activations** – Activate Gosford's laneways with public artwork, live entertainment and decorative lighting. Priority locations include Kibble Park and the Mann St to Gosford City Carpark laneway.
  - **Good Times Summer** – Run a 6 week activation program aimed at promoting planned events and activities, as well as showcasing the local businesses across Gosford CBD including weekly markets in Kibble Park, live entertainment, workshops and activities, decorative lighting projections and public art.
  - **Wayfinding Signage** – Install updated decals and upgrades to identified existing signage to improve wayfinding throughout the Gosford CBD. Include directional, safety, interpretative and other general information for visitors and the community.
  - Investigate potential for a **Shuttle Bus Loop**. Seek interest from private operators to deliver a 'City Night-time Loop' linking towns across the coast on weekends. Explore funding support opportunities from Transport NSW (for ongoing operations, signage, and marketing activities) and negotiate inclusion of Central Coast branding on shuttle buses.
  - Investigate opportunities for **Vacant Property Activation**. Proactively engage the Gosford Erina Business Chamber, landowners and creative businesses and encourage them to activate Gosford's empty shopfronts.
- Develop a **marketing strategy and website for events**.

# Executive Summary

Other short term priority actions include:

- Establish an NTE working group for key stakeholders to meet regularly, with the aim to encourage collaboration and guide the delivery of NTE projects
- Create a business enquiry roadmap to display internal processes for managing business enquiries within Council.
- Establish an NTE business concierge to assist businesses looking to establish or invest in the Central Coast night-time economy.
- Ensure Council Economic Development Team maintains a strong relationship and ongoing communication with Liquor & Gaming NSW's Hospitality Concierge Service Team – including regularly referring local NTE businesses to the service and inclusion within the proposed NTE working group.
- Utilise Section 10.7 planning certificates (formerly s149) to manage community expectations around noise in key night-time economy precincts
- Establish 'Special Entertainment Precincts' in the LEP in key locations in the Central Coast LGA to manage amplified music,
  - Trial an extended business hour policy for Special Entertainment Precincts
  - Trial automatic outdoor dining permit approvals for Special Entertainment Precincts
- Leverage and collaborate with Council's Community & Culture Team to support delivery of live music micro-festival events at night-time through the Live & Local Strategic Initiative policy.
- Advocate for Central Coast funding through the Office of the 24-hour commissioner for the implementation of tools, resources and support programs to accelerate night-time economy's development on the Central Coast. Specifically target (a) Live music venue sound proofing improvements and (b) Investment in contemporary music facilities.
- Continue to carry out a recurring night market event at Kibble Park following the conclusion of the 'Good Times Summer' activation program (Safer Cities: Her Way Initiative).
- Introduce a roaming winter live music series across NTE venues in the Central Coast's small towns.
- Encourage live music and busking after dark across the coast. This could be achieved through waiving busker permit fees or directly funding buskers to perform
- Promote the concept of local food businesses delivering late night meals to bars and live music venues, in collaboration with relevant food safety stakeholders
- Collaborate with Transport for New South Wales to implement the bus on demand service pilot project across the LGA.

# Background & Context



## Introduction

Urban Enterprise was engaged by Central Coast Council to develop a discussion paper for the development of the night-time economy in the Central Coast.

This report aims to identify interventions and concepts to enhance and activate night-time economy precincts in the Central Coast, based on identified constraints, industry needs, a strategic framework developed from consultation, as well as best practice initiatives across Australia.

The aim of this process is to enhance and activate the night-time economy and create better places for business, the local community and visitors after dark in the Central Coast.

## Methodology

The following process was undertaken to inform this Discussion Paper:





## What is the night-time economy?

The night-time economy (NTE) is defined as the range of leisure activities and experiences associated with patterns of collective night-time socialising and entertainment, including eating, drinking and creative practices.

The different phases of the night-time economy include:

<b>Early evening</b>	5pm – 7pm
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<b>Twilight</b>	7pm – 10pm
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<b>Evening</b>	10pm – 2am
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<b>Late night</b>	2am – 5am
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For the purposes of this report, the night-time economy generally includes the time period from 5pm to 2am.



## Why develop the NTE?

This discussion paper will focus on core activity that contributes to the vibrancy and activation of night-time precincts.

Establishing a successful and well-functioning night-time economy is an important economic development objective for Council, and requires partnership, support and collaboration between government, private enterprise and the community.

The range of benefits that a vibrant night-time economy can bring to a region include:

- Increased number and diversity of employment options, including for youth
- Increase economic output
- Achieve economic resilience through diversification
- Support the attraction of a young, professional and talented workforce
- Develop cultural and community vitality
- Grow the visitor economy; and
- Provide opportunities for the production and consumption of arts and culture.

## Types of NTE businesses

Core night-time economy businesses are typically the types of businesses people would associate with a vibrant 'night life'. These are important for providing residents and visitors with places to go, to socialise and enjoy the night hours. They are supported by a range of supporting businesses.



### Entertainment

- Performing arts, music and culture
- Live sports and recreation activities
- Cinema
- Night clubs
- Galleries and cultural institutions



### Food Activities

- Cafes
- Restaurants
- Food trucks
- Food markets
- Food delivery services



### Drink Activities

- Bars
- Pubs
- Hotels
- Liquor Retailing
- Wine Tasting



### Supporting Activities

- Health – pharmacies, medical centres, gyms
- Groceries – supermarkets, convenience stores
- Retail and Accommodation
- Transport – public and on-demand
- Services – dry cleaning, beauticians and spas

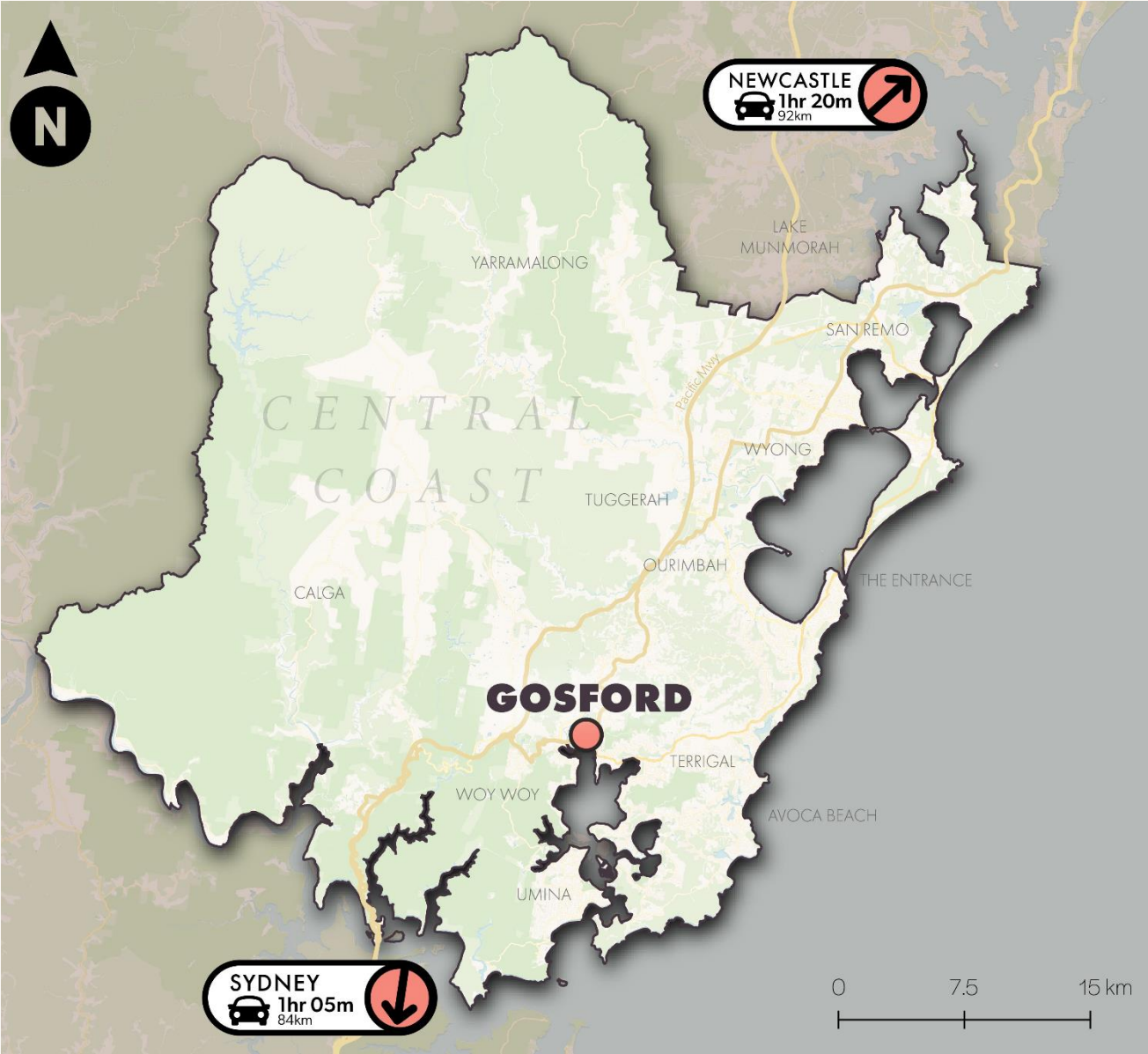
Figure 1. Central Coast Context Map

## About Central Coast

The Central Coast is situated on the coastline of New South Wales, strategically located within 90 minutes of both Sydney and Newcastle, providing access to a market of almost 6 million people (see Figure 1).

Central Coast is a peri-urban LGA bordering the Northern Beaches and Hornsby to the South and Lake Macquarie to the North, with the Pacific Motorway dissecting the LGA. This provides convenient access to metropolitan Sydney, and disperses travellers into northern and western regional New South Wales via the Central Coast.

As of 2021, Central Coast has a population of 346,596 and is expected to grow substantially to 417,500 by 2036. The municipality is shown in adjacent.



## Consultation Summary

Stakeholder engagement and consultation undertaken to assist in the development of this feasibility study is summarised in the table below:

Format	Engagement
Business & Industry Workshop (4)	15 attendees
Business & Industry Survey	23 respondents
Business & Industry 1:1 Phone Calls	13 stakeholders
Council Workshop (1)	6 attendees
Local Government Interviews (2)	City of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie City Council

## Key Findings

Consultation with business and industry highlighted the following as key constraints for NTE businesses:

- There is an overall lack of vibrancy and things to do at night in the Central Coast key townships
- The Coast's NTE products and experiences are not suited to families
- Council policies and procedures are confusing & slow planning permit approval times prevent investment in the NTE
- Central Coast is a highly dispersed region with a lack of transport infrastructure and parking
- The public realm and streetscape is unattractive, and infrastructure is poorly maintained infrastructure, particularly in Gosford.
- Alcohol related antisocial behaviour & concerns about security and safety
- Noise complaints associated with conflicting land uses prevent late night economic activity and NTE investment proposals.
- Economic development activities over-prioritise investment in Gosford over smaller towns

# Strategy, Policy & Governance Review



## NTE Governance

The governance of the night-time economy is highly complex, due to its interrelatedness with a range of government interests including economic development, planning, tourism, transport, infrastructure and health and safety. Stakeholders involved in the governance of the night-time economy are outlined in the table adjacent.

The inclusion of night-time economy management in the remit of a variety of government departments reflects the government's objective to drive night-time economy development in New South Wales. However, the range of stakeholders involved in night-time economy development could represent a barrier to investment, as potential business owners may be discouraged by the difficult to navigate governance and policy structure during the process of acquiring support, information or approvals.

Collaboration between stakeholders and alignment of their strategic direction, policy and activity will allow them to synergise and achieve positive outcomes for night-time economy development.

### Central Coast Council

Discussions with Council staff revealed that internal governance procedures for handling business enquiries can serve as an impediment to fostering business investment.

Night-time economy businesses require approvals and permits that span across various departments within Council. Consequently, there are a number of points where a business request can be blocked or delayed.

Presently, there is no structured roadmap outlining these internal processes, from a business' initial contact with Council to the receipt of an approval.

The implementation of streamlined procedures or the creation of a defined process would greatly enhance the prospects for businesses, ensuring smoother interactions and more favourable economic outcomes.

### Governance Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Role
Direct	
Central Coast Council	Economic development, tourism development & marketing, development approvals, strategic planning, town centre management, environmental compliance.
Investment NSW	Economic development and investment attraction.
24 Hour Economy Commissioner	Delivery of 24-hour Economy Strategy and facilitating collaboration between state government, local government and industry.
24 Hour Economy Advisory Group	Helps the NSW Government develop NTE ideas and implement the 24-hour economy strategy.
Liquor and Gaming NSW	Regulate liquor, wagering, gaming and registered clubs in NSW and manage incidents of loud music and patron noise.
Independent Liquor & Gaming Authority	Determine licensing and disciplinary matters under the gaming and liquor legislation.
Food Authority	Ensure effective food safety and food quality management.
Indirect	
Greater Cities Commission	Future planning, deliver key innovation districts and discussion on major city-shaping issues.
Dept. of Transport	Develop safe, integrated and efficient transport systems.
Destination NSW	Tourism and major events, marketing and promotion, events attraction, funding delivery.
Dept. of Planning and Environment	Long term planning, assessment of state significant developments, infrastructure priorities, natural resources, the environment and energy.





# Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner (O24HEC) was established in April 2021 to deliver the 24-Hour Economy Strategy for Greater Sydney.

The 2023 O24HEC program implemented a number of strategy projects and election commitments. A selection of projects, as relevant to night-time economy development in the Central Coast, are shown adjacent.

Where possible, Council should seek to leverage state government tools, resources and grant opportunities to accelerate night-time economy development in the Central Coast.

## Greater Sydney 24-Hour Economy Strategy

Project	Description
 <b>Local Council Toolkit &amp; Accelerator Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practical tools for Councils to enhance the night-time economy</li><li>• Masterclasses for Council staff (from late 2023)</li></ul>
 <b>Data After Dark</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A digital data tool to access, compare and visualise NTE data by area</li></ul>
 <b>Arts, Culture &amp; Creative Industries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NSW Government is developing a new arts, culture and creative industries policy</li><li>• \$103m committed for investment in NSW's contemporary music scene</li></ul>
 <b>Sound NSW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing a 10-year Contemporary Music Strategy</li><li>• Committed to establish an \$8m fund to support soundproofing, ventilation and video screen technology upgrades</li></ul>

## Strategic Context

Ensuring Council activities align to NSW State strategic policy directions will be critical to developing a successful night-time economy in the Central Coast. The NSW Government's recent emphasis on the importance of developing Sydney's night-time economy provides pertinent timing to create activated and vibrant night-time precincts in the Central Coast.

The State Government is focussed on transforming planning, placemaking and precinct development in the Central Coast, to ensure it can become an attractive destination for both business and tourism. Major State Government infrastructure investments will drive demand for night-time economy uses in the Central Coast. The existence of a diverse, attractive and vibrant night-time offering will be crucial in attracting the business investment and workforce talent required to transform Central Coast into a globally competitive city.

### Summary Of Documents Reviewed

#### Local

- Central Coast Regional Plan
- Greater Cities Commission
- Gosford City Centre Revitalisation
- Economic Development Strategy
- Community Strategic Plan
- Destination Management Plan
- Central Coast Regional Plan 2041
- Cultural Plan
- Tourism Opportunity Plan
- Wyong Settlement Strategy
- Tuggerah to Wyong Corridor Strategy
- Gosford Urban Design Framework
- The Entrance Town Centre Masterplan
- Graffiti Strategy
- Pedestrian and Access Strategy

#### Regional

- Greater Sydney 24 Hour Economy Strategy
- Central Coast and Lake Macquarie Regional Economic Development Strategy

#### State

- Visitor Economy Strategy 2030
- NSW Tourism and Transport Plan



## Greater Sydney 24-Hour Economy Strategy

Greater Sydney's 24 Hour Economy Strategy, developed by Investment NSW in 2020, intends to enhance and develop the night-time economy to realise its huge economic potential. The Strategy recognises that the night is an integral part of Sydney's commercial, cultural and social fabric, providing huge potential and that with more business activity through the night comes more opportunities for employment and greater choice for how locals and visitors interact with the city.

Strategic pillars and considerations outlined in the Strategy have informed the development of this Discussion Paper and are summarised below.

### Greater Sydney 24-Hour Economy Strategy

Strategic Pillar	Considerations
Integrated Planning and Placemaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Precinct-based streetscape atmospheres and activations;</li> <li>Community and industry-led safety programs;</li> <li>Under-utilised public and private spaces accommodating live performance and arts and culture events.</li> </ul>
Diversification of night-time activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better activity mix planning</li> <li>Business diversification</li> <li>Extend opening hours for retail businesses and cultural institutions.</li> <li>Live music and noise regulations</li> <li>Improve affordability and requirements for cultural events in public spaces.</li> <li>Before and after game activities for major sporting precincts.</li> </ul>
Industry and Cultural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordable spaces for creative industries</li> </ul>
Mobility & Improved Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Late-night transport</li> <li>Enhanced parking options</li> <li>Safe options for end-of-trip connections</li> <li>Arts program to activate transport links.</li> </ul>
Changing The Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve public perceptions of health and safety.</li> <li>Develop distinct branding for night-time hubs.</li> </ul>

## Central Coast Regional Plan 2041

The Central Coast Regional Plan is a 20-year land use plan for the municipality. The Plan recognises that the night-time economy can encourage people to dine out or enjoy entertainment or cultural experiences, and that communities and visitors expect cities and town centres to provide a safe and flourishing economy and community life from late afternoon to early morning.

A number of local strategic planning considerations outlined in the plan relate to the night-time economy:

- Promote the night-time economy in suitable centres and main streets where night-time public transport options are available;
- Improve access, inclusion and safety, and make public areas welcoming for consumers and workers;
- Diversify the range of night-time activities including extending opening hours for shops, cafes, libraries, galleries and museums.
- Address the cumulative impact of high concentrations of licensed premises and other noise generating activities to manage land use conflict; and
- Foster relationships between the creative industries, live performance and the night-time economy.

## Gosford City Centre Revitalization

Revitalisation of Gosford City Centre as the capital of a healthy, prosperous and connected Central Coast, is a key priority of the Central Coast Regional Plan 2036.

The NSW Government Architect's Urban Design Framework provides the long-term vision for the continued development and renewal of the Gosford City Centre. The State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional) 2021 and accompanying development control plan provides the planning controls for future development and requires that all development exhibit design excellence and contribute to the natural, cultural, visual and built character values of Gosford City Centre.

The key recommendations of the Urban Design Framework are:

- Foster a place-based approach and focus on public domain.
- Provide green infrastructure to improve the social wellbeing and health of the people living, working in, and using the city centre.
- Respect and enhance built form.
- Leverage regionally important sporting, health and transport infrastructure assets. That contribute to the identity and definition of Gosford as a regional capital.
- Streamline planning controls to remove complexity and create the best possible framework for investment and development.
- Provide strong leadership and governance, focussed on coordinated and integrated delivery.

## Greater Cities Commission

The Central Coast was identified by the NSW Premier as part of the vision for a Six Cities Region in December 2021. The Greater Cities Commission was tasked with coordinating and facilitating the delivery of key investments and infrastructure to drive a globally competitive Six Cities Region.

The Greater Cities Commission is a NSW Government statutory body, with the role to coordinate and align the planning that will shape the future of the region, accelerate the delivery of key innovation districts and lead discussion on major city-shaping issues.

The NSW Government is focussed on seven priorities for the Central Coast City to grow jobs, industry, connectivity and opportunities for the community, including:

1. Driving innovation and industry collaboration.
2. Unlocking employment land and accelerating employment precincts.
3. Activating a university campus in a revitalised Gosford CBD.
4. Building on the Gosford Health and Wellbeing Precinct.
5. Improving transport within the Central Coast and with Sydney and Newcastle.
6. Delivering a high-speed internet network.
7. Improving planning processes to accelerate development approvals.

## Local Strategic Documents

A list of all documents reviewed to inform this discussion paper can be found in Appendix A.

These documents provide a range of findings and strategic directions relevant to the development of the night-time economy, which are summarised adjacent.

### Key Local Priorities

<p>Foster <b>economic diversity and vibrancy</b> to increase economic resilience, visitation, creativity and participation.</p>	<p><b>Attract and retain</b> people, jobs, investment and business.</p>	<p><b>Enhance community safety</b> within neighbourhoods, public spaces and places.</p>
<p><b>Promote and provide more sporting, community and cultural events</b> and festivals, day and night, throughout the year.</p>	<p><b>Foster creative and performing arts</b> in the night-time economy through theatres, galleries and creative spaces, by <b>integrating art and performance into public life</b>.</p>	<p>Encourage night-time activation in key night-time economy precincts, including outdoor dining through streetscape design improvements and interventions.</p>
<p><b>Encouraging resilient, accessible and inclusive hubs</b> with a range of uses including town centre uses, night-time activities and civic, community, social and residential uses.</p>	<p>Addressing the cumulative impact of high concentrations of licensed premises and other noise generating activities to <b>manage land use conflict</b> in these areas.</p>	<p><b>Enable growth of music and the arts</b> in city and town centre planning, with a streamlined approach to procedures and urban design.</p>
<p><b>Promote imaginative use</b> of the Central Coast Stadium and other non-traditional venues and spaces for creative programming.</p>	<p>Deliver activations to <b>encourage and facilitate visitor dispersal</b> across the region.</p>	<p>Approach the State Government and <b>advocate</b> for the return of Night Owl bus services.</p>

# Policy & Legislation Review

This section provides an overview and assessment of the planning scheme, state legislation and local policies in relation to night-time economy development.

The following policies and legislation have been reviewed as part of this process:

- Liquor Act 2007
- **Liquor Amendment (Night-Time Economy) Act 2020**
- Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997
- **State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional)**
- **Local Environment Plan**
- **Local Strategic Planning Statement**
- **Business Use of a Public Footpath Policy**
- **Busking Guidelines**
- Street Banner Policy
- Events on Open Space Areas Policy
- **Policy for Operation of Temporary Food Premises**
- Environmental Management Policy
- Landscape Management Policy
- Sustainable and Plastic Free Events Policy

Key documents as relevant to this discussion paper have been **marked in bold** in the list above.

## **Planning Policy**

### **Local Environment Plan**

The Local Environmental Plan (LEP) is the primary legal planning document for guiding land use and planning decisions made by Council.

#### **Aims**

- To protect and promote the use and development of land for arts and cultural activity, including music and other performance arts;
- To foster economic, environmental and social well-being so that the Central Coast continues to develop as a sustainable and prosperous place to live, work and visit,
- To encourage a range of housing, employment, recreation and services to meet the needs of existing and future residents of the Central Coast;
- To promote the efficient and equitable provision of public services, infrastructure and amenities;
- To provide for a range of local and regional community facilities for recreation, culture, health and education purposes;
- To conserve, protect and enhance the natural environment of the Central Coast, incorporating ecologically sustainable development;
- To conserve, protect and enhance the environmental and cultural heritage of the Central Coast;
- To minimise risk to the community in areas subject to environmental hazards, including flooding, climate change and bush fires
- To promote a high standard of urban design that responds appropriately to the existing or desired future character of areas;
- To promote design principles in all development to improve the safety, accessibility, health and well-being of residents and visitors;
- To concentrate intensive land uses and trip-generating activities in locations that are most accessible to transport and centres;
- To encourage the development of sustainable tourism that is compatible with the surrounding environment.

## Local Strategic Planning Statement

The Central Coast Local Strategic Planning Statement provides a land use vision that will guide sustainable growth and development across the Region to 2036 and beyond.

### Vision

The Central Coast of tomorrow will show leadership in placemaking, environmental protection, sustainability, infrastructure and community resilience.

Gosford City Centre will become the Capital of the Central Coast, providing regional-level facilities and a positive local identity. Our other Centres will thrive with more living and working opportunities, providing key services to surrounding communities.

Importantly, our communities will be physically connected through appropriate infrastructure and socially connected through strong relationships and a sense of unity.

### Relevant Planning Priorities

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- Economics**
- Enliven cultural spaces and places.
  - Grow regionally competitive tourism destinations across the Central Coast.
  - Facilitate economic development to increase local employment opportunities for the community.
- 

- Community & Culture**
- Develop and implement a Central Coast Cultural Plan that identifies opportunities to strengthen creative industries and contribute to the night-time economy.
  - Identify cultural precincts or opportunities for cultural enhancement in our centres such as temporary performance and exhibition spaces to support creative industries.
  - Develop a Cultural Precinct in the City of Gosford with a Regional Library and Arts Centre, and a Cultural Hub in Wyong.
  - Enliven cultural spaces and places.
- 

- Transport**
- Improve connectivity within and between our centres.
-

## State Legislation

### Liquor Act 2007

#### Objectives

- Regulate and control the sale, supply and consumption of alcohol in a way that is consistent with the expectations, needs and aspirations of the community.
- Facilitate the balanced development, in the public interest, of the liquor industry through a flexible and practical regulatory system with minimal formality and technicality.
- Contribute to the responsible development of related industries such as the live music, entertainment, tourism and hospitality industries.

### Liquor Amendment (night-time economy) Act 2020 (Liquor Amendment Act)

The management of Sydney's night-time economy has historically been criticised for being too heavily centred on the consumption of alcohol and associated violent incidents. The decision to roll back some of these laws in 2020 has provided the foundation to invigorate the night-time economy and achieve a better balance between safety and vibrancy.

From December 2020, a range of changes to NSW liquor laws were introduced to support nightlife and encourage a vibrant and safe 24-hour economy. The changes encourage live music and entertainment, arts and cultural events, support small bars and make licensee obligations clearer.

#### Relevant Policy Changes:

- Automatic removal of live entertainment conditions from liquor licenses;
- Incentives for live music and performance venues
- Options for small bars to offer more diverse and family orientated services for customers, including allowing minors in bars and offering take away alcohol.
- Streamlining licensing timeframes for standard small bars to begin trading.
- Establishing 'Special Entertainment Precincts' for managing amplified music that allow Councils to decide requirements for amplified music, where requirements that would normally apply under the Liquor Act 2007 will not apply.
- Including live music and performance considerations in liquor licensing decision making

## Local Policy

There are over 80 local policies and regulations administered by Central Coast Council. A recent review of Council policy documents identified an excessive number of policies and a lack of visibility and transparency, as well as inconsistencies with previous processes. As such a new policy framework has recently been adopted, with clear accountabilities and consistent process.

Key local policies relevant to the night-time economy are summarised overpage, noting that provisions relating to venue trading hours and noise requirements are generally outlined in individual license agreements.

## Key Local Policy Constraints

Policy Document	Policy Objectives	Restrictive Policy Requirements
Business Use of a Public Footpath Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage establishment of appropriate outdoor dining areas throughout Gosford Local Government Area, which promote a safe, attractive and vibrant environment for local residents and visitors.</li> <li>To permit limited business use of public footpath for street vending purposes, directly outside suitable businesses, throughout Gosford Local Government Area, to help retailers with promotion of their businesses in an ever increasing competitive field.</li> <li>To minimise disruption to neighbouring businesses and surrounding environment by regulating and monitoring approved business activities on public footpath.</li> <li>To ensure suitable pedestrian thoroughfare zone is available along the footpath for all road users.</li> <li>To improve the amenity and character of business districts throughout the Gosford Local Government Area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.21 Serving of Alcohol (and Alcohol-Free Zones) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selling and consumption of alcoholic or intoxicating liquor is only permitted in the public footpath area if the licensee has obtained an appropriate liquor licence and/or approval from Council. Approval shall only be granted after Council's Property Services and Engineering Services sections have assessed appropriateness of the application.</li> <li>Alcohol is only permitted to be sold and consumed with a meal.</li> </ul> </li> <li>No advertising signs (including display information and menu boards) are permitted on the footpath area.</li> <li>No outdoor dining is permitted on neighbouring premises.</li> <li>No provisions or policies relating to permanent or semi-permanent structures (i.e. parklets)</li> </ul>
Busking Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To outline the conditions for buskers to ensure maximum public safety, amenity and community harmony at all times;</li> <li>To encourage and manage high quality performances that complement our existing communities and town centres.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Busking Approval Cards only allow busking between 9am and 9pm</li> </ul>



## Local Approvals Policy (Draft)

Council is currently preparing a Local Approvals Policy (currently at draft stage) for Central Coast, with the aim to identify those activities under Section 68 of the Local Government Act 1993 that:

- Are exempt from requiring a separate approval from Council under section 68, subject to meeting specified criteria (where relevant); or
- Are required to obtain a section 68 approval, subject to meeting specified criteria (where relevant)

Activities that are covered by the Policy, as relevant to the night-time economy, are detailed in the table adjacent. The majority of these activities will still require Council approval under the new policy. However, the Policy will consolidate numerous Council policies, making it easier for businesses to navigate the approvals process.

Activity	Council Exemption?	Required Application to Council
<b>Street Stalls on Public Land</b>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events on Open Space Area Guidelines</li> <li>• Licensing of a Trade or Business on Open Space Areas</li> </ul>
<b>Hiring of Council Park, Reserve for an Event</b>	Yes –for events less than 80 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events on Open Space Area Guidelines</li> <li>• Licensing of a Trade or Business on Open Space Areas</li> </ul>
<b>Business UE of a Public Footpath for Outdoor Trading</b>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor Trading Area Application</li> </ul>
<b>Outdoor Dining and Associated Structures on Public Land or Footpaths</b>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor Trading Area Application</li> </ul>
<b>Busking or Street Theatre</b>	Yes – does not need approvals with a valid busking license	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Busking Application Form S138 Roads Act Approval where in Road Reserve</li> </ul>
<b>Set Up, Operate or Use a Loudspeaker or Sound Amplifying Device</b>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casual Open Space Hiring Enquiry Form</li> <li>• Special Event Application Form</li> </ul>
<b>Install or Operate Amusement Devices</b>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events on Open Space Area Guidelines</li> <li>• Licensing of a Trade or Business on Open Space Areas</li> </ul>
<b>Mobile Food Vehicles on Council Land and Road Reserves</b>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary and Mobile Food Business Notification</li> </ul>

## Key Policy & Governance Constraints

- Confusing and difficult to navigate NTE governance structure.
- Lack of reference within the State Environmental Planning Policy, Local Environment Plan or Strategic Planning Statement around supporting night-time activity in the Central Coast.
- Missed opportunity to encourage night-time activity through Council policies and permits.
- Council policies that limit on-street economic activity, impeding the creation of vibrant public spaces.
- Community or police objections to NTE proposals can result in permits or liquor licenses not being granted.

## Recommended Policy & Governance Interventions

- Deliver an **NTE policy** to implement findings from the NTE strategy and to reinforce the primacy of Gosford, Terrigal and Wyong as key NTE locations
- Establish a dedicated NTE resource to provide NTE-specific **business concierge** services.
- Liquor & Gaming NSW provide a **Hospitality Concierge service** which offers businesses with personalised guidance on a range of government support such as 'Alfresco Dining' initiative, planning approvals, connections to the NSW Government's 24-hour Economy Commissioner, and advice on the development of special entertainment precincts. Council should endeavour to maintain a strong relationship with this department.
- Utilise **Section 10.7 planning certificates** (formerly s149) to manage community expectations around noise in key night-time economy precincts (*Precedent: City of Newcastle*)
- Include specific provisions allowing **street stalls, mobile vending and outdoor dining** in the LEP (*Precedent: City of Lake Macquarie*)

- Enforce the inclusion of a night-time component in events through the **event permit process** (*Precedent: City of Lake Macquarie*)
- Establish '**Special Entertainment Precincts**' in the LEP for managing amplified music, allowing Council to decide requirements for amplified music, where requirements that would normally apply under the Liquor Act 2007 will not apply
- Automatic **outdoor dining** permit approval program for NTE precincts
- Establish a **Business Hour Policy** to allow for extended opening hours in established NTE precincts, to be applied through the development assessment process (*Precedent: City of Wollongong*)
- Reinforce NTE objectives through other **Council strategic plans** (e.g. Council Plan, Arts and Culture Strategy) to ensure NTE objectives are considered in future strategic planning
- **Collaborate** with Lake Macquarie City Council on NTE project delivery to achieve cost efficiencies.

### What is a Section 10.7 Planning Certificate?

A Section 10.7 Planning Certificate provides information about the development potential of a parcel of land. Information on a 10.7(2) Certificate includes:

- The zoning of the property
- The relevant state, regional and local planning controls and policies
- Which land uses are complying development on the land
- Constraints such as contamination, level of flooding and bushfire-risk.
- Advice from other authorities
- Development approvals and contributions plans.

They are usually required upon the sale or purchase of a property, thus providing a holistic view of all information required from early in the development process.

# Existing Situation Analysis



# Central Coast

Home to almost 350,000 people, Central Coast currently supports approximately 120,000 workers and 26,000 businesses. Employment in the Central Coast is concentrated in the population-driven industries of health care and social assistance, retail trade and construction.

## Resident Profile

In 2021, the most common household type in the Central Coast was families (28%), followed by couples with children (27%) and lone person households (25%). Central Coast has an ageing population, typified by a high proportion of residents aged over 50, and a median age of 43 (compared to the metropolitan Sydney average of 37).

The Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) Index measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage based on a range of Census characteristics (e.g. education, income, employment). With a SEIFA score below 1,000, Central Coast is relatively disadvantaged compared to the rest of NSW.

Central Coast has a relatively high job containment rate (71%), indicating that the majority of resident workers are employed in the municipality. This reflects the municipality's isolation from other areas of economic activity (Newcastle, Sydney). The onus is therefore on Central Coast to provide night-time economy product and experience for its residents, as well as visitors to the region.

## Migration from Sydney

Between 2016 and 2021, the net number of migrants from Sydney to Central Coast was 17,365. This trend is a result of the rise of remote working and health and lifestyle advantages associated with living in a more sparsely populated peri-urban environment. New residents from metropolitan Sydney are accustomed to having access to a diverse night-time product and experience offering, and have high expectations of quality. Central Coast should aim to improve the quality of its experience in line with the likes of Sydney and Newcastle. This could be achieved through attracting investment from experienced investors from these areas.

**346,596**

Population (2021)

**5.3m**

Visitors (2016-2019 4-year average)

71% domestic day trip  
28% domestic overnight  
1% international

**119,780**

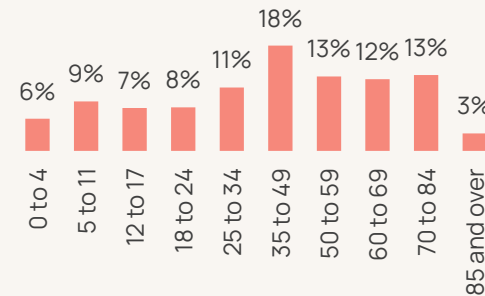
Jobs (2021)

71% job containment rate

**25,801**

Businesses (2022)

## Age Profile



## Top Industries by Employment (2021)



**19%**

Health Care and Social Assistance



**11%**

Retail Trade



**11%**

Construction



**43**

Median Age

**994**

SEIFA

**\$1,507**

Median Weekly Household Income



**28%**

Couples with children



**27%**

Couples without children



**25%**

Lone person

## Visitor Profile

The Central Coast has a vibrant visitor economy, attracting 6.6 million domestic visitors in 2019 and 54,000 international visitors. Tourism Research Australia visitation data from 2019 has been used to reflect a business as usual scenario, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The visitor economy is dominated by almost 5 million daytrip visitors (70%), owing to its peri-urban location adjacent to major population centres of Greater Sydney and Newcastle. Majority of the daytrip visitor economy on the Central Coast is driven by holiday visitors (41%) and visiting friends and relatives (38%). When benchmarked against Newcastle, the Central Coast has higher levels of holiday daytrip visitors, reflecting the appeal of the Central Coast's beaches and nature-based assets in driving holiday visitation.

Whilst overnight visitation is much lower at 1.9 million, it accounts for the majority of visitor spend (\$847 million). Overnight spend is however significantly lower than Newcastle (\$569), due to the high proportion of visitors staying with friends and relatives and engaging in low-yield outdoor activities.

Overnight visitation to the Central Coast is highly seasonal, which is likely to be largely driven by the VFR and holiday home markets during school holiday periods. Both daytrip and overnight visitation peaks across the height of summer in December and January.

A low number of both day trip and overnight visitors dine out in the Central Coast, when compared to Newcastle. This potentially reflects a lower supply of destination dining experiences on the Central Coast compared to Newcastle.

# 6.6m

## Visitors

70% day trip  
29% overnight  
1% international

# \$1.3b

## Expenditure

26% day trip  
64% overnight  
10% international

## Purpose of Visit



### Holiday

41% day trip  
42% overnight



### VFR

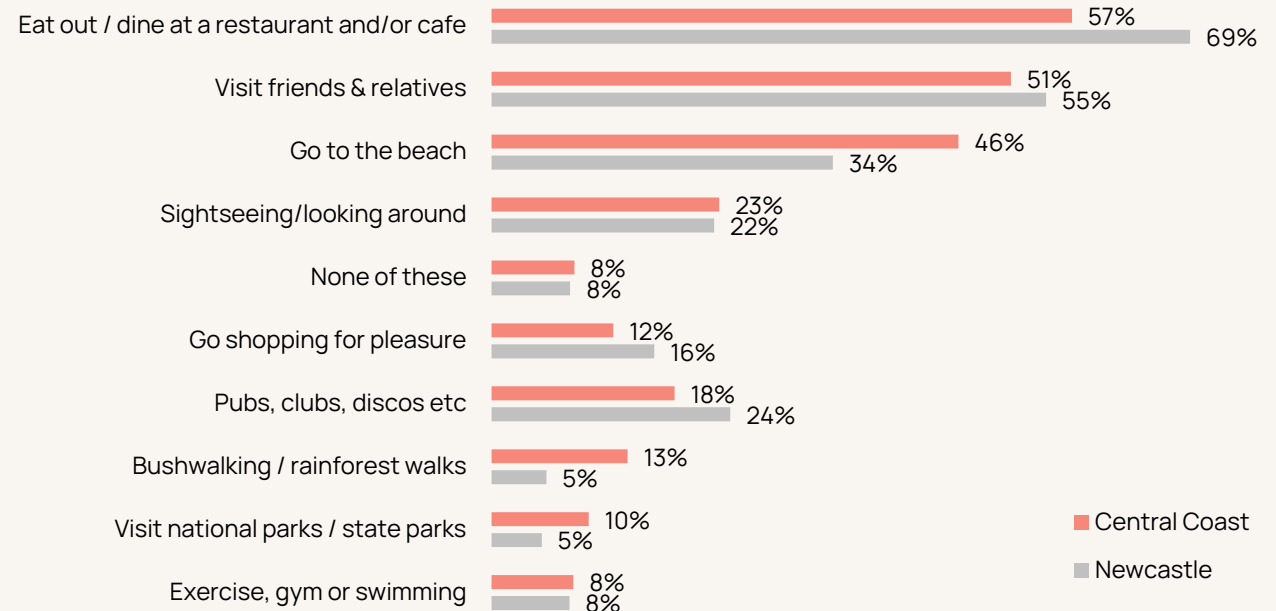
38% day trip  
45% overnight



### Business

12% day trip  
8% overnight

## Activity Profile (Overnight Visitors)



## The Night-Time Economy

Between April 2022 and March 2023, total expenditure on dining and entertainment at night (between 6pm and 6am) was almost \$230 million. Terrigal attracted the highest proportion of visitor spend (29.3%), reflecting the concentration of restaurants and bars in the town, and its role as a popular tourist destination.

A low proportion of Central Coast's night-time economy spend was attributable to Gosford, relative to its population, despite its competitive advantage in the provision of key regional-level facilities, such as healthcare services, sporting infrastructure, and public transport connections to both Sydney and Newcastle. Given that current local and state strategic planning seek to position Gosford as the capital of the Central Coast, there is significant opportunity to grow its role as a hub for night-time economic activity, and as a result grow its contribution to the night-time economy.

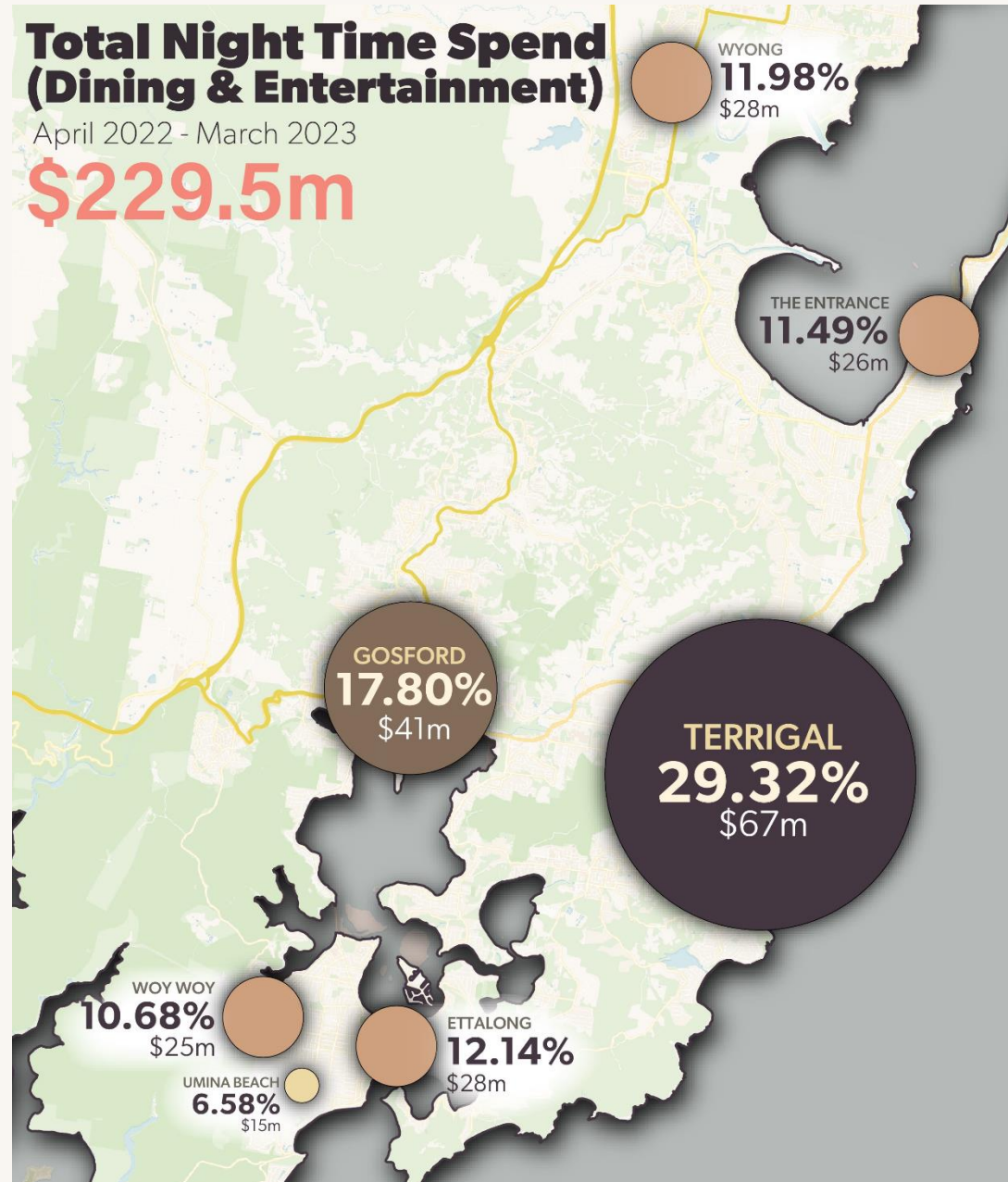


Figure 2. Central Coast Night Time Expenditure

Source: Urban Enterprise, based on Spendmapp, 2023.

## Current Offering

The table following shows the current products and experiences open from 7pm onwards across key locations in the Central Coast. The Coast's night-time offering predominantly includes restaurants, with some take away food, pub and bar options available at night.

The vast majority of the municipality's night-time offering is concentrated in Terrigal, where a number of restaurants, bars and take away food establishments are clustered along the foreshore in walking distance from each other. Additionally, Terrigal's product offering is more contemporary, which assists in attracting a younger market who are more likely engage with the night-time economy throughout the week.

There is a stark lack of arts, culture and live music-dedicated venues open at night in the Central Coast. These product typologies are needed to create vibrancy and attract a diverse range of resident and visitor groups. There is opportunity to likely attract flow-on investment into supporting activations and prioritise the delivery of live music, arts and cultural venues in the City (particularly in Gosford), which will ng product, such as bars, restaurants and late night meals.

### Night-Time Product and Experience Offering

	Restaurant	Take Away Food	Pub	Bar	Leagues Club/ RSL	Arts/ Culture / Live Music	Total
<b>Terrigal</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	-	-	<b>30</b>
<b>Gosford</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Ettalong Beach</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	-	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>The Entrance</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>18</b>
<b>Woy Woy</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	-	-	<b>15</b>
<b>Wyong</b>	<b>7</b>	-	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Long Jetty</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	-	-	-	<b>11</b>
<b>Erina</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	-	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Toukley</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	-	-	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>160</b>

# Night-Time Economy Trends

## COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health restrictions ignited an interest in how outdoor and public spaces are utilised, and how the economy functions throughout the 24 hours of the day. The pandemic had a disproportionately negative affect on the night-time industries, particularly hospitality and tourism related businesses. The recovery period has provided the NSW State Government with the opportunity to re-open the night-time economy and reconsider the night-time economy experience in New South Wales.

## Food

- **Experiential Dining.** In a post COVID-19 environment, diners are looking for experiences when eating out. More diners are now willing to celebrate special occasions and are looking for foodservice venues that can deliver memorable experiences.
- **Food Halls.** Experiential dining trends and increased consumer awareness regarding supporting local, independent businesses has led to the rising popularity of food halls and shared spaces for dining. Examples include The Grounds, Alexandria, Spice Alley Chippendale.
- **Fast Casual & Solo Dining.** Fast paced and busy modern lifestyles have driven demand for affordable, quick and diverse dining options. A key driver of this segment is solo dining, which accounted for over 40% of traffic share within Sydney's food industry in 2019.

## Drink

Australians are drinking less alcohol than at any point in the last 55 years , with a range of considerations such as health, faith, cost and culture driving this trend. Simultaneously, premiumisation is driving growth in the alcohol sector , with more Australians consuming premium or niche alcohol products (e.g. craft beer, high quality wines, spirits produced by independent distillers etc.).

The above reflects a trends of Australians purchasing more expensive alcohol but drinking less of it overall. This presents a suitable environment for small bars providing luxury, intimate drinking experiences, and drinking experiences that showcase small-scale and niche alcohol production, such as breweries, distilleries and urban wineries.

## Experiences

There has been a shift towards experiential night-time economy products in response to changing consumer preferences and demands. Traditional nightlife experiences that centre solely around alcohol consumption have given way for more immersive and engaging activities. Consumers now seek unique and memorable experiences that provide entertainment, social interaction and a sense of exploration.

This trend has been accelerated by the rise of social media and the sharing economy. Consumers have a desire for novelty, engagement and memorable moments that are visually appealing and make for great content.



## Local Insights

A survey of **23 hospitality venues throughout Central Coast** was undertaken to understand business' experience with the night-time economy in the Central Coast. Key findings are as follows:

- As a primarily beachside, holiday destination, seasonality creates challenges for business operations midweek and during the winter months.
- Most respondents indicated having a heavier reliance on local markets, compared to visitors.
- The main constraints to night-time trading include: a lack of public transport services, property and planning constraints, and public realm infrastructure.
- With limited public transport options available, patrons are typically care dependent which places pressure on parking availability and creates conflicts with businesses wishing to implement outdoor dining in former parking areas.
- Alcohol related antisocial behaviour and crime discourage participation in the night-time economy, which creates challenges for businesses as they can face heightened patron management pressures at night, such as through the responsible service of alcohol.
- Central Coast's streetscape and public spaces are dated and lack suitable activation to encourage patronage, which causes a lack of vibrancy and economic activity at night.
- Respondents indicated that issues hiring and retaining staff is a major cause of daytime businesses struggling extending trading hours into the night. This is particularly prevalent in the hospitality industry, which tends to rely on younger cohorts who often leave the region in pursuit of more lively environments (e.g. Sydney, Newcastle).

# Placemaking & Activation



## Case Study Analysis

This Section provides an overview of Local Government night-time economic development initiatives from across Australia, to identify the attributes of a successful night-time economy and the types of infrastructure and product that could be delivered to enhance the Central Coast night-time economy.

With growing recognition of the economic, social, cultural, and community benefits that a vibrant and well-managed night-time environment can bring to a city, many municipalities have begun developing and implementing strategies to increase night-time trading.

The aim of this case study analysis section is to identify best practice night-time economy initiatives relevant to regional locations that could be replicated on the Central Coast.

Case study initiatives for the following categories have been identified:

1. **Visual Amenity.** Projects that aim to create inviting public spaces to invoke a sense of vibrancy and safety in public after dark.
2. **Arts, Culture and Live Music.** Initiatives that promote creative and entertainment activities for residents and visitors.
3. **Food and Dining.** Projects that provide a vibrant and inviting atmosphere centred around food.
4. **Events.** To diversify the night-time offering and give residents and visitors a taste of the night-time economy.

This analysis has been used to inform the identification of potential projects, outlined later in this report.

## 1. Visual Amenity

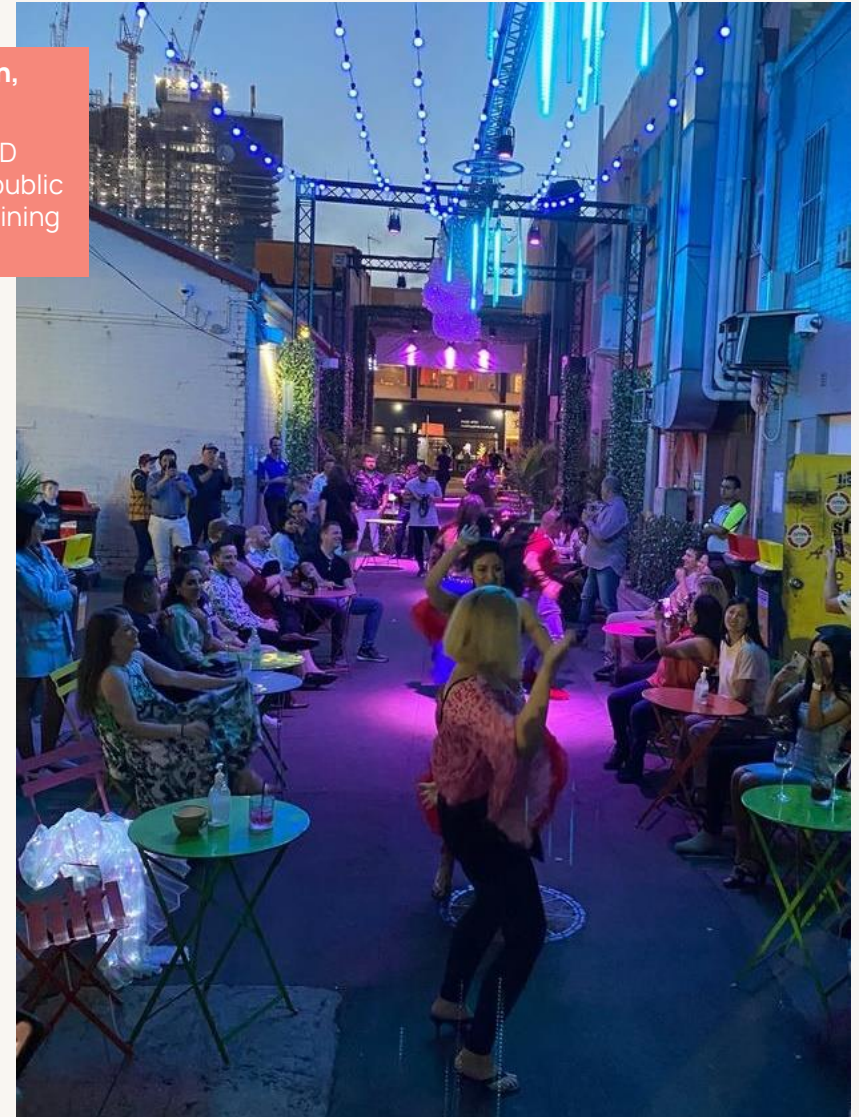


### Night Galleries, Newcastle

Purpose built interactive light installations in various locations across the city that display works of art from Newcastle Art Gallery. The light installations help to improve street lighting which is linked to a number of safety outcomes.

### Phillip Lane Activation, Parramatta

Transformation of a CBD laneway into a shared public space with art, street dining and creative lighting.



### Neon Lighting Installations, Geelong

Instillation of illuminated artworks in various locations around central Geelong to activate outdoor areas and improve night-time lighting, improve safety and deter crime.



## 1. Visual Amenity (cont'd)



**Float your Boat, Lake Macquarie City Council**  
An annual festival featuring illuminated boat parades, entertainment, food and family activities celebrating the waterfront and the



**EASLE'D, Newcastle**  
Month-long live painting festival, including artist' workshops, masterclasses, guided tours and artist trail.



**On water activation in Canary Wharf, London**  
On-water sculpture art to attract visitors to the area during the winter months.

## 2. Arts, culture and live music



### Newcastle West Walk

A food, art, music and wine walk featuring 4 contemporary art galleries, degustation, local beverages & live music



### Hunter Street Stride

A collection of 12 venues in Newcastle that feature live music on a single Saturday.



### West Best Bloc First

A collection of 12 venues in Newcastle that feature live music on a single Saturday

### Raising the Bar

A one-night event featuring 30 free talks at 15 venues, with a theme of 'entrepreneurship and innovation'



### Shakespeare in the Park

A popular outdoor theatre event where Shakesperean plays are performed in a public park or open air setting.

### 3. Food and dining



#### **Raised Outdoor Dining, Newcastle**

Installation of a raised outdoor dining deck that was initially trialed for six months and permanently retained under the NSW Government's Streets as Shared Spaces initiative.

#### **Lucky Dumpling Market, Adelaide**

An outdoor food festival featuring a wide array of Asian-inspired street food, as well as cultural performances and entertainment.



#### **Ramadan Nights Festival, City of Canterbury Bankstown**

A vibrant, global food bazaar from dusk until 3am every night during Ramadan. This is an alcohol-free event.



#### **Vibrant Scene, Lake Macquarie City**

Expand outdoor dining through:

- Encouraging hospitality businesses to create outdoor dining precincts in parks or car parks
- Offering Council owned land to food truck businesses to create food van hamlets.

## 4. Events

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<b>Voyage: A New Kind of Storytelling</b> <i>City of Newcastle</i>	A live music, spoken word and contemporary dance event that will form part of the 2023 Newcastle Writers Festival program delivered across two nights.
<b>Newcastle Food Month</b> <i>City of Newcastle</i>	Food events in the month of April running throughout days and evenings.
<b>New Annual Festival</b> <i>City of Newcastle</i>	A 10-day arts festival with more than 50 events that activates parks, places and spaces across Newcastle. Featuring local and visiting artists sharing music, dance performance and visual art in a celebration of creativity.
<b>Live &amp; Local Parramatta</b> <i>City of Parramatta</i>	Parramatta City Council proposed and delivered two events, one held in 2017 and one in 2018 in the Parramatta CBD. Council engaged a Live Music Coordinator, Stephen Griffiths, to oversee Live Music events and activations in Parramatta. This included the Live and Local program.
<b>In Good Taste Festival</b> <i>Georges River Council</i>	The festival celebrates food from around the globe, offering a variety of food stalls from many different cuisines representing the multicultural and diverse city we live in.
<b>Un[contained] Arts Festival</b> <i>Georges River Council</i>	Arts festival held across the weekend. Art, performances, food, drinks & music.
<b>Live Music Lake Mac</b> <i>Lake Macquarie City</i>	The series of events aims to give locals the chance to see other local acts and touring musicians from across NSW
<b>Fast and Loud Festival</b> <i>Lake Macquarie City</i>	Two weekends featuring an incredible lineup of action on and off the water including exclusive live performances, exhilarating boat races, gravity defying air shows and more.
<b>Music in the Podium</b> <i>Lake Macquarie City</i>	Free family friendly community entertainment at The Foreshore, Warners Bay, NSW. Every Friday evening for summer period.
<b>Luminous Festival</b> <i>Wollongong City Council</i>	Five-day festival taking the CBD by storm with a jumpacked program of art, music, culture, dance and fun. All of the events happen mainly during the evening.

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# Spotlight on: City of Newcastle

Heralded as a success story of urban renewal and economic revitalisation, the City of Newcastle's transformation over the past decade has changed the city's employment landscape and created a distinct sense of place that leverages its industrial history. These changes were the result of substantial state and local government investment in infrastructure, strategic planning, and policy development. In particular, the City of Newcastle's work to revitalise the night economy through its Newcastle After Dark Strategy has helped the city to become a 24-hour urban centre with distinct precinct areas. This case study serves as a best practice example of integrated and collaborative night economy policy.

The City of Newcastle has undergone a remarkable urban transformation in recent years, moving from its industrial past to a vibrant, diverse, and modern city. This impressive transformation was driven by a range of innovative Council plans and strategies, along with several large major projects (shown adjacent)

Between 2011 and 2021, the population of the City of Newcastle grew at a similar rate to Central Coast (+0.9% p.a. and +0.8% p.a. respectively). However, over the same period, jobs growth in Newcastle (+2.0% p.a.) was much higher than in the Central Coast (+1.4% p.a.).

The delivery of these major infrastructure projects coincides with strong employment growth within the municipality, indicating their substantial contribution to the local economy.

The City of Newcastle is an excellent example of a historically industrial city transformed into an attractive, modern and economically diverse urban centre. This has been achieved through a combination of major infrastructure and transport investment, revitalisation of cultural assets and a targeted program of night-time economic development activities.

The story of Newcastle demonstrates the relationship between public realm amenity and night-time vibrancy. Importantly, the city's revitalisation has celebrated and drawn inspiration from its unique heritage buildings, coastal features and industrial, working class history.

This is particularly relevant to Gosford, where there is significant opportunity to leverage the tidal wave of infrastructure, public realm and residential development investment. Like Newcastle, the revitalisation of Gosford's night-time economy should consider ways to embrace its unique points of difference, such as its 'grungy' urban feel and anchor assets - e.g. hospital, stadium, train station etc.



## Newcastle Light Rail

A 2.7-kilometer light rail line connecting the Newcastle Interchange to Newcastle Beach via the city centre.



## Newcastle Inner City Bypass

A four-kilometre, four-lane road connecting the Pacific Highway with the Newcastle Inner City Bypass, aiming to alleviate traffic congestion and improve connectivity.



## Honeysuckle Foreshore Redevelopment

A significant urban renewal project that transformed the former industrial area into a vibrant waterfront precinct.



## Newcastle Museum

Major redevelopment of the Newcastle Museum, including a contemporary building and expanded exhibition spaces.



## University of Newcastle New Space

The University of Newcastle's New Space is a state-of-the-art education precinct located in the heart of Newcastle.

# Gosford



# Overview

This Section provides a detailed assessment of Central Coast's capital city, Gosford, to identify issues and opportunities relating to the City's ability to cater for future night-time economic activity.

Gosford City Centre is the social and economic heart of the Central Coast, servicing the region for employment, housing, health and education, public transport and retail.

State Government policy supports the role of Gosford as the regional capital city and major service centre within the Central Coast. Gosford's role is therefore to provide a wide range of uses to the region, including commercial, government, retail, cultural, entertainment and recreational activities.

**21,204**

Population (2021)

**1.2m**

Visitors (2016-2019 4-year average)

82% domestic day trip  
17% domestic overnight  
1% international

**20,629**

Jobs (2021)

**2,438**

Businesses (2022)

## Age Profile



**39**

Median Age

**\$1,460**

Median Weekly Household Income

## Top Industries by Employment (2021)



**35%**

Health Care & Social Assistance



**11%**

Public Administration & Safety



**11%**

Retail Trade

## Strengths & Challenges

Gosford is growing and becoming increasingly urbanised, with a suite of public and private investments in health care, education, apartments, tourism and hospitality underway that will boost the number of workers, residents and students dwelling in the City.

However, the city is not the vibrant place it used to be, in part paralleled by the rise of major shopping centres throughout the region.

The opportunity to transform and enhance Gosford's night-time economy is ripe, with existing assets like the Central Coast Stadium, Gosford Train Station and Gosford Waterfront already attracting people to the City. The key opportunity and focus for this project will therefore be on nurturing and growing the night-time economy of Gosford, which will in turn support the broader vision of transforming the city into an iconic waterfront destination within the Central Coast.

Gosford assets, strengths and challenges, as they relate to night-time economic development, are shown adjacent. This information is informed by consultation with Council, local businesses, a review of strategic policy documents and a thorough on-ground audit of Gosford.

### Gosford Assets, Strengths and Challenges

#### Assets & Strengths

- Central Coast Stadium
- Public transport connectivity to Sydney and Newcastle
- Significant level of government and private sector investment planned and underway (hospital, TAFE, university, city centre revitalisation, waterfront, residential)
- Growing cluster of NTE businesses who collaborate well
- Strong market potential associated with future population and visitation growth driven by migrants from Sydney, university students and health care workers

#### Challenges

- Insufficient provision of night-time economy product for a city of its size
- Lacking diversity of product e.g. cultural experiences and entertainment
- Lack of cultural anchors in the CBD to drive night-time visitation (e.g. theatre)
- Dispersed products and lack of clustering (e.g. art gallery located outside of main activity centre)
- Unattractive streetscape and public realm, which impacts amenity at all times of the day
- Potential for noise, licensing and light conflicts associated with planned residential development
- Unattractive development sites
- Poor perceptions of safety, which impacts walkability
- Limited public transport at night
- Lack of venues for live music
- Little activation around Central Coast stadium
- The urban character of Gosford doesn't align with the Central Coast brand
- Loss of retail market share following the opening of Erina Fair, which offers NTE products and experiences

# Investment Context

A number of existing and planned infrastructure and major capital projects are likely to generate demand for night-time economy uses in Gosford.

Key demand driving projects are outlined below.

## Residential Development

Gosford is currently experiencing historic levels of apartment development activity, with 920 apartments expected to be delivered in the next two years. These developments along will increase the population of Gosford by approximately 2,000 people.

The Archibald (pictured) will offer 323 residential apartments, 130 hotel rooms, food and beverage facilities, as well as a 960sqm rooftop sky bar.

## Newcastle University Campus

A \$40 million University of Newcastle campus is planned for Gosford, which will accommodate 900 students in its first decade of operation. The new facility is currently in the design phase, with construction expected to be completed in 2025.



## TAFE

A new state of the art TAFE campus is planned for the heart of Gosford's CBD, encompassing the former Gosford Council Chamber building and the adjacent land. The project will create up to 3,000 tertiary and vocational education opportunities across a wider range of trades.

## Gosford Hospital

Gosford Hospital underwent a major redevelopment to meet the needs of a growing Central Coast community, including new and upgraded facilities, enables new treatment models, and enhance the future capacity for high quality patient care. The redevelopment increased total employment at the hospital by 540 jobs.

## Gosford Waterfront

Council's concept plan for the revitalisation of the Gosford Waterfront includes a mix of commercial, retail and accommodation options, along with a ferry terminal, outdoor recreational areas and an amphitheatre. The project will beautify Gosford's large tract of foreshore land, and will boost liveability and economic growth in the region.

## Safer Cities: Her Way

Safer Cities: Her Way is a \$30 million NSW Government collaborative partnership program between Transport for NSW and a number of pilot councils, including Central Coast. Council will receive \$1 million to deliver demonstration projects aimed at improving the perception of safety for women, girls and gender diverse people when walking or moving to, through and within public spaces and transport hubs. Delivery of interventions will begin by November 2023

## Community Improvement District Pilot Program (Purple Flag)

The Community Improvement District (CID) Pilot Program (formerly Business Improvement District Pilot Program) is an initiative led by the NSW Government, designed to fund trials of business-led, place-based partnerships and governance models across the state.

Gosford Erina Business Chamber and Business NSW Central Coast have submitted a joint application for funding to create a BID in Gosford, which will seek to emulate place marketing and branding components of the successful YCK (York, Clarence and Kent Streets) Purple Flag Accredited Precinct project recently delivered in Sydney's CBD, with the aim to transform Gosford into a thriving, diverse, and inclusive night-time destination.

## Safer Cities: Her Way Findings

Safer Cities: Her Way is a \$30 million NSW Government collaborative partnership program between Transport for NSW and a number of pilot councils across NSW.

Central Coast Council will receive \$1 million to deliver demonstration projects aimed at improving the perception of safety for women, girls and gender diverse people when walking or moving to, through and within public spaces and transport hubs.

The demonstration projects are a way to test how to make public spaces feel safer. Each project will be developed through co-design workshops with local communities and designed to reflect local place identity and character. The projects will be evaluated for their effectiveness and insights will be used to build the case for longer-term change.



Responses to the in-depth in community survey.



Comments dropped on the interactive map.



Local community members and students joined **3 Walkshops** throughout Gosford.



Community members, key stakeholders and community staff joined our Co-Design Workshop.



Visits to the project page and interactive map.



Social media users reached generating more than **12,000** likes, comments, shares, clicks and video views.



Direct emails sent out to the community and key stakeholders.

Key Her Way survey findings and consultation insights, as relevant to the night-time economy in the Central Coast, are shown below.

### **Key Survey Findings**

- 65% of participants changed their route or method of travel due to feeling unsafe
- 71% did not participate in an activity that was being held in Gosford due to not feeling safe.
- 76% of participants felt unsafe in Gosford at night
- Streetlights, passive surveillance, CCTV, well maintained pathways and security would improve participant's sense of safety in Gosford.
- Participants indicated that economic stimulation and activation is just as important as lighting when it comes to improving sense of safety.

### **Key Consultation Insights**

- There is **a lack of things to do** in Gosford.
- Gosford needs to attract a **higher quality businesses** that open later and on weekend.
- **Restaurants and activations** such as night markets are needed to generate more foot traffic.
- **More lighting** is required to improve safety perceptions.
- **Derelict buildings** attract unsavoury crowds
- **night-time economic activity and hospitality** is needed to revitalise Gosford.

# Gosford NTE Audit & Spatial Analysis

An audit of the night-time economy in Gosford CBD was undertaken to assess the existing situation, identify issues and opportunities and, where possible, provide a baseline for future assessment.

The audit assessed:

- Key Pedestrian Routes & Connectivity
- Street Interface Activation
- Footpath Width
- Public Space Lighting & Other Security Features
- General Amenity

This audit did not include activity associated with internal businesses and was focused primarily on the main streets, and only ground floor activity was observed.

The audit was undertaken over the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2023 between 7pm and 9pm.

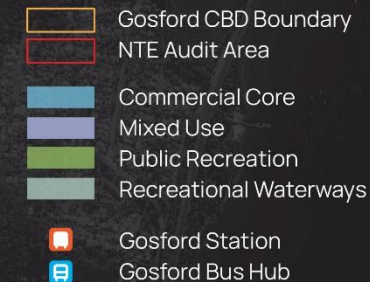
The figure adjacent shows the audited area.

Figure 3. Gosford NTE Audit Area Boundaries

Gosford CBD NTE Audit  
CBD Area & Audit Area



200m





## Key Pedestrian Routes & Connectivity

Figure 4 on page 50 shows key pedestrian thoroughfares in the Gosford CBD with consideration to:

Key pedestrian origin points:

- Car Parks (inc. Station Car Park, Leagues Club Car Park, Stadium Car Park)
- Gosford Station & Bus Terminal

Key pedestrian destinations include:

- Entertainment Venues (Gosford Stadium)
- Parks and Gardens (i.e. CC Leagues Club Park, Gosford Waterfront Park)
- Pubs, Bars & Restaurants (e.g. Drifters Wharf, Bay Rd Brewers)
- Visitor Accommodation (i.e. Hotel Gosford, Railway Hotel)

Potential areas for improvement include:

### Car Parking and Public Transport Access

There is good access to public transport and sufficient supply of parking provided throughout Gosford.

There is potential for an additional bus stop located near the Gosford Waterfront Park and CC Leagues Club Park.

### Wayfinding & Signage

Wayfinding signage is generally appropriately located throughout the CBD. Some directions are outdated and there is some inconsistency in terms of signage design.

Opportunities to improve wayfinding include:

- Upgrade signage so it reflects the destination branding of Gosford and is more targeted towards visitors.

- Use more lighting to enhance key landmarks for easy recognition at night.

### Footpath Conditions

Footpaths along Mann St were generally in good condition.

Select streets between Mann St and Gosford Stadium and the foreshore including Georgiana Terrace, Baker Street, and Dane Drive are in poor condition.

### Cycling Connections

There are currently no dedicated bike lanes within the Gosford CBD.

### Street Interface Activation

Figure 5 on page 51 visualises which sections of Gosford CBD streets are typically active (yellow) or inactive (red) on a Friday or Saturday night at 7pm.

**Most of Gosford CBD's street interfaces are inactive at night. Open businesses are scattered and highly disconnected from key visitor destinations such as the Gosford Stadium.**

Of those businesses that were open, most were food and drink establishments.

These findings are reflective of the current business mix which is primarily professional and personal services (real estate agents, banks, tax agents, etc.) that typically operate only within standard business hours (9am- 5pm).

The closure of several large shopping plazas located on Mann Street is also a major contributor to the sudden drop-off in evening activity.

There are also several large at-grade car parks located at the periphery of the commercial core area which occupy long lengths of the street level.

### What is the Street Interface or Street Edge?

The space which occurs between the building and the urban space demarcated (i.e. building façade).



**Example of Active Street Interface:** Includes transparent shopfronts, on-street activity such as dining, high quality amenity

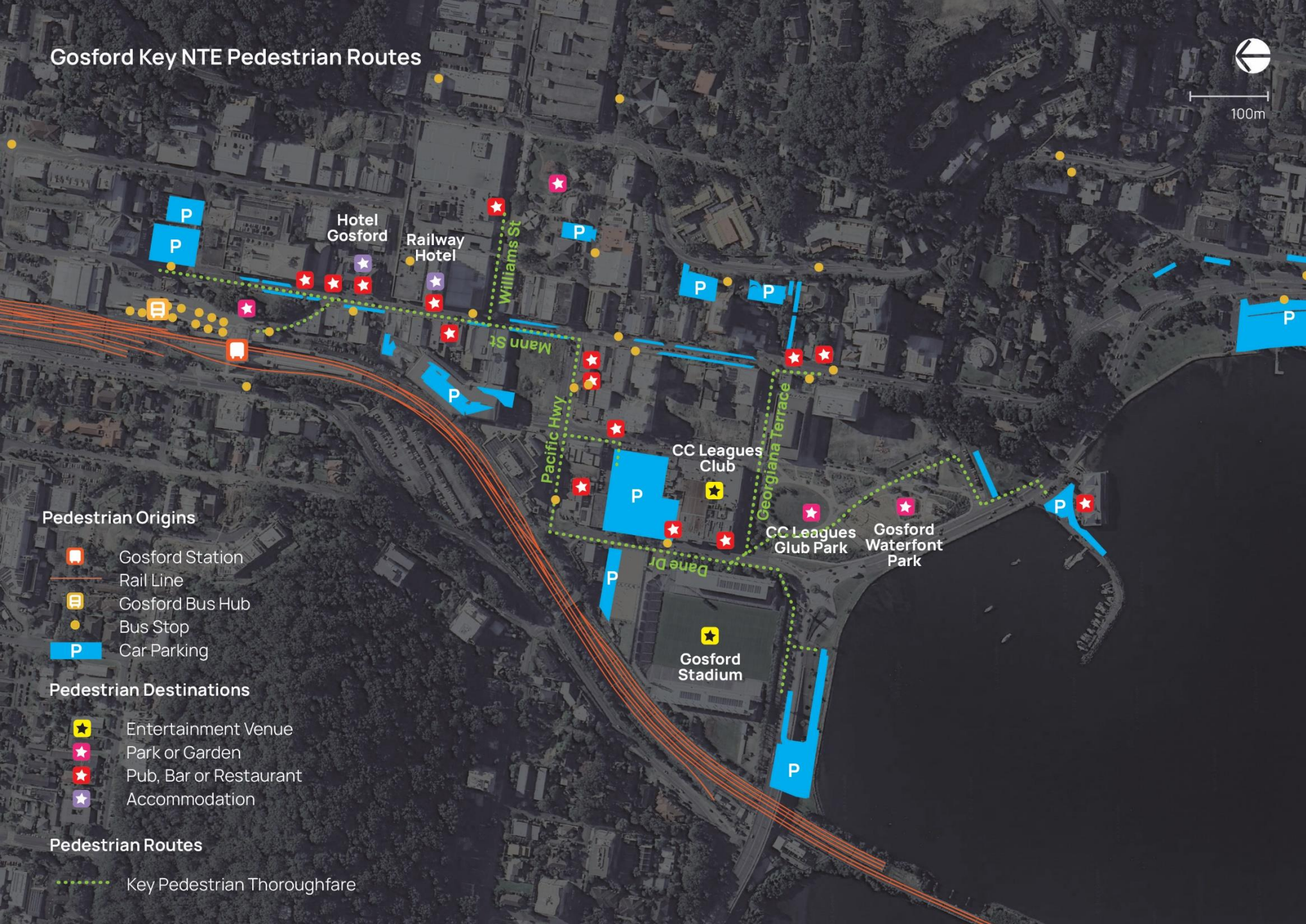


**Example of Inactive Street Interface:** Comprises shopfronts that are blank, opaque, unlit, closed for business or vacant.

# Gosford Key NTE Pedestrian Routes



100m



## Pedestrian Origins

- Gosford Station Rail Line
- Gosford Bus Hub
- Bus Stop
- Car Parking

## Pedestrian Destinations

- Entertainment Venue
- Park or Garden
- Pub, Bar or Restaurant
- Accommodation

## Pedestrian Routes

- Key Pedestrian Thoroughfare

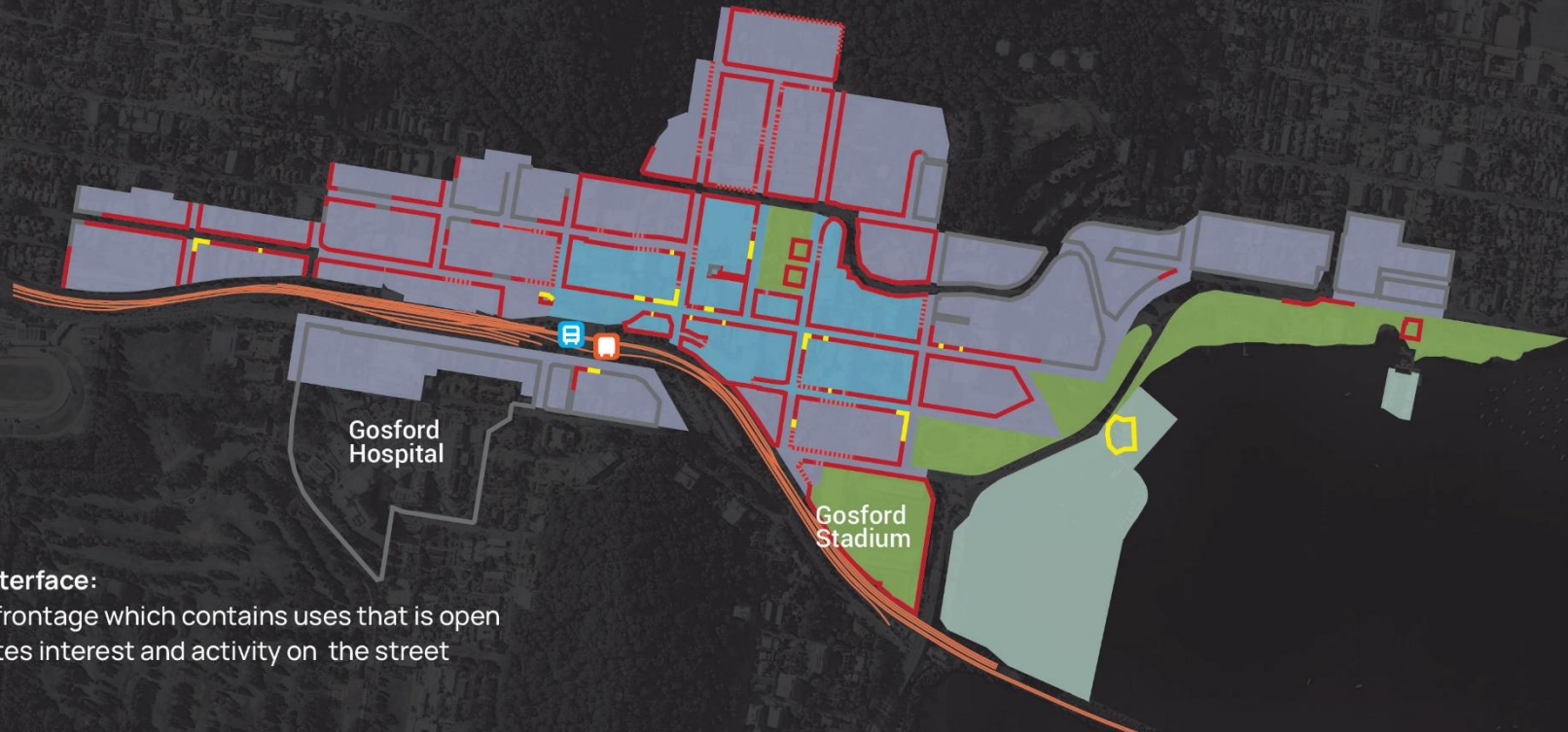
Figure 4. Gosford Key NTE Pedestrian Routes

# Gosford Street Interface Activation

Friday and Saturday 7pm



200m



## Active Interface:

Building frontage which contains uses that is open and creates interest and activity on the street

## Car Transition/Entry:

Entry to Car Parking

## Inactive Interface:

Building frontage that is inconducive to street activity due to being inactive, vacant or opaque.

## Non-Commercial Use:

Land use type such as Residential and Religious Institution, etc.

## Planning Zone

- Commercial Core
- Mixed Use
- Public Recreation
- Recreational Waterway

- Gosford Station
- Gosford Bus Hub

- Rail Line

Figure 5. Gosford Street Interface Activation – Friday and Saturday 7pm.

## Public Space Lighting & Security Features

Figure 6 on page 53 shows the primary light source of street edges and public open spaces in the commercial core of the Gosford CBD. Photographs taken during the NTE audit are shown on

Considered lighting design and visible security features are a key indicator of NTE activity and safety. Ideally, street edges should be well lit and come from a variety of sources including an active businesses, decorative lighting and street lighting for cars.

**Most streets in Gosford are dimly lit. Select areas are well lit are only from a technical compliance perspective, sufficient for enabling orientation and wayfinding, but do not create a sense of comfort and safety for pedestrians.**

The most dominant light source is from closed businesses. 58% of closed businesses keep some type of lighting on, either indoor or under awning, including:

- **Indoor Security Lighting** – Harsh, white, flood lighting designed to deter theft and trespassing. They often exaggerate the feeling of isolation and emptiness.
- **Advertisements** – This includes real estate sign boards and digital billboards. Many are aimed at passing vehicle traffic and use light that creates significant glare for pedestrians.
- **Awning Lights** – Many awning lights are left on in combination with security lighting or in transient spaces (usually with blank frontages) leading to car parks to building entrances.

Light sources without passive surveillance or activation are counterproductive in fostering a vibrant and safe night-time environment.

Ample street lights were observed, supporting visibility for road users but not providing sufficient light for footpaths. This is especially true for Gosford as most shops have under awnings and tree plantings frequently line the footpaths.

Additional observations regarding lighting and security features included:

- Less than 10 of 150 closed businesses had metal shutters pulled down over the shop frontage
- Approximately 1 in 3 business had visible CCTV or alarm systems.

Security features can be an effective deterrent of crime and other antisocial behaviours at night. However, without passive surveillance and activation from surrounding areas, security infrastructure tends to be less effective in creating an elevated sense of safety.

**While lighting alone will not resolve the lack of pedestrian activity, there is opportunity to incorporate street lighting to increase the attractiveness of the CBD and enhance amenity for pedestrians.**

Key areas for improvement include:

- Better lighting of bus stop signs and seating
- Implement feature lighting in shop windows or on blank facades
- Small scale and temporary decorative lighting in 'blackspots' within the CBD e.g. vacant or construction sites
- Improved lighting along streets connecting to the Stadium and Leagues Club Park i.e. Georgiana Terrace and Lower Mann St.

## Footpath Widths

An analysis of footpaths widths and bus stop locations through the Gosford CBD is shown in Figure 7 on page 54.

The map assesses whether Gosford CBD streets are physically able to support on-street activities in compliance with existing on-street trading guidelines and policy.

3.6m – 3.9m is generally the recommended minimum footpath width for outdoor dining and other on-street activities\*.

**Analysis found that 81% of footpaths in the Gosford CBD are less than 3.6m wide. 39% are less than 2m wide.**

The use of footpaths is also typically not permitted at bus / taxi areas, loading zones, intersections and entryways into shopping plazas – all which can be frequently found throughout the core commercial area.

**In these existing conditions, there are few opportunities for businesses to conduct activities on the street in compliance with Council's outdoor trading policies.**

**Consideration of additional initiatives or public realm upgrades to support on-street activities such as the use of parklets or footpath widening, are required to enable on-street activation.**

\*Sources: Gosford City Council Guidelines for Business Use of Public Footpath & City of Sydney Outdoor Dining Guidelines June 2022

Figure 6. Gosford Street Interface Lighting – Friday and Saturday 7pm



# Gosford Footpath Widths & Bus Stop Locations As of October 2023



Figure 7. Gosford Footpath Widths & Bus Stop Locations (Oct 2023)

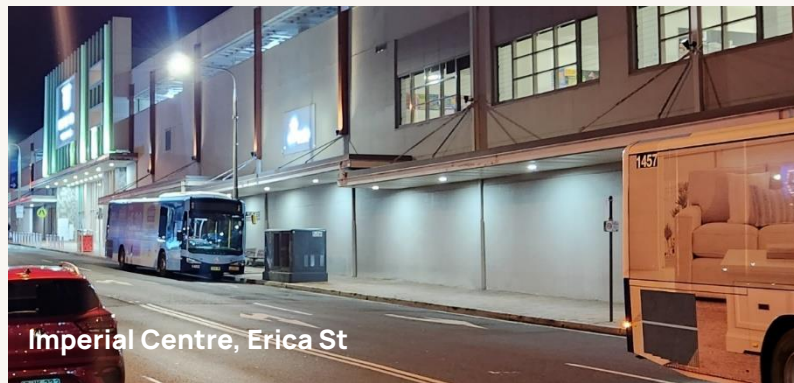
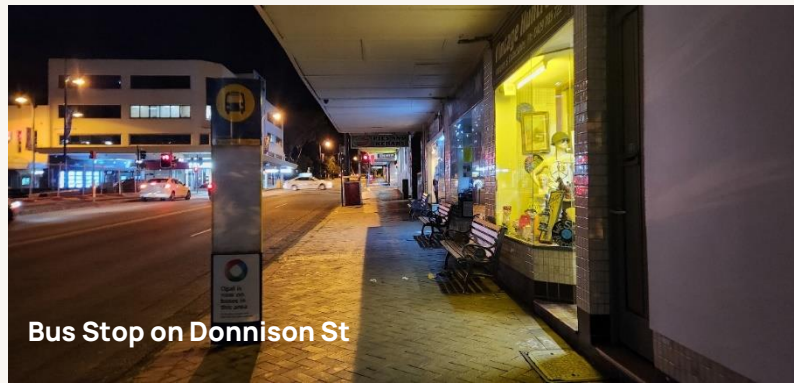


## Footpath Width

3.9m is the recommended footpath width for Outdoor Dining and other onstreet activities.

- Less than 2m
- 2m - 3.5m
- 3.6m - 6m
- 6+ metres
- ▭ Core Business Zone
- Bus Stop
- 🚏 Gosford Station
- 🚏 Gosford Bus Hub
- Rail Line

Figure 8. Gosford CBD NTE  
Audit Lighting, Security and  
Pedestrian Path Observations



## Other General Amenities

Figure 9 on the following page maps general amenities in Gosford core commercial area including public toilets, seating and shelter, bins and cycling amenities.

The presence, conditions and sufficiency of general amenities of the general amenities, and is further discussed below:

### Public Toilets

There are many publicly accessible toilets located in shopping centres, which all close by late afternoon. There are only four public toilets in the Gosford CBD open at night:

- Gosford Train Station;
- Gosford City Library;
- Leagues Club Park; and
- Gosford Rotary Park.

These locations are not easily visible at night with limited passive surveillance from surrounding areas, which could contribute to perception that they are not safe to use.

It is recommended that signage and lighting to direct visitors from Mann St to these locations be improved.

### Seating and Shelter

Seating were sufficiently supplied in key locations such as at bus stops, public parks and pick up zones. More than 120 bench seats were counted in the audit.

Benches are generally in good condition and well sheltered by shop awnings.

## Bins

28 public bins were counted in the audit – with an average of a bin located every 100 to 150 meters in along Mann Street.

### Cycling Amenity

There was also limited bicycle parking observed in Gosford. Other than the Gosford Station bicycle shed, the majority of bicycle parking were located next to public bins (pictured below). Bicycle parking was found at a total of 7 locations.

Provision of more cycling amenity should be encouraged with the Gosford CBD.

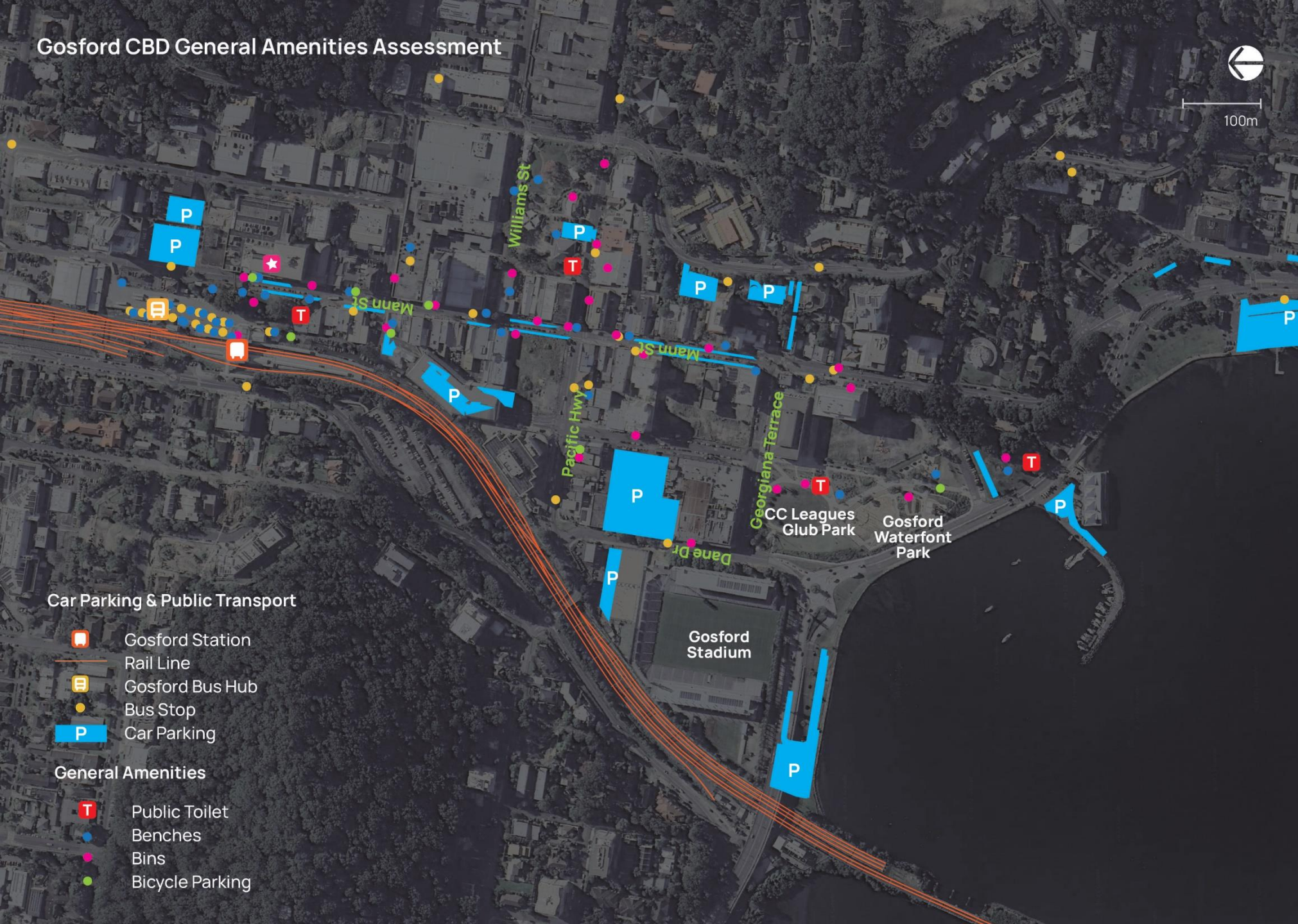




# Gosford CBD General Amenities Assessment



100m



## Car Parking & Public Transport

- Gosford Station
- Rail Line
- Gosford Bus Hub
- Bus Stop
- Car Parking

## General Amenities

- Public Toilet
- Benches
- Bins
- Bicycle Parking

Figure 9. Gosford CBD General Amenities Assessment

## Key Findings – Gosford NTE Audit and Spatial Analysis

- The principle contributing factor to the lack of vibrancy in Gosford is that most of the CBD's street interfaces are inactive at night. Open businesses are scattered and highly disconnected from key visitor destinations such as the Gosford Stadium. All night-time economic development activities should aim to facilitate and promote NTE business investment in the Gosford CBD.
- Additional sources of street lighting are needed to increase the attractiveness of the CBD and enhance amenity for pedestrians.
- There is an opportunity to utilise wayfinding signage and creative lighting to promote visitation and dispersal to key destinations within Gosford. Wayfinding and lighting should be delivered in a way that create a safe and inviting night-time experience.
- Passive surveillance and activation through increased visitation will increase the sense of safety in the Gosford CBD and increase the effectiveness of existing security infrastructure.
- The provision of bike lanes and additional bus stops would stimulate the use of active modes of transport, consequently facilitating night-time visitation and contributing to a sense of vibrancy through increased on-street patronage.
- Under Council's current outdoor trading policies, there are few opportunities for businesses to conduct compliant on-street activities (e.g. outdoor dining). As such, on-street activities such as the use of parklets or footpath widening, should be promoted to businesses.

# Strategic Considerations



## Overview

This section outlines the key considerations for the night-time economy, including the pertinent challenges and opportunities specific to Central Coast and Gosford.

This serves as the foundation for the strategic framework for night-time economic development in the Central Coast, drawing on consultation with business and industry, and the research and analysis detailed in earlier sections of this report.

Strategic considerations have been collated and categorised to help inform the night-time economic development process. Findings from consultation and background research have been distilled into four themes:

- Policy & Leadership
- Activation
- Attractiveness
- Enabling Environment

An overview of strategic considerations, as well as issues and opportunities for Gosford and Central Coast as a whole, are displayed in the following pages.

# Policy & Leadership

Policy, planning and governance structures should enable and support night-time economy objectives.

With a number of competing interests at night, place planning should seek to balance safety with the need for flexibility and innovation. Policy and regulation regarding operating hours, noise control, responsible alcohol service should be sensible and aim to maintain a harmonious environment, whilst fostering business investment.

Collaboration between business, Council, law enforcement, community organisations and residents is vital to achieve these outcomes. Lines of communication between stakeholders should be open to address concerns about the night-time economy, share resources and create collaborative night-time initiatives.

Leadership is required to coordinate and manage the diverse elements of the night-time economy, advocate for investment and ensure all stakeholders have a positive and safe experience.

## Issues & Opportunities for the Night-Time Economy

### Central Coast

- Strive to ensure Council policies have interconnected strategic objectives that actively bolster and advance the objectives of the night-time economy.
- Policy and governance structures should seek to achieve a balance between Council's promotional and compliance responsibilities with regard to night-time economy management.
- Consultation with local businesses revealed that Council policies and procedures can be confusing to navigate and can stifle innovation and night-time economy investment. There is a need to better consolidate existing policies to ensure they strategically align with Council's objectives for the night-time economy.
- Deliver a streamlined business concierge process or night-time economy drop in centre to support businesses looking to invest in the night-time economy. This should be delivered with a pilot program that demonstrates to businesses how to navigate council policies and processes.
- There is opportunity to include provisions relation to street stalls, mobile vending and outdoor dining in the Local Environment Plan.
- Pursue funding to allocate dedicated resources to the effective management of night-time economy projects within Council. This may involve the appointment of a night mayor responsible for overseeing such initiatives and leading advocacy efforts.
- There is a need to formulate an internal governance framework for efficiently managing the night-time economy.
- Consider opportunities to collaborate with Lake Macquarie Council to deliver night-time economy initiatives, leveraging their similar locational and economic conditions.
- There is opportunity to develop or support an online business wayfinding directory, which could be utilised for both day and night-time businesses.

### Gosford

- There is a strong level of collaboration between existing hospitality businesses in Gosford.
- Noise complaints, which have increased with the high level of residential development, limit the city's late night entertainment potential. Consideration needs to be given to how noise, licensing and lighting conflicts with residential uses.
- Police safety concerns have historically acted as a barrier to night-time economy investment.
- There is a need to ensure appropriate sound proofing and acoustic protection mechanisms for live music businesses interacting residential areas. This should occur in line with the 'agent of change' principle whereby responsibility for noise attenuation is borne by the party delivering the new use or development.

# Activation

Cultural and social activity is integral in defining the night-time economy.

The night-time economy is more than just alcohol led entertainment. A mix of night-time businesses catering to different interests and preferences is needed attract a wider audience and promote longer stays. Attracting a diverse crowd helps improve safety perceptions and achieve broader social objectives. Therefore, a range of night-time assets such as theatres, live music venues, clubs, bars, and restaurants are essential for a successful night-time economy.

Promoting venues that service a wide range of demographics and age groups is a key priority for night-time economy development. This includes showcasing live music and creative pursuits, as well as protecting and investing in existing cultural assets.

## Issues & Opportunities for the Night-Time Economy

### Central Coast

- Night-time arts and cultural product is limited across the municipality. There is opportunity to capitalise on Central Coast's existing arts and cultural institutions, such as Art House Wyong and the Gosford Regional Gallery, by utilizing them to host night-time experiences and deliver programs that foster growth in the creative industries.
- Expand the operational hours of Council-run facilities to include night-time offerings that complement their existing daytime operations.
- Night-time product largely comprises restaurants and pubs and there is a lack of diverse product and experience suitable to families.
- Central Coast's hospitality industry currently comprises a large number of small businesses, with very few big players who have the capacity to drive night-time investment and product development.
- The ongoing high level of residential development in the Central Coast is expected to significantly expand the size of the night-time market.
- Event operators are often discouraged from operating events at night due to increased costs associated with licensing, lighting and safety.
- There is opportunity to amend Council's event licensing process to require all operators to integrate night-time elements into their events, creating new opportunities for the night-time economy.
- Events should be organised outside of peak periods to help address seasonality in visitation.

## Issues & Opportunities for the Night-Time Economy (cont'd)

### Gosford

- Despite its potential, Gosford currently suffers from a lack of vibrancy due to a limited number of businesses operating at night.
- Gosford's current hospitality and tourism offering is largely day time focussed, and night-time product is largely generic and alcohol or gambling oriented. There is a need for a more diversified and experiential product and experience base, as well as cultural experiences and entertainment that create a more rich and complete experience.
- There is potential to expand the existing cluster of high quality bar and restaurant businesses at the southern end of the Gosford CBD, through attracting more private operators.
- Gosford lacks high-quality, branded accommodation supply that could promote overnight stays and appeal to new markets.
- There is an opportunity to establish clusters of night-time economic activity in key locations, facilitated by safe and well-signed active and public transport connections.
- Gosford's night-time economy product offering should be scaled to align with the expected population growth resulting from ongoing and planned residential development.
- Night-time product and experience in Gosford needs to meet the quality expectations of recent migrants from Sydney, as well as the future health care workforce and university student base.
- The Central Coast Stadium is a high quality stadium with good connectivity to Sydney. Currently, events at the stadium bring thousands of patrons into Gosford, with many people leaving the area immediately after the game due to a lack of things to do. A more vibrant and activated night-time economy will encourage greater dwell time and spend from these patrons. There is also opportunity to deliver international sporting events at the stadium.
- Roof top and shop top activations offer the potential to revitalise the urban landscape and provide a unique experience that will contribute to the growth of the night-time economy.
- Introducing boating and water-based experiences at night in Gosford could help offer a distinctive and untapped product, enriching the night-time economy with an exciting experiences in an underutilized part of the city.
- Gosford is currently perceived as a regional town and falls short of meeting the night-time economy standards expected of a city its size.
- While smaller towns and villages in the Central Coast focus on coastal and nature-based experiences, Gosford stands apart from this branding. There is opportunity to reinvest Gosford's image as a vibrant, urban live music visitor destination with a grungy appeal. Gosford-specific destination marketing could be driven by the business community.
- Short-term activations and pop-ups in targeted locations could help bridge the gap between the stadium and the existing night-time economy offering in Gosford. These initiatives should also emphasize promoting local businesses and their operating hours to enhance the overall night-time experience.
- Encouraging visitors to experience Gosford through events could help change perceptions of the region. Consideration should be given to delivery of the following event types:
  - Laneway events
  - Educational events and public talks suited to the healthcare workforce and the university student base.
  - Multi-day festival events supported by integrated transport

# Attractiveness

An attractive, immersive and vibrant public realm brings places to life at night.

The public realm design of a place greatly influences the comfort and experience of individuals within it. Public spaces shape the overall character of a space, creating ambience and providing opportunities for social interaction. Adequate lighting, well-maintained public spaces, pedestrian friendly streets and public art help ensure the safety of patrons and encourage increased dwell time and participation in night-time activities.

## Issues & Opportunities for the Night-Time Economy

### Central Coast

- In the short term, Council should prioritize 'quick wins' aimed at enhancing streetscape attractiveness and bolstering businesses' confidence to invest in the night-time economy.
- On street dining and streetscape activations are required to invigorate public spaces and draw people into visibility.

### Gosford

- The scarcity of patrons in the Gosford CBD at night creates a sense of unsafety, discouraging pedestrians from walking between venues.
- Derelict buildings and unattractive shop fronts along Mann Street diminish the overall streetscape amenity.
- Gosford's current night-time offering is quite decentralised with poor connections and wayfinding between key anchors (e.g. train station, stadium, racecourse, waterfront) and night-time economy product.
- There is very little public realm activation in the area surrounding the Central Coast Stadium, representing a missed opportunity to create a sense of vibrancy in an area that already attracts large numbers of people.
- Technological advancements in lighting (i.e. 'smart lighting') could be better utilised to activate key areas.
- Promoting the Gosford brand through street art offers an opportunity to enhance the streetscape while simultaneously showcasing the city's identity in a creative and immediate manner.
- The existing lighting infrastructure in the Gosford CBD requires improvement. It is essential to adhere to best practices that incorporate a diverse array of lighting sources to create an inviting and well illuminated urban environment.
- Implement gateway signage that resonates with the Gosford brand and creates a cohesive and welcoming identity for the city.
- Embracing street music and encouraging busking in Gosford will invigorate the night-time economy, captivating residents and attracting visitors with lively performances.



# Enabling Environment

A successful night-time economy must be underpinned by well-functioning infrastructure and services, to ensure it can be accessed and enjoyed safely.

A range of convenient transport options are needed to encourage people to travel to a night-time destination and between venues, particularly when engaging in the consumption of alcohol. This includes efficient and frequent public transportation with extended operating hours and affordable taxi and ride share services.

Access to essential services during late hours, such as pharmacies, convenience stores, and 24-hour healthcare facilities, can also enhance the appeal of a night-time economy, ensuring that people feel safe and supported even during the late hours.

## Issues & Opportunities for the Night-Time Economy

### Central Coast

- Central Coast is highly dispersed, with no logical and accessible hub for people to access night-time offerings, such as restaurants and bars.
- Limited public transport between towns at night discourages patrons from travelling to a destination and places added strain on ride-share and taxi services.

### Gosford

- Gosford faces a shortage of car parking facilities, hindering visitation from residents in the Central Coast's smaller towns. Addressing this issue presents an opportunity to offer additional 24-hour secure parking options to better accommodate local visitors.
- There is a significant opportunity to cater to the expanding population residing in apartments in Gosford by offering late night or 24/7 retail services.
- Introducing a privately-run 'night rider' bus service would establish vital connections between key towns and facilitate increased patronage of Gosford's night-time businesses for residents across the entire coast.

# Strategic Framework



The following strategic framework includes the key themes for the Central Coast night-time economy, including relevant project priorities and other opportunities for Council, which are explored throughout this section.

## Themes



### Policy & Leadership

Policy, planning and governance structures to enable and support the night-time economy.



### Activation

Cultural and social activity to create vibrancy.



### Visual Amenity

An attractive, immersive and vibrant public realm to bring places to life at night.



### Enabling Infrastructure

Well-functioning infrastructure and services to ensure the night-time economy can be accessed and enjoyed safely.

## Project Opportunities

Type	Time Frame	Council Responsibility
Short-term	1-2 years	Lead
Medium-term	2-4 years	Lead/Support
Long-term	4-5 years +	Advocate

## Theme 1: Policy & Leadership

### Potential projects

As outlined in the <i>Safer Cities: Her Way Project</i> , develop a <b>marketing strategy and website for events</b> .	Short-term
Establish an <b>NTE working group</b> for key stakeholders to meet regularly (e.g. Business NSW, Central Coast Local Health District (CCLHD), Council, 24-hour commissioner, police, community etc.), with the aim to encourage collaboration and guide the delivery of NTE projects.	Short-term
Create a <b>business enquiry roadmap</b> to display internal processes for managing business enquiries within Council.	Short-term
Establish an <b>NTE business concierge</b> to assist businesses looking to establish or invest in the Central Coast night-time economy.	Short-term
Ensure Council Economic Development Team (including the proposed NTE business concierge) maintains a <b>strong relationship and ongoing communication with Liquor &amp; Gaming NSW's Hospitality Concierge Service Team</b> – including regularly referring local NTE businesses to the service and including service representatives in NTE development initiatives (i.e. proposed NTE working group).	Short-Term
Utilise <b>Section 10.7 planning certificates</b> (formerly s149) to manage community expectations around noise in key night-time economy precincts (Case Study: City of Newcastle).	Short-term
Establish ' <b>Special Entertainment Precincts</b> ' in the LEP in key locations in the Central Coast to manage amplified music.	Short-term
Trial an <b>extended business hour policy</b> for Special Entertainment Precincts.	Short-term
Trial <b>automatic outdoor dining permit approvals</b> for Special Entertainment Precincts.	Short-term

## Potential projects (cont'd)

Leverage and collaborate with Council's Community & Culture Team to support delivery of live music micro-festival events at night-time through the <i>Live &amp; Local Strategic Initiative</i> policy.	Short-term
<b>Advocate for Central Coast funding</b> through the Office of the 24-hour commissioner for the implementation of tools, resources and support programs to accelerate night-time economy's development on the Central Coast. Specifically target (a) Live music venue sound proofing improvements and (b) Investment in contemporary music facilities.	Short-term
<i>Use Night-Time Activities Mapping Project in conjunction with the CCLHD &amp; the Police to help inform the extended business hours trial action for Special Entertainment Precincts.</i>	Short-term
Deliver an <b>NTE policy</b> reflecting directions outlined in the NTE strategy.	Medium-term
Update <b>LEP and Council strategic plans</b> to reflect NTE objectives.	Medium-term
Implement a new <b>3-Year Destination Central Coast Marketing Strategy</b> , with a focus on Gosford and sub regional propositions priorities.	Medium-term

## Theme 2: Activation

### Potential projects

Deliver the <i>Safer Cities: Her Way</i> pilot initiative ' <b>Burns Park Refresh</b> ' including landscaping upgrades, decorative lighting and public art installations and temporary activations at Burns Park.	Short-term
Undertake improvement works identified in the <i>Safer Cities: Her Way</i> pilot initiative ' <b>William St Plaza Refresh</b> ' including hut removal, painting and shade sail refresh, landscaping, seating upgrades and decorative lighting installations.	Short-term
Deliver the <b>Good Times Summer</b> 6 week activation program aimed at promoting planned events and activities, as well as showcasing the local businesses across Gosford CBD including weekly markets in Kibble Park, live entertainment, workshops and activities, decorative lighting projections and public art.	Short-term
Implement <b>Laneway Activations</b> planned within the <i>Safer Cities: Her Way</i> pilot program – Activate Gosford's laneways with public artwork, live entertainment and decorative lighting. Priority locations include Kibble Park and the Mann St to Gosford City Carpark laneway.	Short-term
In support of the <i>Safer Cities: Her Way</i> pilot program, investigate opportunities for <b>Vacant Property Activation</b> . Proactively engage the Gosford Business Chamber, landowners and creative businesses and encourage them to activate Gosford's empty shopfronts.	Short Term
Continue to carry out a <b>recurring night market</b> event at Kibble Park following the conclusion of the 'Good Times Summer' activation program ( <i>Safer Cities: Her Way Initiative</i> ).	Short Term
Introduce a <b>roaming winter live music series</b> across NTE venues in the Central Coast's small towns.	Short-term
Facilitate collaboration between NTE businesses and local artists via an ' <b>Artist in Business</b> ' initiative, fostering shared spaces for creative expression.	Short-term

## Potential projects (cont'd)

Encourage <b>live music and busking after dark</b> across the coast. This could be achieved through waiving busker permit fees or directly funding buskers to perform.	Short-term
Promote the concept of <b>local food businesses delivering late night meals to bars and live music venues</b> , in collaboration with relevant food safety stakeholders.	Short-term
Direct local businesses to Destination NSW's <i>NSW First Program</i> in order to <b>establish bookable night time products and experiences</b> .	Short-term
Work with industry and the Office of the 24-hour Commissioner to enrol businesses in the <i>Uptown Accelerator Program</i> and subsequent <i>Uptown Grant Programs</i> .	Short-term
Deliver an ongoing <b>Gameday Activation</b> (and other events) program for Central Coast Stadium at Leagues Club Park, with the potential to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports activities for kids</li> <li>• Participatory 'come and try' experiences for community groups</li> <li>• Pop-up bars and restaurants showcasing local products and hospitality businesses.</li> </ul>	Medium-term
Create a <b>Gosford Regional Gallery satellite</b> in the town centre, showcasing prints and light displays of key artworks. This should be delivered alongside food and beverage stalls and live music.	Medium-term
Design and promote a <b>ticketed walking event</b> featuring live music, food, and bars, linking existing NTE products and experiences in each key town (Gosford, Wyong and Terrigal).	Medium-term
Create a <b>Friday night experience at Gosford Regional Gallery</b> by extending opening hours and introducing live music. Create links to Gosford centre encouraging formal dining etc.	Medium-term

## Potential projects (cont'd)

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Host <b>educational talks</b> at local NTE venues in partnership with Gosford Hospital and tertiary institutors, bringing together the healthcare workforce for interactive and social learning sessions.	Medium-term
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Plan for a new cultural institution which acts a hub for the night-time economy in Gosford Town Centre (e.g. performing arts or exhibition centre).	Long-term
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## Theme 3: Visual Amenity

### Potential projects

Implement **Wayfinding Signage** upgrades identified in the *Safer Cities: Her Way Pilot Program* – Install updated decals and upgrades to identified existing signage to improve wayfinding throughout the Gosford CBD. Include directional, safety, interpretative and other general information for visitors and the community.

Short-term

Expanding on the *Safer Cities: Her Way Pilot Program*, continue to **deliver a comprehensive lighting installation and improvement program in Gosford, with consideration of:**

- Illuminating Gosford Wharf
- Festoon lighting in Mann Street
- Illuminated on-water sculptures
- Permanent, interactive light art trail through Gosford
- Coloured lighting and light art in Kibble Park and Burns Place
- Illuminating major trees in small towns
- Installation of solar panels to light bollards
- Event Lighting.

Medium-term

Continue to work with local artists to decorate development site hoardings, car parks and other public spaces with **paste-up posters and street art**. Utilize street art creatively to promote upcoming local live music events.

Medium-term

Continue to undertake wayfinding and signage improvements, including:

- Using coloured QR code decals providing directions to different destinations.
- Increased **wayfinding signage** between key anchors and NTE products and experience. This includes linkages between Railway station, Central Coast Stadium, Mann Street and the Wharf.
- Investigate opportunities for Dual Naming signage.

Medium-term

## Theme 4: Enabling Infrastructure

### Potential projects

In support of the <i>Safer Cities: Her Way</i> project, undertake preliminary investigation into a <b>Shuttle Bus Loop</b> opportunity. Seek interest from private operators to deliver a 'City Night-time Loop' linking towns across the coast on weekends. Explore funding support opportunities from Transport NSW (for ongoing operations, signage, and marketing activities) and negotiate inclusion of Central Coast branding on shuttle buses.	Short-term
Collaborate with Transport for New South Wales to implement a <b>bus on demand service project</b> across the LGA.	Short-term
Investigate potential delivery models for <b>shared transport</b> (e.g. bike hire, e-scooters).	Medium-term
Identify locations for <b>24-hour retail</b> to service residents living in apartment developments.	Medium-term
Install <b>digital displays</b> showing train arrival times at Central Coast stadium.	Medium-term
'Ramp it up' <b>accessibility program</b> – educate businesses on the importance of accessibility and provide funding to get temporary to permanent ramps to make them accessible.	Medium-term
Advocate to state government for increased and improved <b>public transport provision</b> throughout the LGA (i.e. between towns).	Long-term

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