



LAKE MACQUARIE NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY ACTION PLAN 2019-2024

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A nighttime photograph of a cityscape with lights reflecting on water. In the upper right corner, there are colorful fireworks exploding in the dark sky. The overall scene is dark with scattered points of light from buildings and streetlights.

INTRODUCTION

Growing the City's night-time economy is an important element in making Lake Mac a City like no other. To grow our economy and remain competitive, we must attract new investment and residents. This requires Council to create, support and grow a suitable environment for a night-time economy.

Interest in the night-time economy has been highlighted by the Lake Macquarie community during community consultation work on a variety of projects over the past 18 months. We received feedback that there is a need to have more to do in Lake Macquarie, particularly after dark.

Following extensive community consultation in late 2018, the Night-Time Economy Working Group (NTEWG) has developed the Lake Macquarie Night-Time Economy Action Plan 2019-2024.



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WHAT IS THE NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY?

The night-time economy is defined as all activities and experiences that occur at night. When people think about this kind of economy, most thoughts are to bars, pubs, clubs and restaurants. However, the night-time economy includes all economic activity that occurs during these hours – gyms and other sporting activities, cinema, retail, medical, transport and cultural activity.

‘Night-time’ refers to activities after 5pm known as:

Twilight economy (5pm-7pm);

Evening economy (7pm-10pm);

Night time (10pm-12am); and

Late night (12am-4am).

BENEFITS TO HAVING A NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY ACTION PLAN

The night-time economy is an important part of Lake Macquarie City’s overall economy. Growing the City’s night-time economy will help Lake Macquarie to realise its potential to become an economic powerhouse within the Hunter region.

The evening economy has naturally been growing over the last decade, mainly due to increasing outputs from food and beverage sales. However, without an action plan or framework in place, the exact value this brings to the economy of Lake Macquarie through sales and employment is relatively unknown. This organic growth is also uncontrolled and not adequately supported to ensure positive outcomes for the businesses and the communities they serve.









LAKE MACQUARIE'S NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

Interest in the night-time economy has been highlighted by the Lake Macquarie community during community consultation work on a variety of projects over the past 18 months. The community told Council there is a need to have more to do in Lake Macquarie, particularly after dark.

The night-time economy covers a large range of activities such as:

- retail trade;
- restaurants, takeaways and cafes;
- live entertainment;
- cinema;
- arts and cultural activity;
- health and wellbeing services;
- events;
- bars and clubs; and
- sporting activities.

The night-time economy has been recognised by a number of bodies as playing a significant role in the economic prosperity of regions. In Australia the night-time economy employs more than one million people and was estimated, in 2017, to be worth \$127 billion.

PURPOSE OF THE ACTION PLAN

The purpose of the Lake Macquarie Night-Time Economy Action Plan is to investigate opportunities and actions to grow Lake Macquarie's night-time economy.

The Night-Time Economy Action Plan sets the objectives, priorities and actions to achieve our goals in these key areas:

- Diversity;
- Entertainment;
- Creative uses of public spaces;
- Public transport; and
- Safe and vibrant centres.

The timeframe to achieve these goals are categorised as:

- Short-term = 1-2 years;
- Mid-term = 2-4 years; and
- Long-term = 5 years or more.

Actions will be focused in centres where businesses show the most interest to work with Council.

CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER COUNCIL STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

The Lake Macquarie Night-Time Economy Action Plan meets shared objectives of the following plans:

- Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027
- Destination Management Plan 2018-2022
- Arts Heritage and Cultural Plan 2017-2027
- Lake Macquarie Crime Prevention Strategy 2015-2020
- Lake Macquarie Smart City, Smart Council Digital Economy Strategy
- Lake Macquarie Events and Festivals Strategy 2019-2024



VISION

Lake Macquarie becomes a vibrant and attractive night-time lifestyle and business destination in New South Wales.



OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of this Action Plan are to:

- change perceptions of Lake Macquarie from a passive City to an active City, with vibrant experiences and opportunities for people and business;
- create an evening environment to support a diverse range of leisure and entertainment options, and a rich mix of private and public attractions for all ages, lifestyles and cultures;
- become a more connected City, where businesses, visitors and residents are connected to our City's events and urban centres; and
- create an inviting and safe City at night through design, lighting and placemaking in our urban centres.

MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

This Action Plan identifies six strategic drivers that will help shape the City's night-time economy: governance and communication; diversity; entertainment; creative use of public spaces; transport; and safe and vibrant centres.

The success of this Action Plan will be measured using the indicators identified.

To understand the wider impact of the changes, Council will monitor the City's demographic makeup, pedestrian volumes, anti-social behaviour, area attractors and transport usage. Council will also monitor changes in the number of visitors and overnight stays in the City.

GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNICATION

OUTCOME: Well thought out policy and framework to guide the growth and development of a vibrant night-time economy.

Actions	
1.1	Communicate the findings of the Night-Time Economy Strategy community and business consultation, particularly the community's desire for a more activated night-time economy, later retail trading hours and more diverse offerings, through existing business and economic development forums
1.2	Create a 'Late Mac' section on Council's website, providing policy or guidance for businesses wanting information and assistance on extending their trading hours and other information about night-time activities and policies
1.3	Utilise social media and other marketing channels to promote night-time activities in Lake Macquarie and to brand Lake Macquarie City as place to enjoy at night. Continue to use the #LateMac hashtag on all social media posts related to the night-time economy Promote the use of the #LateMac hashtag among the business community
1.4	Review Council's existing draft lighting policy to ensure consistency with the objectives of the night-time economy action plan
1.5	Review Council's existing noise control policy to ensure consistency with the objectives of the night time economy action plan
1.6	Review the Lake Macquarie Development Control Plan to ensure consistency with the objectives of the night time economy action plan
1.7	Review the Local Approvals Policy to ensure consistency with the objectives of the night time economy action plan
1.8	Review conditions of consent for development approvals to ensure consistency with the objectives of the night time economy action plan
1.9	Review Council's Park Booking Policy/Procedure to ensure consistency with the objectives of the night time economy action plan
1.10	Acquire and analyse night-time economy research data developed by the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors
1.11	Establish relationships with local businesses and host a business workshop or event targeted towards local businesses.

How will we know we've arrived?

Measure	Source
Monitor monthly website traffic to Late Mac webpages	Lake Macquarie City Council – internal measure

	Timeframe	Resources	Lead	Partners
	Short-term	Low cost	NTEWG	Communications
	Short-term	Low cost	Communications	
	Short-term	Low cost	Communications	Cultural Services (Tourism, Art Gallery and Lake Mac Libraries)
	Short-term	Low cost	NTEWG	Asset Management
	Short-term	Low cost	NTEWG	Environmental Regulation and Compliance
	Short-term	Low cost	NTEWG	Integrated Planning Development Assessment and Certification
	Short-term	Low cost	NTEWG	Integrated Planning
	Short-term	Low cost	NTEWG	Development, Assessment and Certification
	Short-term	Low cost	NTEWG	Community Services
	Short-term	Low cost	NTEWG	Integrated Planning
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Cultural Services (Events Team)

DIVERSITY

OUTCOME: A diverse, vibrant and quality night-time experience providing family-friendly options, quality venues and a range of permanent and temporary activities in urban centres.

Actions	
2.1	Review the community grants funding program to encourage and support creative ideas to make Lake Macquarie City more vibrant after hours
2.2	Investigate the potential to extend opening hours for cultural venues and community facilities such as Lake Mac Libraries, Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery and Lake Mac Centre for Performing Arts
2.3	Host events, workshops, courses and live performances in already existing underutilised spaces
2.4	Audit vacant commercial buildings/shopfronts that could support pop-up, short or long-term lease arrangements for creative or cultural activities or events
2.5	Encourage new developments to deliver ground and first floor retail and commercial spaces that trade beyond 5pm
2.6	Investigate ways to assist small arts and creative organisations to deliver and showcase their ideas in the evening
2.7	Host events, workshops, and live performances that enable experiencing the natural environment after dark
2.8	Make applications for small events and small venues easier for applicants
2.9	Undertake research to better understand the range of requirements for incubator and creative spaces in our City
2.10	Work with local schools and youth groups to create night time youth events

How will we know we've arrived?

Measure	Source
Number of businesses in the City that are trading after 5pm is increasing	Australian Bureau of Statistics Lake Macquarie City Council – internal measure
Satisfaction with supporting the City's arts, heritage and culture is increasing	Lake Macquarie City Council Community Survey
Number of visitors (day tripper and overnight stays) is increasing	Tourism Research Australia
Increased number of activities for youth	Lake Macquarie City Council - internal measure

	Timeframe	Resources	Lead	Partners
	Short-term	Low cost	NTEWG	Cultural Services (Events Team)
	Short-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Cultural Services
	Short-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Cultural Services Youth Advisory Council
	Short-term	Low cost	NTEWG	Integrated Planning
	Short-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Integrated Planning Development, Assessment and Certification
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Cultural Services Youth Advisory Council
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Community Services
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG,	Cultural Services (Events Team) Customer Experience Communications
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Integrated Planning
	Mid-term	Cost to be determined	NTEWG	Cultural Services Community Services Youth Advisory Council

ENTERTAINMENT

OUTCOME: Provide a vibrant choice and rich mix of entertainment and activities across Lake Macquarie’s urban centres.

Actions	
3.1	Explore night-time food markets, night-time cinema and family-friendly events in parks and public spaces as part of Council’s Event Strategy
3.2	Run a pilot program of evening and night-time activities/events in Warners Bay, Charlestown, Belmont and Toronto. There is potential to work with the local community, cultural groups or businesses who could access sponsorship or community funding through Council’s funding programs for seed funding
3.3	Develop a holistic events calendar/database to promote evening and night-time events across the City
3.4	Review Council’s online Events Calendar to promote night-time events across all urban centres and ensure businesses are linked to events so they can leverage off them
3.5	Investigate opportunities for schools and sporting groups to diversify offerings to include evening and night-time activities
3.6	Investigate the creation of acoustic reports for key urban centres
3.7	Develop a Live Music Action Plan for the City in consultation with key stakeholders including local artists, venues, community and businesses
3.8	Deliver a music festival event for upcoming and well-known artists to showcase original music
3.9	As part of Council’s Event and Festival Strategy, review Council’s event approvals processes to a more simplified format to encourage more small events
3.10	Continue to curate a regular program of events and festivals that activate our outdoor, public and natural environment in line with Council’s Event and Festival Strategy

How will we know we’ve arrived?

Measure	Source
Participation rates for events and festivals is increasing	Lake Macquarie City Council Community Survey Lake Macquarie City Council – internal measure
Satisfaction with public art and cultural facilities is increasing	Lake Macquarie City Council Community Survey
Number of opportunities and partnerships formed with businesses, creative and cultural sectors is increasing	Lake Macquarie City Council – internal measure
Number of evening and night-time activities initiated that attract audiences is increasing	Lake Macquarie City Council – internal measure

	Timeframe	Resources	Lead	Partners
	Short-term	Costs to be determined	Cultural Services (Events Team)	NTEWG Youth Advisory Council
	Short-term	Costs to be determined	Cultural Services (Events Team)	NTEWG
	Short-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Communications Cultural Services
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Communications Corporate Information
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Community Services
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Development, Assessment and Certification
	Long-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Cultural Services (Events Team) Youth Advisory Council
	Long-term	Costs to be determined	Cultural Services (Events Team)	NTEWG Youth Advisory Council
	Long-term	Low cost	Cultural Services (Events Team)	NTEWG
	Long-term	Costs are already included in the Operational Plan Budget	Cultural Services (Events Team)	NTEWG

CREATIVE USE OF PUBLIC SPACES

OUTCOME: Create a sense of place in key locations across the City.

Actions	
4.1	Trial creative lighting and other temporary green energy lighting fixtures in key locations across the City to determine if it increases usage of these spaces of an evening
4.2	Investigate using the Lake for cultural activities
4.3	Investigate a pilot place-making project to assist in activating the City's urban centres
4.4	Investigate ways to assist groups to activate public spaces of an evening
4.5	Review of public infrastructure provided at Council parks and reserves to ensure sufficient infrastructure is in place for events
4.6	Explore options for 'pop-up' dining and 'food truck' bays in select locations

How will we know we've arrived?

Measure	Source
The proportion of people living and working in, and adjacent to, our town centres is increasing	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Satisfaction with our facilities and public spaces is increasing	Lake Macquarie City Council Community Survey

	Timeframe	Resources	Lead	Partners
	Short-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Cultural Services
	Short-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Cultural Services (Events Team) Youth Advisory Council
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Integrated Planning
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Cultural Services
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Assets Management (Recreation Planning Team)
	Long-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Cultural Services Property, Business and Development

TRANSPORT

OUTCOME: A City with adequate transport and car parking options available to enable night-time activity to grow.

Actions	
5.1	Work with other agencies to improve transport to the City's urban centres and cultural facilities
5.2	Investigate opportunities to fund the illumination of key shared pathways that links to night-time economy activity
5.3	Investigate alternative transport options to make getting around Lake Macquarie City easier for visitors and residents
5.4	Increase awareness about the availability of existing car parks through sensors and smart parking initiatives
5.5	Advocate for effective and seamless public transport in Lake Macquarie City at night
5.6	Investigate and trial 'adaptive parking' in urban centres

How will we know we've arrived?

Measure	Source
Percentage of trips undertaken on public transport of an evening is increasing	Australian Bureau of Statistics NSW Bureau of Transport Statistics
Amount of new shared pathways being provided is increasing	Lake Macquarie City Council – Internal measure
The proportion of walking and cycling trips in the City of an evening is increasing	NSW Bureau of Transport Statistics – Household Travel Survey

	Timeframe	Resources	Lead	Partners
	Mid-term	Low cost	NTEWG	Asset Management
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Asset Management
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	Integrated Planning	NTEWG Youth Advisory Council
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	Integrated Planning	NTEWG
	Long-term	Low cost	NTEWG	
	Long-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Asset Management Integrated Planning

SAFE AND VIBRANT CENTRES

OUTCOME: A safe, welcoming and functional City with well-lit urban centres, improved wayfinding for pedestrians, improved transport and secure places and venues.

Actions	
6.1	Work with licensed premises to implement the 'Ask for Angela' campaign to increase safety in our urban centres 'Ask for Angela' is an international campaign introduced in licensed venues to address sexual violence and patron safety
6.2	Work with local businesses and business chambers to engage live performers or install interactive art pieces in centres
6.3	Work with police to review centres and night time activities against Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles
6.4	Investigate opportunities for wayfinding in our urban centres
6.5	Support cultural and creative activation of vacant shopfronts, buildings and spaces within urban centres
6.6	Investigate the cost and feasibility of installing energy efficient lighting in key urban precincts including lighting for better wayfinding at night and creative lighting projects to instil a sense of place and activity
6.7	Investigate the cost and feasibility of installing energy efficient lighting at Council facilities across the City

How will we know we've arrived?

Measure	Source
Increased satisfaction of community safety and crime prevention	Lake Macquarie City Council Community Survey
Improved perceptions of safety in centres	Lake Macquarie City Council Community Survey

	Timeframe	Resources	Lead	Partners
	Short-term	Low cost	NTEWG	Community Services
	Short-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Community Services Cultural Services Asset Management
	Short-term	Low Cost	NTEWG	Community Services
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Asset Management Integrated Planning
	Mid-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Cultural Services Development, Assessment and Certification
	Long-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Asset Management Environmental Systems
	Long-term	Costs to be determined	NTEWG	Asset Management Environmental Systems

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CONCLUSION

A strong and vibrant Night-Time Economy provides direct economic and social benefits, alongside increased activation and improved perceptions of safety.

The Lake Macquarie Night-Time Economy Action Plan 2019-2024 will allow Council to work with businesses, recreation and entertainment providers and the community to support, grow and manage the night-time economy.









LAKE MACQUARIE CITY

NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY ACTION PLAN

Prepared by Lake Macquarie City Council

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